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**Annie:** Hey friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm so happy to be here with you today. We are back from our summer Sabbath. We're all rested up ready to dive into the second half of the year.

Looking ahead at our plans for the pod, you guys, I am so excited for what we have coming your way this fall. We've got the whole rest of the year planned and it is good. Not only that, but we've got a really fun and special episode for you today.

Today on the show we're celebrating the new 100-day devotional, *Chase the Fun*, that releases tomorrow on August 2nd. This 100-day journey will help you in lots of practical ways to find the fun in your life and to create the fun that you need.

If you're listening to this episode the day it comes out, you still have the rest of today to preorder and get the bonus goodies like the first seven days for free or the audiobook, the whole thing read by me for free today. You just go to [chasethefunbook.com](http://chasethefunbook.com) so you don't miss out on those fun pre-order offers.

But to celebrate *Chase the Fun* making its way into the world and in your hands, we're having an episode full of fun coaching, you guys. We are fun coaching y'all. More on that in just a minute.

**Sponsor:** Before we dive into today's conversations, I want to take a moment and share with you about one of our amazing partners, [Athletic Greens](#). I am in on anything that makes it easier to take good care of myself and to treat my body well. And Athletic Greens is one such helpful product.

"Oh Annie, Athletic Greens. Tell us more." Okay, so one scoop of Athletic Greens has 75 high quality vitamins, minerals, Whole Foods sources superfoods, probiotics, and adaptogens. They're easy for your body to absorb and easy for you to simply stir into a glass of cold water.

The special blend of ingredients in Athletic Greens supports your gut health, your nervous system, and immune system, your energy, your recovery, and your focus. It's the one thing with all the best things. Athletic Greens uses the best of the best products based on the latest science with constant product iterations and third-party testing. Come on!

With continuing to make their products better and better, Athletic Greens, we see you. So many of us take some kind of multivitamin or use various supplements. And it's important to choose one with high quality ingredients that your body will

actually absorb. Athletic Greens provides that and it's cheaper than getting all the different supplements yourself separately. That's so annoying.

So it's time to reclaim your health and arm your immune system with convenient daily nutrition, especially as we finish up this flu and cold season. It's just one scoop in a cup of cold water every day. That's it.

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

And just a reminder, those links are always in our show notes below. So you can just look wherever you're listening and you'll see the direct link to all of our partners as well as to signing up to join us to do the *Chase the Fun* 100 days together, starting on August 15th. That is all in the show notes below.

**Annie:** Today on the show... Hi Ashley.

**Ashley:** Hey, Annie.

**Annie:** I love when you join us.

**Ashley:** I love it too. Thanks for having me.

**Annie:** Welcome back. Welcome back. Welcome back to all of us.

**Ashley:** Yes, welcome to all of you.

**Annie:** I know. Happy August. How was your July?

**Ashley:** July was good. I got a couple of weeks off. Good time with family. Really good time with my kiddos. As a family, we've got some crazy stuff going on. The time together helps work through crazy stuff. And we got some good rest and had lots of fun. So I got some time on my own too, which was a gift. My husband's kind of awesome that way. What about you?

**Annie:** Same. I mean, I think that's the interesting thing is, you know, you think, "Here's what these weeks are gonna look like. I'm gonna go on this trip, I'm gonna do this, I'm gonna see my family man or whatever."

I did not plan to get COVID and I did. I did not plan to... I mean, you know, same in our family. We've got some really heavy stuff going on in our family. So I got to be with my family more days than I thought I would have.

Well, of course, when we planned this... we put this on schedule in January. And in January you can't be like, Well, I bet next summer there'll be really hard things in your family, that you'll need to be with your family. I was like, "No, I was gonna go here and there and everywhere." So it feels good to be back and to be here with everybody. Oh my gosh, the live shows, though.

**Ashley:** Oh, they're just the absolute-

**Annie:** Listening back made me so happy, Ashley.

**Ashley:** Yes! The nostalgia for not that long ago was strong for me.

**Annie:** Strong. Strong. Spring 2022 nostalgia. That's exactly right. So one of the things we did in every one of our live shows from June of 2021, which was like one of the That Sounds Fun tour and then February March of 2022, is we did fun coaching-

**Ashley:** Right.

**Annie:** **Ashley:** ...which I loved. It's the most fun.

**Ashley:** Oh, it was so good.

**Annie:** Now, it's not like an official thing. But I mean, I've written three books about it. I talked about it twice a week for the last nine years, right? I mean, I've collected a lot of information about fun.

**Ashley:** Right.

**Annie:** So at our live shows, we got to fun-coach people. What was your experience of that when we were doing that as a staff member, but as an audience member for every other live coaching?

**Ashley:** Well, it was very tender a lot of times. I even described it to someone as it goes deeper and more spiritual than I ever realized that a question about how do I have more fun in my life might go. And though I might not have been in the same season or been initially like, "Oh, I totally relate to that question," I found something that I learned for myself in each one.

**Annie:** Yes, yes, me too. I just loved it. I love getting to talk to all these people about like, anytime someone can say, "There's a roadblock between me and who I want to be," and someone else can come along and go, "Let me help you remove that roadblock, or crawl under it or crawl over it, or busted up or set it on fire."

So I need so many people in so many different areas of my life to help me with roadblocks. It's really fun to me, it's really fun to me, that I get to kind of come help people with their fun roadblock. So I'm glad we get to do that today.

**Ashley:** Me too. So we are celebrating the launch of *Chase the Fun*, the new devotional that you have coming out tomorrow.

**Annie:** Tomorrow, August 2nd. I can't wait. You know, the funny thing about Chase the Fun... I did this once already. I did an interview this morning and laughed about this to the lady. I was like, "When I wrote *Let's All Be Brave* and it was like the why be brave, the what does it look like, the what have been some steps in my life, and then everybody goes, "Okay, so how? How do I do it?"

**Ashley:** Absolutely.

**Annie:** And I was like, "Oh, whoops." And so I wrote *100 Days to Brave*. We kind of accidentally did it again with That Sounds Fun. It came out in February of 21. And telling the like what is fun and why does fun matter, and then everybody said, "So how? How?"

And the fun coaching is one of the ways we help with the how. But we can't help as many people as 100-day devotional can help. So now *Chase the Fun* comes out tomorrow. So people get to be a part of it. And the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, is you helped a lot with *Chase the Fun*.

**Ashley:** Oh, I was honored to.

**Annie:** So we worked on it together, I wrote it, it was all my content. You helped massage it and make it better, and edit it and add some important pieces. So thank you. I mean, I've said that to you privately, but *Chase the Fun*, the book would not exist if you didn't work here with us. So I'm really grateful.

**Ashley:** Thank you. I am too. Because I believe in every bit of that content.

**Annie:** Me too. I think it's really gonna matter. So the book comes out tomorrow. And then we're going to start a group of people doing the book together. And we're going to do it starting on Monday, August 15.

**Ashley:** Right.

**Annie:** So people can go to [chasethefunbook.com](http://chasethefunbook.com) and sign up to be a part of that group with us. That's the magic of these 100 Day devotionals finishing. And we finish better together. This is kind of a Q&A show. Will you tell them a little bit about what we're doing today?

**Ashley:** Yes. So we reached out to everyone who pre-ordered *Chase the Fun*. And they had the opportunity to send in some fun coaching questions and followed up to schedule some time to chat through some of those with those individuals. So we have a chance to talk with several people who sent in questions for a fun coach. Their favorite fun coach. Maybe the only fun coach they know, Annie F. Down.

**Annie:** That's right. I think it'll be great. So for our friends listening, this is all happening in real-time. You're going to hear us get on Riverside, which is our Zoom of choice.

**Ashley:** The recording application we use.

**Annie:** And we love it. We are big fans of Riverside. If you are an Annie and Eddie Keep Talking fan, then you know we call this the Reverse sponsor. We love Riverside but they are not paying us to say that at all. But we love using Riverside, that program.

So we're gonna hop on Riverside with a handful of different people. We got a bunch of questions. So after we finish talking to these people who are giving us their questions live, we're gonna bust through some of the other ones too, right?

**Ashley:** Yes.

**Annie:** So friends, here are our fun coaching conversations. Let's go, Ash. You're ready?

**Ashley:** Yeah.

**[00:09:37] <music>**

**Annie:** Alicia, Welcome to That Sounds Fun. Welcome to fun coaching.

**Alicia:** I'm so excited. Hello.

**Annie:** Okay. For people who can't see you, please tell everyone where you are.

**Alicia:** I am on vacation at a lake house in Houston, Texas.

**Annie:** Oh, I mean, it looks beautiful behind you. The sky is perfectly blue. Oh, there's a lake. I'm just having a great time. I'm having a great time. So you sent in a fun coaching question. I'm ready for it. Bring it.

**Alicia:** All right, here's my question. It's always hard to walk the balance of doing fun things that fill your soul and your bucket while also being selfless and taking care of your family, job, whatever. So can you speak to that journey? Specifically for me, it's doing it without mom guilt as my passion, community theater, often takes some sort of sacrifice for my family. But I know I am better as a mom when I've got that kind of outlet in my life.

**Annie:** Yeah, I get that. Okay, Alicia, first of all, can I ask you some follow-up questions?

**Alicia:** Absolutely.

**Annie:** Okay. How many kids?

**Alicia:** Three?

**Annie:** And what are their ages?

**Alicia:** Six, nine, and twelve?

**Annie:** Okay. Okay. So for a lot of our friends listening, if they have one, three, and five year old, it's a different conversation than a six, nine, and twelve-year-old, right? Because my guess is you have a little more free time now than you did then. Is that true?

**Alicia:** Yes. But I started when my middle child was one year old. I started this when I had a three and a one-year-old and not even born yet.

**Annie:** Okay, tell me why you started it then.

**Alicia:** It's always something I wanted to do. My worship minister at church said, "I'm doing the music for the show, for Little Women." And I was like, "I'm in. I've always wanted to do this. Put me in." And I was ready to play. So he cast me in the ensemble and I've been hooked ever since.

**Annie:** Because you know what you're actually modeling for your kids, which I think is really cool? What you're modeling is there are things I'm passionate about that I am going to put my time and energy toward. Right? Because that's what they're seeing

in you have going like, "Oh, my mom..." It happens all the time when moms and dads garden. It's when you are in the choir at church, it's when you volunteer and take the kids along and they go, "Oh, my mom cares about this." So you're actually already doing it I think in a lot of ways.

Talk to me about the balance you experience. Do you feel guilt when you're doing it? Do you feel like you're being selfish?

**Alicia:** I think when I was little it was a little bit easier. I didn't initially have the guilt because my husband is a rock star. He would be like, "Go do. I've got this." He's an introvert. I'm an extrovert. He understood early what it meant to fill my bucket.

As the kids have gotten older, they've been more vocal. And they've been the ones saying, "Mom, I miss you. Mom, don't go." And that's been harder. So that's been the struggle because I don't struggle with leaving my husband. He's got this. He's often, I say, a better mom than I am. He handles things like a rock star. But the kids miss mom. So that's been a struggle as they've gotten older strangely enough.

**Annie:** So I have a couple of thoughts about that. One, would be, do they want to be involved? Do they want to go with you or would you rather them not go with you?

**Alicia:** I've toyed with that. I have friends who have been doing theater all along and they have like nine kids and a lot of their kids just come along. And I get that. But a part of me is like, "This is kind of my thing right now and I can kind of go and do and then I can come back and be filled."

My oldest has no interest. He might be interested in backstage stuff but he's like, "No, I don't want to be on stage." My middle child, he's like, "Maybe that would be something I want to do, but probably not." But my youngest is a little girl and she's the only girl and she's a diva and I think she might soon be like, "Come on! Bring me, mom! Bring me, mom! And I'm going to be like, "Come on! Let's do it. So it'll probably become a mama daughter thing soon. But it hasn't yet.

**Annie:** Well, I also wonder... You know me. I don't like to shoot people. So I'm not going to shoot you at all. So I'm just wondering out loud. I wonder if there is a conversation around the schedule of like, "Okay, twice a year, I'm going to do this. In the summer, I'm doing a play, and I'm gonna be the only one in our family that does it. But then at Christmas, I would love for us all to do this."

So I wonder if that way you get some of your like, "Hey, you guys get to go and play on your soccer team and I'm not out there trying to be the goalie because we all have different things that we love. So I'm there cheering for you like you're

cheering for me. But at Christmas, I'd like us all to be in a play together or next weekend at home we're all going to play soccer together."

I'm just thinking out loud about like, how do you model for them there are things that bring me joy that it is okay if other people... I mean this is a grown-up conversation, Alicia, but it's okay if other people have feelings about the things that we love. It's okay. And that's gonna be their whole life.

But I wonder if there's some meat in the middle where you can have a conversation of like, "Hey, when you miss me, how can I help you with that? Would you like to bring your book and come and sit? You can come to rehearsals on Thursdays," or "You can come..." You know, just kind of go have these a little bit. Does that make sense?

**Alicia:** Yeah. Like, "Come see what I do sometimes."

**Annie:** Sometimes. Sometimes. Alicia, that is gonna be the word that keeps you having fun is "sometimes." Y'all can come sometimes. Y'all need to stay home sometimes.

**Alicia:** Amen.

**Annie:** That's good. Oh, that's so good. Okay, well, here's my request of you. I would love for you to... next time you're in a show, will you tag me in a picture, so I add a video so I can see it?

**Alicia:** Yes, I love that. My next audition is *The Addams Family* and that is in a few weeks. I'm gonna audition for that. And I'm super excited.

**Annie:** Oh, I hope you make it.

**Alicia:** Yeah. It'll be my first show since COVID.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Alicia:** So it's been a few years. Because that was another like with COVID going on and with the kids getting older and starting their own things, it was the hard to get back into it. So I'm stepping out. It has been a while since I've done a show. And so I'm really excited to like... like, no, this is... Yeah.

**Annie:** That's awesome.

**Alicia:** It's gonna be a thing.



**Annie:** I can't wait to see it. Please don't forget. And listen, let them jump in with helping you audition and practice and picking... I mean, there's all sorts of things where they don't have to get in the car with you, but they can get you ready, you know?

**Alicia:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Thank you for doing this today. I really appreciate it.

**[00:16:36] <music>**

**Annie:** Okay, Rachel, welcome to That Sounds fun.

**Rachel:** Hi. Thank you, Annie.

**Annie:** Are you nervous?

**Rachel:** A little bit.

**Annie:** It's just me though. It's just your friend Annie. So we're gonna be fine.

**Rachel:** Absolutely.

**Annie:** Will you tell me where you live?

**Rachel:** I live in Plattsburgh, New York. So it's about as far upstate as you can get. I'm right by the Canadian border.

**Annie:** Do you go over to Canada all the time?

**Rachel:** Absolutely. Half of my family's Canadian.

**Annie:** Oh, you're so lucky. I've always wanted to live in a place where a country was right next to my country. I don't think I'll ever get to do it. But that is very cool that you get to do that. Are you near Niagara Falls then?

**Rachel:** Not really. My sister is near Niagara Fall.

**Annie:** Okay, good. That's what I was thinking of. No. Okay, just embarrass me in front of all of our friends listening. How far are you from Niagara Falls?

**Rachel:** So, Annie, just embarrass me because I don't know.

**Annie:** Okay, great. Great. The only time I've gone from New York to Canada was at Niagara Falls. So that's all I knew about where they touch.

**Rachel:** I'm terrible at geography so I will embarrass myself and my family if I'm like, "It's west and I'm north." I don't know. Maybe it's east.

**Annie:** And it's hot up there, too, right?

**Rachel:** It is very hot. Not southern hot but is far... It's very warm.

**Annie:** No. I think everybody is getting southern hot this August. I think everybody's getting it. So you sent in two questions. You're gonna lead me on one and I'm gonna remind you of your second one. So I am ready. Tell me your first fun coaching question.

**Rachel:** So my first question is, how do you keep from being disappointed after fun ends?

**Annie:** That's a very good question. I'm going to push back some questions to you, too. If you don't mind, do you identify with a certain Enneagram number?

**Rachel:** I have taken the test multiple times and I've gotten multiple numbers. So everyone says I'm a nine.

**Annie:** Okay. You're like, "Here's what everyone else says, and I will just believe them." I resonate so deeply with that because a lot of times what happens for me... Tell me if this feels true for you. What happens for me at the end of fun is a lot of times it didn't actually live up to my expectations. Is that ever your experience?

**Rachel:** It is.

**Annie:** This is a genuine question to you. When it ends, do you find yourself you're more often sad that it's over or more often sad that it didn't quite live up to what you hoped it would be?

**Rachel:** Honestly, I think it's about a 50/50 split. I feel like when the fun is what I expect it to be, I'm so disappointed that it's over. And then when the fun isn't what I expected, I almost feel like I missed out and that I'm not going to be able to get that fun back.

**Annie:** Yes. Yes. There's a little bit of "there's a hole in my bucket" problem, right, of no matter how much water I put in this bucket, it is running out faster than I can fill it.

So then when fun ends you go, "Wait, wait, wait, but my bucket is empty. This was supposed to fill it up and it didn't quite fill it up. Or it did, but it's already starting to drain again."

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm.

**Annie:** Okay. So tell me about how you spend your day. Do you have like a day job or are you a student? Where are you in the world?

**Rachel:** So I am actually a college professor. I teach in a Speech-Language Pathology department in my alum, like my local SUNY Plattsburgh college.

**Annie:** You are such a better person than me. You're such a better person than me. That job is so nice and so giving. Now, you know I'm not good at shooting people. I don't like shooting people. I'm just gonna suggest a couple of things and you can tell me if we're on track or off track. I wonder if you're very invested in your job and that makes your fun opportunities rare and really important.

**Rachel:** That feels very true, Annie. Yeah.

**Annie:** Because when it's really rare is when the importance level goes up and that's when the sadness that it's over or didn't meet our expectations tends to be more profound. Because you go, "Well, I only had a we..."

I have a great example of that in that I got COVID in July during my time off, and I honestly was panicky about it. Because I was like, "No, no, no, I only have these amount of days. I'm stuck in my house watching *Virgin River* and cross stitching for days. And I was supposed to be here, here, here, here."

And what that actually showed me... I'm not talking about you, I'm talking about me. What it actually showed me is that I have a little bit of a spirit of scarcity that I am not going to have enough. So you can answer this or not answer this. But is there a little bit of a theme in your life of "no matter what I do, it's not enough."

**Rachel:** A little bit.

**Annie:** Me too. Me too. And so when that happens and when that eff... A lot of times, and you've probably experienced this or this is why you even have this question, a lot of times what we experience in fun mirrors what we experience in other places.

So if you feel like your fun is running out or your fun didn't meet your expectations, and you're sad when it's over because it's so rare, it's probably that in

a lot of places in your life you feel like your bucket is empty and quicker than you can fill it. Does that feel true?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Annie:** I'm not trying to embarrass you in front of our friends that are listening or anything. Is this okay so far?

**Rachel:** You're just reading my mail. It's fine.

**Annie:** No, no. Well, great. But it's because it's my mail too. We just share a mailbox is all there is to it.

**Rachel:** I guess so.

**Annie:** Also, I want you to hear me say it's totally okay to be sad when fun ends. Like I'm sad my vacation days are over because I had a great time with friends and family. So it's totally natural to feel that the question to ask ourselves is why. Am I feeling it because it was supposed to feed me in a way it can't feed me or am I just feeling it because it's over, and I'm sorry it's over?

So my next question to you is, your vacation is starting right now. How long do you get to be on vacation for this window of time?

**Rachel:** I'm on vacation for six days.

**Annie:** Six days. You're like, six days, seven hours, 24 minutes."

**Rachel:** I'm not counting. I am counting.

**Annie:** What are some things that you have planned for this vacation?

**Rachel:** You know, lots of family time, doing birthdays, celebrating my parents' 60th anniversary-wedding anniversary. Go, mom and dad!

**Annie:** Well done. A lot of people can't do that. I salute them.

**Rachel:** Same. And just kind of spending time with family whom I haven't been together. We have military members in our family who just came back from leave. It's a lot of just reunion and spending time together.

**Annie:** Yeah. Are you gonna get any alone time to just like chill and read a book or watch TV?

**Rachel:** Probably not this vacation. No.

**Annie:** Is that a value to you is getting to do stuff like having quiet downtime?

**Rachel:** It is.

**Annie:** One of my suggestions might be to go ahead during these six days and find a one day where you can go, I know coming in September on Labor Day... Labor Day? Yes, that's the one. ...on Labor Day or I have a Friday off or we have a fall break coming where you take like a Rachel day. This is only a question we can follow up with after Rachel day is, I just wonder if having six days that are family oriented with a Rachel day on the calendar will make this ending less sad.

**Rachel:** That's a great idea.

**Annie:** It may be. We will see. I legit plan on us following up with you and seeing how Rachel Day goes in the fall. But if you can fit it in August—but I know it's back to school—but August or September, if you can go ahead...

I try, when I'm in the middle of my fun, to know when the next fun is. It's kind of the Sabbath feel of like, Okay, I know I'm gonna Sabbath on a Saturday and I know the next one's the next Saturday. So it makes the ending a little more like I've thrown a rope and tied it to the next one versus the rope just falling off.

**Rachel:** That makes sense.

**Annie:** Does that make sense? Let me remind you of your other question because I think it's really interesting. You said, "Any suggestions for finding fun in fitness?" Tell me more Rachel.

**Rachel:** I remember, and I'm sorry if I don't remember which book it was. I love all your books.

**Annie:** You're kind. Thank you. I often don't remember either. So you're fine.

**Rachel:** I want to say *100 Days to Brave* you talk about a class you took. I think it was Zumba.

**Annie:** Zumba, yeah.

**Rachel:** And you had so much fun. And you were like, "I can have fun and workout?" I think that's so brilliant. And I think that's part of what I'm looking for for my personal chasing of the fun. I want to find something that I love again. I used to swim in high school and I adored it. But I haven't been able to swim because of an actual injury I got when I was swimming. And it makes it really quite painful to swim.

So I'm trying to find that fun fitness activity again. Do you have any suggestions for looking for something when one thing was working but it doesn't work anymore? So what's next?

**Annie:** I'm the queen of one thing is working until it doesn't work anymore. So the first thing I want to release you from is that you have to find a fitness activity that lasts for the rest of your life. What I have started to say to myself is do something for a year. Do a program or a class or a whatever for a year.

And then at the end of that year, if you want to go... Because I want to balance really well. I think you're like this too Rachel. I want to balance really well like committing to something and not forcing myself to spend the rest of my life riding a bicycle. I want to be both. I want to be a person who's committed and perseveres but who doesn't like... I don't want to be miserable. I want to have fun doing it.

So I have found, for me, and I'll be interested to see when we follow up with you about Rachel Day, I'll be interested to see... I wonder if you find either based on what the school offers, if there's a gym or if it's a peloton or the peloton app, or some sort of other app online that offers a huge variety of classes. Are you a person who likes to exercise with people or by yourself? I'm a by myself person.

**Rachel:** So I want to be the person who exercises with other people. But I think that we both end up letting each other down where it's like, "I don't want to work out today," and then we don't.

**Annie:** Yes, thank you. Ashley, who you know and love, is sitting here with me. Ashley, you and your girlfriends go how many mornings a week?

**Ashley:** Four mornings a week.

**Annie:** Four mornings a week.

**Rachel:** So impressed.

**Annie:** At what time, Ashley?

**Ashley:** During the school year it's 5:30 a.m.

**Annie:** What a nightmare!

**Ashley:** During the summer, we back it up to six.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh, we back it up to six. Listen, in no world, Rachel, are you and I gonna meet up at 5:30 at Niagara Falls and go on a jog. In no world. Maybe you have that discipline. Not me. I don't like to see the 5:30s. But that really works for Ashley and her friends because it meets a couple of different needs, right?

So, for me, what I need most an exercise is fun and release. Like I gotta release tension out of my body. And I'm guessing from your job, that's probably true for you too. So what I found really helpful is apps that have this wide variety of classes, then I go, "Okay, I'm gonna do this program." So right now I'm in the middle of a program that lasts for four weeks, and then I'll pick a different one.

So I wonder if there's something like that either in person or something you can do at home that offers you variety, but also requires a little bit of commitment, and invites you to practice perseverance without forcing you to jump in a swimming pool for the rest of your days.

**Rachel:** Right.

**Annie:** That would be my suggestion. And technically I think I have a six-month or a six-week guest pass to peloton if you want me to give it to you. I have a guest pass. So just email me and you can just have my guest pass for peloton because I don't need it. So if you want that, email us back, you just email me back. Does that kind of help try to think through that variety?

**Rachel:** I think it does. I think it does. Honestly, the biggest holdup is I think I was holding on to something that I used to really love to do and kind of that fear that I'm going to either not find that or find it and lose it again, versus just being excited about something new or trying something new.

**Annie:** Wow. There are people writing that down that are hearing this. Ashley just raised her hand. She's writing that down. I mean, that's it for dating, that's it for exercise, that's it for jobs. That is it for so many things of like, if I start again, what if that happens again?

So I think you get to run face on... You know that old kids rhyme "You can't go over it. You can't go under it. You got to go through it." We're going on a bear hunt. We're going on a bear hunt. I think you're going on a bear hunt a little bit of like you can't go over this and you can't go under it. You just have to go through the reality of "Why am I afraid of that? And what do I do with that fear? And can I get some exercise in while I'm figuring it out? And can it be fun?"

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Ashley, do you have thoughts? Ashley's leaning forward like she has thoughts.

**Ashley:** No. I'm just in for this. It is applying to my life too.

**Annie:** Me too. Okay, Rachel, we're gonna follow back up though. I'm not done with this information. I need to know about Rachel Day. I need to know what this bear hunt leads you to. Because I think it feels maybe profound for you.

**Rachel:** I agree. I'm excited to see. Now it's an experiment.

**Annie:** That's it, girl.

**Rachel:** So now I'm ready to see what-

**Annie:** People don't quit any experiments. People quit New Year's resolutions all the time but no one quits a science experiment. We got to see if it blows up.

**Rachel:** Absolutely. Hopefully not. Absolutely.

**Annie:** But I think you're right.

**Rachel:** So yeah, circle back at the end of September.

**Annie:** Okay. Can do. Can do. Thank you for making time to do this. I'm really, really grateful.

**Rachel:** Absolutely. Thank you for having me. This was amazing.

**[00:30:56] <music>**

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Just interrupting our fun coaching real quick to share about one of our amazing partners, [ButcherBox](#). Even though kids are headed back to school here in



the next few days, we definitely still got several weeks of summertime cookout weather ahead of us.

Listen, Best Summer Ever is not over, you guys. You know your girl AFD loves a good get together with friends and even better with delicious homemade food that everyone brought with them. As you wind down your summer, well, we're thinking about winding down our summer but we're not doing it yet, add some showstoppers to your grilling lineup with ButcherBox.

ButcherBox is the subscription service that delivers high quality meat and seafood right to your doorstep. You get to choose from carefully curated selection of 100% grass-fed beef, free-range organic chicken, wild-caught seafood and more.

Y'all, my freezer is so well stocked now with beef and chicken which is actually pretty motivating for me. You didn't know I've got restaurant-worthy meat that was delivered straight to my door waiting on me to cook it up. It's expertly packed fresh and shipped frozen. I love how convenient ButcherBox is and what a time saver it is in my grocery shopping situation.

You can customize your own box or go with one of theirs, which is what I did—convenience all the livelong day. Either way, you get exactly what you want. Delicious 100% grass-fed beef, free-range organic chicken, pork raised crate-free and wild-caught seafood. All of this for an unbeatable value. I mean, we're talking less than \$6 per meal on average, you guys. Let's be real. We pay a smidge more than that when we go out to eat, don't we? Yes.

So get summer sizzle and started with this special ButcherBox deal for our friends. Free bacon for life. You guys, free bacon for the life of your membership. Plus \$100 off. Sign up today at [Butcherbox.com/tsf](https://Butcherbox.com/tsf), like That Sounds Fun, and use the code BONUS100 to get one pack of free bacon in every box for the life of your membership. You guys, free bacon. Plus \$100 off your first order. That's [Butcherbox.com/tsf](https://Butcherbox.com/tsf) and use the code BONUS100 to claim this deal.

**Sponsor:** And I got one more amazing partner to tell you about, these two go together so well, [Liquid I.V.](#) Okay, so during my break, I was able to do some travel. And as you heard, I also spent some time dealing with illness and staying home. In both instances, when it was blazing hot while I was on the road and when I needed to take a little extra care of my body to support my immune system, hydration was top of mind. Thank goodness I had my Liquid I.V. with me for the entire month.

One stick of Liquid I.V. mixed in your water bottle will hydrate you two times faster and more efficiently than water by itself. Plus Liquid I.V. has 10 refreshing

flavors. They taste so good, y'all. Flavors like concord grape or lemon lime and tropical punch. Yum.

So I've been working through trying some of my less familiar flavors and y'all, they're real real and I have loved them all. But golden cherry, y'all, the golden cherry, it is so good. And the pina colada takes you straight to the beach... in your heart. They're a part of my morning pretty much every day. But like I said, for sure when I'm on the go or under the weather or on an airplane... Listen, I drown Liquid I.V. when I'm on an airplane,

Liquid I.V. had got five essential feel-good vitamins, B3, B5, B6, B12, and vitamin C, and three times the electrolytes of traditional sports drinks. Liquid I.V. is made with premium ingredients and without gluten, dairy, soy, or any GMOs. So grab your Liquid I.V. in bulk nationwide at Costco or you can get 25% off when you go to [liquidiv.com](http://liquidiv.com) and use the code THATSOUNDSFUN at checkout. That's 25% off anything you order when you shop better hydration today using the promo code THATSOUNDSFUN at Liquidiv.com.

And now back to fun coaching.

[00:34:40] <music>

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

**Sandy:** Thank you so much.

**Annie:** Thanks for doing this. I'm so glad you're here. Okay, Sandy, tell me how long you've been listening to That Sounds Fun.

**Sandy:** Oh, gosh, probably about three years, maybe four.

**Annie:** Did you ever think, "You know what? I'll probably be on that at Some point?"

**Sandy:** No, I never thought I would be on the podcast. It is like a dream come true.

**Annie:** Oh, good. For me too. So I'm really glad you're here. This is a very fun, fun coaching episode. And I love your question. So will you go ahead and tell everybody your fun coaching question?

**Sandy:** Yes. So I am wondering how can I convince others of the value of taking time to have fun?

**Annie:** Well, part one, I feel like that's my life motto. Like, here I am out here trying to give it to everybody. Tell me who you're thinking of when you're thinking of who you have to convince that fun matters.

**Sandy:** I feel like sometimes it's my husband. It's not necessarily friends so much. Sometimes my family. And I feel like sometimes it's myself when I'm in work mode. I really struggle with the work versus personal life.

**Annie:** Girl, I feel like I spent half of my vacation thinking... Of all my thinking on vacation, I spent half of my vacation thinking on how do we balance work and life. It's just so hard, isn't it?

**Sandy:** It is.

**Annie:** What do you do for work?

**Sandy:** I'm a school counselor-

**Annie:** Oh, how would you not. I know.

**Sandy:** ...which I absolutely love. I love having summers off. We're just getting back to work again now. But I feel like I am not always fun at work. And I feel like I'm pretty fun outside of work. But I want to be both. So sometimes it's me I have to convince.

**Annie:** Thank you for doing that job by the way. As a former elementary school teacher, there was no one I trusted in that building more than the counselors that were available to my students. So thank you, thank you, thank you for what you do.

**Sandy:** My pleasure.

**Annie:** It is not an easy job. It is not an easy job. I think you know this because you work with kids, too. It's not very easy to convince anyone of anything.

**Sandy:** Correct. Yes. Right.

**Annie:** And especially in the internet world, as you and I were discussing before we started, in the internet world, we can't convince anybody of everything because everyone shows up believing everything they believe.

**Sandy:** Yes, that is so true.

**Annie:** And I showed up today in my life believing everything I believe and so did you. Like it's just part of what we do as humans. I mean, when you're trying to convince your family to eat the meal you just made for them, how do you do that? What are your other tools you're using in other places to help your people understand what matters to you?

**Sandy:** Right. I think one thing I've really learned is like I have to role model the behavior I expect another. So if I want people to have fun and take time to have fun, because I know it's good for their overall mental health and life, then I kind of have to be an example of that. So I think that's kind of like my go to. But I am not always fun at work. I don't like it. I want to take time for fun at work, too. So that's where I'm struggling for sure.

**Annie:** I think you're exactly right, that the way we impact others the most is how we live more than what we say. And the annoying part of that for you and I when we're talking about fun is no one wants to be the fun trailblazer because that usually means you're alone. And that's the case for like every kind of Trailblazer, is the one who goes first usually goes alone for a while.

So (a) I'm sorry that that's the truth, and I'm sorry that that is your experience, because I wish that wasn't it. I wish that wasn't it. But I'm very interested in your thoughts about what you have to do to convince yourself particularly at work. Do you feel like there was a time in your job that was easier to have fun than it is now?

**Sandy:** I don't know. I don't know. I've been doing my job for 25 years. So I do have to say it probably has gotten less fun the more I've done it because even though you think the longer you do something, the easier it becomes, that is so not the case in education with high schoolers.

**Annie:** No.

**Sandy:** No. So I do think maybe there's less time for fun or I just don't carve it out. Maybe I just carved it out better when I was younger. So that's just something I want to do for my team, for my students, you know, for my whole school. I just want to make sure that we take time to have fun. Because it really is an important part of being balanced, you know?

**Annie:** I want to release you from a couple of things. I don't think that it is you that is the reason your job is less fun. I think it's very fair to say that educating high schoolers now versus 25 years ago when you started is a very different job.

**Sandy:** For sure.

**Annie:** Counseling high schoolers and what they are experiencing and the depth of what comes against them is so different than 25 years ago. So in the midst of you trying to sort this out, I also want to release you and remind you that it sounds to me like you're doing the thing they always used to tell us to do and teaching of you don't teach one year 30 times, you teach 30 years.

**Sandy:** Yeah, yeah. That's good.

**Annie:** And it sounds like you've done that. It sounds like you haven't done one year 25 times, you've done 25 years and you've grown and changed with the job. But I also love that you want to model fun as part of a busy life that could have some really hard parts to it.

What I'm wondering about is, I wonder if there is a small, fun thing you can do every day, versus trying to be like, "Hey, I'm the fun counselor, everybody. Come over here."

**Sandy:** Well, I definitely don't have that reputation, so I'm definitely not the funnest. It just comes-

**Annie:** Right, right. I think there's a lot to be said. The veteran teachers were the ones I loved learning from because I was like, "Man, the girl next door has only been doing this for five more minutes than me. But the one down the hall for me taught me. So I'd love that."

So I just wonder if there's like a daily thing, even if it's... When I taught school on Fridays, I always put a joke on the board. I taught fourth and fifth grade. So on Fridays I would write a joke on the board. The joke and the punch line were on the board. And we went through every Friday why the joke was funny. Because I was like, in fifth grade, I'm not teaching them to read. They've got all the letters down. I can help them be like good people. And to me, good people are funny. So I was like, "Let's talk about this joke."

I'm thinking through like... These are silly examples, but maybe they will spark the real answer for you. But I mean, it is a candy jar that every piece of candy has a question attached to it. And before the student can leave with the candy, they have to answer the question. But the question is like, what's your favorite snack? Which game are you not going to miss this weekend? If you could trade your life for one day with any celebrity, who would you trade with? I mean, I just wonder if there is some sort of...

Because the thing about fun is it's relational and vulnerable. And if you can figure out a way to use it to help grow relationship and vulnerability, that's what the younger teachers and younger counselors really need to see modeled is what you naturally know how to do. And that's how people connect with each other.

**Sandy:** Yeah, for sure.

**Annie:** And even on your team, I wonder if there's... how many of y'all are on your team? Are you in charge of the team?

**Sandy:** I am. That also impacts the fun factor. I know.

**Annie:** 100%. Listen, you're talking to the one who's in charge of a team over here too.

**Sandy:** I know. I know.

**Annie:** That's the fun factor, unfortunately.

**Sandy:** I know. I know. Sometimes you're just kind of feel like you're trying to wrestle up cats. But yes, I am in charge of the team and we are six counselors for about 2,100 students.

**Annie:** Good gravy, Sandie. That is a lot. If you can see Ashley, Ashley's head is just shaking.

**Ashley:** I used to teach high school and... So yeah, I am feeling with you.

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah. Sandie, one of the things—I'm sure you already do this, but I'm just gonna say out loud, what's coming to my head—is I think you asked God for a battle plan for fun this year.

**Sandy:** I think that's an awesome idea.

**Annie:** Because I just think there may be something... When you go back and listen to this episode, you will hear I haven't said this to anyone else. So that's kind of why I'm trusting it is like I think there's an actual battle plan that's going to shift something at your school.

And when I mean battle plan, I'm picturing like a map in front of you that God goes like, "Here's the journey we're gonna go on this year." And it could be a candy jar. It could be a joke on the board. It could be that, you know, you and the other six

counselors are going on a guacamole journey this year and you are going to find the best guacamole in your area no matter what.

Another thing I did. My first school I taught at, we were down the street from the Mayfield Dairy, which... What part of the country do you live in Sandie?

**Sandy:** Oh, I know Mayfield ice cream.

**Annie:** Okay, good.

**Sandy:** I live in South Florida.

**Annie:** Okay. So Mayfield ice cream. So we worked down the street. And on Fridays, there was like a train of teachers that as soon as that last bus left, we all went in. And it was only 20 minutes. But we would go and get one scoop of ice cream on a cone and then everybody would go home.

To me it's one of the things that bonded me with these other teachers because we're all like, "Does anybody need some cookies and cream at the end of this week?" So I just wonder if there's something that... Because you know this from the podcast and from our life together that simple fun can swing open huge doors.

**Sandy:** I completely agree.

**Annie:** I wonder if there's something simple. And because it's you who has to talk yourself into it first and you have to be the leader, you've got to figure out what sounds fun to you. So does guacamole sound fun to you? Or does Margarita sound fun to you? Or does ice cream? Or does a soccer game? I don't know. But there's something that you go, "Man, I don't mind committing this school year to pursuing this section of fun for my team and with my team.

**Sandy:** I love it.

**Annie:** Because I think you're right, it will spill into the kids. If the counselors cared, it will spill out to the kids.

**Sandy:** Yeah. And we just have a lot of change going on in our school this year. We have a new principal. We're changing the way we're serving our students. So I think it's great opportunity to infuse fun for sure.

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah. And when you retire in another 100 years, because I promise they're not going to let you go anytime soon because you sound like you're the best at your

job, it is okay if when we retire from our job, if someone doesn't go, "She was the fun one."

Because when you bring fun, what they're actually gonna say about you is, "Sandie..." I won't say your last name because I don't want to like put you on blast in front of everybody. "...but Miss Sandie," they will say, "she really loved us. She really saw us. I know this is weird but every time I took a piece of candy, I had to tell her. I had to answer a question, but like she listened. They're not gonna go, "She was the fun one who, at the school carnival, let me throw a pie at her face." No one remembers that teacher.

And I was that teacher, so I can say that. I was always the one that was in the dunk tank. They were like, "She's 23. She's not married, put her in the dunk tank." I was always the one who had to do the stupid stuff because I was new.

So that's not what they remember. They remember the ones who saw them and loved them. And by choosing fun as the vehicle to get you there, you're gonna do that for those kids and those teachers this year.

**Sandy:** Yeah, that's awesome. Thank you for that encouragement. I appreciate that so much.

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh, well-

**Sandy:** And I definitely don't pray about my job enough. So that's a really good reminder to do that.

**Annie:** I don't know that I do either, Sandie. It's one of the reasons... I think you may have heard me talk about this before. But hanging on my wall in the room where I read most mornings is literally at my eye level on the wall across the room is everybody's name who comes to this office because otherwise I would never think to pray. And I want to pray for my job a lot.

This year I want the wisdom and courage. I want a lot of wisdom and courage. So I'm asking God for that for us. So I will ask Him for that for you, too.

**Sandy:** That's awesome.

**Annie:** So, Sandie, thanks for making time to do this.

**Sandy:** No problem. It was fun. Thank you.



**Annie:** I hope you have a great school Year. I hope at the end of the year, will you circle back with us so we can kind of hear? Even if you just have one fun day, I'll feel like it's a big win for all of us.

**Sandy:** I would love to do that. I'll keep you guys updated.

**Annie:** Yeah, please do.

**[00:48:03] <music>**

**Annie:** Megan, I'm so glad you're here. Welcome to That Sounds Fun.

**Megan:** Thanks for having me. So fun.

**Annie:** Tell me where you live.

**Megan:** I'm outside of Chicago. Wheaton, Illinois.

**Annie:** Oh, I love Wheaton. It's a beautiful part of the world. Well done. I love it there. I've gotten to come up to Wheaton Bible a couple of times.

**Megan:** That's right at my neck of the woods.

**Annie:** I did a Christmas thing there. Anyway, I love that part of the world. Well done. I'm good picking on where you live. So you have a question for fun coaching because pretty much your self-proclaimed bad and having fun.

**Megan:** That's it.

**Annie:** Okay, tell me more.

**Megan:** My main question is why is fun important? Like, I'm so busy with work. I have so much going on all the time. My husband says fun is the main part of life, he's in an Enneagram seven, but I am not built that way. So my main question is, why is fun important?

**Annie:** I'm gonna push back a question to you. Why do you think it's not important?

**Megan:** I like productivity. And fun doesn't feel like it's moving the needle with anything.

**Annie:** Well, this is going to be a... The thing our friends listening don't know is we already had like a five-minute conversation before we started. So I'm just like jumping in

with you a little more aggressively because we're already friends. Megan, what is the fear if you're not producing?

**Megan:** Oh, good question. That's a really good question. What is the fear if I'm not producing? That I'll fall behind maybe.

**Annie:** Maybe. I think it's a question worth sitting and thinking with a little bit. Because a lot of times the reason we don't want to have fun is also the reason we don't rest, is also the reason we don't turn down opportunities that we probably really don't have time or energy or bandwidth for, is because there's something we're afraid of losing or not getting.

So I kind of wonder if it's not that... Don't think you and your husband are these polar opposites about fun where he's like all in and you're all out. I think you just have different fears.

**Megan:** For sure. That's probably so spot on.

**Annie:** Right. I mean, it's one of the things we talk about a lot when we talk about fun is that it's vulnerable. My wonder is, is there something about the expert you've become at your job and everything you can produce that there's like a, "I'm not an expert at fun, and therefore I might as well not even give it a go"?

**Megan:** Yeah. That is hitting close to home.

**Annie:** You're like, "Downs, get out of my business."

**Megan:** This Enneagram conversation just really open things up.

**Annie:** Sorry. Sorry.

**Megan:** I'm just kidding.

**Annie:** Before we started, you said that your husband most identifies as an Enneagram seven.

**Megan:** Yes.

**Annie:** And you most identify as a what?

**Megan:** An Enneagram six?

**Annie:** And we have a lot of friends who wrote in doing these questions that are sixes and ones that are saying, "I don't know how to do this if I'm not going to do it right. And I don't know how to do this if I'm not going to do it in a way that is going to make sure nothing goes wrong."

Those are kind of the two points of view is a lot of times people who identify as a one are the ones who are going to say, "Give me the recipe and I'll follow it." And my friends who identify most closely with Enneagram six are gonna say, "There's 18 ways this could go wrong. Just don't let me do one of those."

**Megan:** Yes, it's very overwhelming when I think about fun.

**Annie:** So let me help you with this. I'm just gonna give you a picture to think about. I think a lot of times people think of fun as a lake and you're trying to go fishing. And there's a right spot and you don't want to get your hook stuck on the bottom. "And how are we ever going to find the fish? And am I standing where I should stand? Should I move over here?"

I actually would tell you fun is more like a river than it is a lake. If you think of it more like, "can we just get in here and adjust as we go?" versus "this is a stagnant pool of water that I've got to sort out correctly."

**Megan:** Okay. Yeah, I love that visual.

**Annie:** It helps me a lot because I think, Okay, it is... Currently I'm working on a cross-stitching project. You know I love cross stitching. It's like my favorite hobby. So I'm doing the three cities that I've lived in. I'm doing the skyline. So I finished Nashville. I'm working on Edinburgh, Scotland, and then I'll do Atlanta.

Well, one of the things I've done is I've done it on black background instead of white. And it's actually really hard because the holes are really small. I feel like I need special glasses. It is not working for me.

So my options are: if this is a lake, and it is fish or don't fish, I'm gonna quit. If the only option is this, I'm out. But it's not a lake, it's a river. And I get to go okay, "If this isn't working for me, I can keep floating down this river and I can just switch back to white background for the next project. Does that make sense to you?"

**Megan:** Yeah. I kind of thought fun was like you have this still lake and you have to do a cannonball right in the middle of it. So that feels very overwhelming and intimidating. So the river thing makes it a lot more approachable.

**Annie:** It's a river, sister. It's a river. And the good thing about a river is if you need to pull over and take a break, it gets more shallow. But the deepest part and the coolest part and the part that people enjoy the most and that actually moves the fastest is the middle. So that's just our goal is to end up in the middle of the river whichever way the river is going.

I had some way to teach that. When I was in college, this friend of mine named Tammy came and taught that to our college ministry but talked about like your life calling is not a lake, it's a river.

**Megan:** Oh, wow.

**Annie:** Yeah. Because she was like, "Just get in. You're not going to miss what God has for you. Just get in and get going." And that picture has stuck with me for a long time and helped me to like this is... the pressure is off a little bit. This isn't a cannonball that has to go to the very middle. Get on pizza float and head down and see what happens. Tell me what kind of hobbies do you and your husband... do y'all share any hobbies?

**Megan:** Music. We love music. He's a worship pastor actually.

**Annie:** Awesome.

**Megan:** So we love all kinds of music.

**Annie:** What worship leader are you dying for me to have on the podcast? Is there anybody I haven't had that you're like, "Please bring this person on"?

**Megan:** Maybe Andi Rozier.

**Annie:** I don't know his name.

**Megan:** Do you know him?

**Annie:** No. I'm writing it down right now.

**Megan:** I just met him the other day. He just seems like the coolest guy. He's incredible.

**Annie:** Dream concert for you and your husband. What's like the concert? This is a cannonball question instead of a river question. I'm sorry. It's terrible.

**Megan:** I love this question though.

**Annie:** Okay, what is it? What's the shot?

**Megan:** So we went to the Jay Z concert and that was just crazy. It's like so many people and it's kind of wild. Just really fun.

**Annie:** Did he play in Chicago?

**Megan:** He did. Yeah, the United Center.

**Annie:** Oh, that's so fun. I kind of have a dream. I've never seen him live. But after the halftime show in January, I was like, I need to see all these like 90s rappers. I need to see their show.

**Megan:** Oh, my gosh.

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh. That was so fun.

**Megan:** I was standing up. That was the most fun.

**Annie:** I sang every word. I sang every word. I was like, "This is when you know where middle-aged Megan is when we're like that halftime show, spot on. Every college student was like, "I don't know what's happening." And all of us were like, "Your dreams are coming true is what's happening."

**Megan:** Best music ever.

**Annie:** Best music ever. It was so good.

**Megan:** It was so good.

**Annie:** It was so good. All right. Well, listen, here's my challenge to you. I just would love... You know I don't like to shoot people. But I just would love for you and your Enneagram seven husband to kind of have some rivers versus cannonball in the lake conversations and just kind of see what would it look like, even with music as a hobby like, "Hey, here's some things that I'd like to try."

I think it'll serve you in your heart to dig into the fear of doing this wrong. And see if it releases you. And I think it's worth your husband... I mean, the thing Enneagram sevens have to dig into is what's our fear if it's not fun.

**Megan:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

**Annie:** That's a real-

**Megan:** I'll have to tell him you said that.

**Annie:** Girl, it is. Yes, tell him. Say, "Annie said you got to face the fear of what happens if this isn't fun." Megan, thanks for doing this today. I really appreciate it.

**Megan:** Thank you so much. Appreciate your time. That was so helpful.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh, it's so fun. I love getting to do it.

**[00:56:56] <music>**

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Just interrupting one more time to tell you about another one of our amazing partners, [KiwiCo](#). You know, as a former teacher, that I love learning. There's a lot to be said about what you can learn in the space and pace that summer break provides, right?

But it can be tough to keep coming up with new experiences or adventures to help your kids have the #TSFbestsummerever. When your ideas start to run out, which may be happening at this point, let KiwiCo come to your rescue.

KiwiCo delivers monthly crates full of science and art projects perfect for kids of all ages who want to keep their imaginations active all summer long, and maybe take a break from the computer and phone screens. Build stomp rockets, fly a kite you created yourself, or explore the fascinating science of trees.

Every month brings a new adventure in science and art. My MiniBFF Audrey who I love, what's up Audrey, she created a felt succulent garden from a Kiwi crate just a couple of weeks ago and sent me a picture of it, y'all. It was so cute. It was so cool.

These strips of felt that she had rolled and decorated and arranged into this little garden box and her favorite part was like my favorite part of hearing about it was she did it all by herself and she was really proud of that.

You can help the kids in your life become more innovative and creative, building their confidence along with their knowledge and problem-solving skills. Seriously, they won't believe what they can build and accomplish with KiwiCo. I'm sure all of you parents have hit the point in the summer when it can be hard to keep your kids busy and challenged. And y'all that is okay. Let KiwiCo do the legwork for you.

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Now back to finish up this fun coaching Q&A.

**[01:00:08] <music>**

**Annie:** Hi Ashley. Welcome to That Sounds Fun.

**Ashley:** Hi. Thank you.

**Annie:** I'm so glad you're here. Okay. Tell me where you live.

**Ashley:** I live in Hagerstown, Maryland. It's about an hour from Baltimore in DC.

**Annie:** Oh, one hour from Baltimore in DC. So when it comes to baseball, are you a baseball fan?

**Ashley:** Ah, Orioles by default but-

**Annie:** Yeah, that's what I was wondering if you are Orioles or Nats. I didn't know which one you are.

**Ashley:** Orioles and Ravens in Baltimore.

**Annie:** And Ravens. Fair. Very fair. I support that. Okay, you have a really vulnerable and generous question that you submitted for fun coaching. So (a) thank you for doing this, and (b) will you ask us your question?

**Ashley:** Sure. So I lost my mom unexpectedly this January. And as a result of that, or I guess in the wake of that, I've started to create a bucket list of sorts of things that either she loved or that we wanted to do together that I could do in her memory over the course of this year just moving forward.

And while these things are meant to be fun, I anticipate that they also may come with pain and grief. So I wanted to ask you if you had any advice on how to go about this in a way that is fun and special, but still honoring and creating space for that grieving process. And I guess a little bit of context, I also have a younger brother and sister who I'll be bringing along with me in that.

**Annie:** For starters, I'm so sorry. It was never meant to be like this. You know, it's not what God intended from the start. So I am really, really sorry. One of the things I like to consider with grief is it only happens once. You will never have to feel this exact same thing again. So that helps me a little bit.

For starters, I think this idea is brilliant. I think honoring someone you love that is no longer with us by doing the things y'all would have done together is such an interesting and smart idea. For our friends listening, I think this is great if someone has died. I don't think it's great if it's a breakup. If it's a friendship breakup or a romantic breakup, I don't think there's a lot of wisdom and like, "Let's make a list of everything we were gonna do together and I'll go do it." I don't think that works. But I do think when it's someone that is no longer with us, it makes a lot of sense.

I think you already know what is true. I think even your question is saying, "I recognize this is not going to be all fun and I recognize this isn't going to be all pain." I submit to you that I think possibly the freedom you need to give yourself is



not the freedom to grieve in the middle of the fun but the freedom to have fun in the middle of the grief.

**Ashley:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Can you give us a couple of examples of what's on the list?

**Ashley:** Yeah. So one is a Ravens game. She was a big Ravens fan. My brother is as well. So kind of doing that with him. And then smaller things. Like she loved baking Christmas cookies. So doing that this year, or going to the fair in the area in the fall. So things like that that I knew she loved and were part of her rhythm.

**Annie:** I just did Best Summer Ever where I listed out a bunch of things I want to do this summer. And part of the reason I did that is because our family... and there's some close things to me that are really tragic and sad that we knew would happen this summer, some loss. So I wanted to hold both at the same time.

So I'll tell you one of the things I'm doing with my list that is similar to your bucket list, is I'm making a chapbook have the pictures of everything from my Best Summer Ever, because I want to have this memory. And one of the pictures is going to be the checked off list.

And some of my things haven't happened, one of the things got canceled because of family things and a new thing popped up. So just last night, I put a piece of tape over the original thing and wrote the new thing. So I'm making a chapbook out of that. So I think having that hand memory in hand will be part of me remembering the good of the season.

So as you're starting this and really getting into it, I would say make a list you can see that's really visible for you and your brother and your sister, whether you do that online or whether you do that in your house. I would have a list you can see, a list that they can contribute to which I'm sure you have but I'm just saying that out loud for all of our friends listening.

If it's three of y'all involved, there's three sets of memories here. And check them off. And do them and trust what you feel. You've probably heard me say this before, but your feelings are fine. They can ride, don't let them drive. Don't let them be the boss of you. But everything the three of y'all feel over the next year is really fair and absolutely allowed: from laughter to anger and everything in the middle. And I don't even think those are the polar opposites. But you know what I mean.

I think you're doing it by saying out loud to yourself, there's going to be grief in this joy and there is going to be joy in this grief. And holding both of those really, really well. It sounds like you're already doing it. I'm not bossing you to do it. It sounds like you are doing it.

Tell me about the Christmas cookies. What are they like? Are they like breaking bake, which is fine? Or is it like this recipe? There's this one recipe in my hometown that no one's allowed to share, and it is like 18 steps. Like where does mom's cookies fall on that scale?

**Ashley:** More on the homemade scale or side? It's kind of funny because I notoriously disliked the cookie she used to make.

**Annie:** Perfect.

**Ashley:** But I gotta do it.

**Annie:** Gotta do it. Ashley, that is the best part of the story is you're like, "I don't even like these things and I will make them this year." And then you know what the freedom is? You don't ever have to make them again if you don't want to. Right?

**Ashley:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Are you married?

**Ashley:** I am, yeah.

**Annie:** Do y'all have kids?

**Ashley:** We have a one-year-old.

**Annie:** Okay. So you and your one-year-old never has to taste them if you don't want them to. Right?

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

**Annie:** They don't have to be a part, but they're memory for you. So my other thought is, now that you are the mom, after this year or in tandem with this year, do you build your bucket list for you and your kids? And you go, "Here are the cookies I actually... My mom made cookies, they were gross. I am going to make cookies that are good, and this is part of my tradition with you." So I wonder if there's a gospel vision for you of what it looks like to be the daughter and the mom in this story.

**Ashley:** Yeah.

**Annie:** That's fun. Okay. What are the cookies that are glo... Well, they're not gross. You just don't love them.

**Ashley:** They're not gross. They are the peanut butter ones with the Hershey kiss.

**Annie:** Oh, right.

**Ashley:** They're sort of fun.

**Annie:** Right, right. Listen, I'm with you. Now, give me those peanut butter ones with a Reese cup and I'm considering it.

**Ashley:** A little better.

**Annie:** I'm with you. I'm with you. Ashley, every time I think of you this year... Our friends can't see you, but you have beautiful red hair. When I see red hair, which is one of my nephew's has red hair, I will think of you and I will just ask God to meet y'all. That's the beauty of fun is that you think you're just pursuing something easy and He can meet you, you know?

**Ashley:** Yeah. Thank you so much.

**Annie:** Oh, girl, of course. Thank you for doing this. I really appreciate it. That's so many of us. Everyone has lost this year in some way or another, right?

**Ashley:** Yeah.

**Annie:** And so how to hold these both is hard to sort. You're a hero.

[01:07:57] <music>

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh, Ash, how sweet are those girls?

**Ashley:** Amazing.

**Annie:** That was really fun. All five of those were so different. Didn't you think so?

**Ashley:** Yeah. I loved the depth of insight, but the variety too.

- Annie:** Yeah, yeah. As I was talking with each of them, I just thought, Man, each of these is helping me in a different way.
- Ashley:** For sure.
- Annie:** I feel helped by their... Because the fun thing about doing fun coaching is it is very little about telling people what they don't know. It's reflecting back to them what they're saying.
- Ashley:** Right. Yeah.
- Annie:** So I'm like, "Oh, man, y'all got it. That was five of the lots of questions people submitted ahead of time. We've gone through the questions. Are there big themes? Can we try to answer groups of questions that came in?"
- Ashley:** Yes, there certainly are. So I've pulled a few of those. Here's a question for you. "How do you overcome the to-do list, the inner critic, the feeling of I have to earn fun?"
- Annie:** Well, I mean, you don't have to earn sleep and you don't have to earn food and you don't have to earn friendship. Now, you have to be healthy in those things-
- Ashley:** Sure.
- Annie:** ...for them to go well, but you don't have to earn them. They are your life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Is that it?
- Ashley:** Yeah.
- Annie:** I mean, there are some rights you have as an actual person. And one of those is to stay healthy, is to have some release and some fun and some joy in your life. So you don't have to earn it. You don't have to earn it. You will enjoy it most if you use it in a healthy way and make it a healthy part of your life. But that is true about sleep. That is true about food. That you don't have to earn it but it is best experienced in a healthy way.
- Ashley:** Right.
- Annie:** So I would say as far as your to-do list and getting through all the things, for the rest of our lives, what is promised in the curse in Genesis is we will have toiling and work. Your to-do list is actually never going to be finished. I have an app where I do my to-do list and It is never empty.

**Ashley:** Right.

**Annie:** So instead of waiting for your to-do list to finish, put fun on it and make it a regular cyclical rhythm.

**Ashley:** I love that. I love that. And then you still get to check it off.

**Annie:** That's right. You still get your list up?

**Ashley:** But you've benefited from it in a different way than maybe some of the other checkboxes?

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

**Ashley:** Okay. So what about finding fun when there are constraints? Let me list some of the constraints that our friends pointed out. What about when there's a budget limit? How do you do fun on the cheap? What about physical or health considerations?

One of our friends said she couldn't swim anymore because of that injury. So when my physical body can't do what I wish it could, how do I find fun in the midst of that? Or just I'm new to town, I don't know people. How do I find fun when my circle is limited as far as the people?

**Annie:** So the first thing that has come into my mind is the all the different currencies we use in our lives. Time is a currency. Money is a currency. Our health is a currency. Everything costs us something, right? So even putting fun in your calendar is going to cost you time. You're gonna have to exert your body in some way most likely. You're going to have to use money in some of them.

So one thing is whatever the thing is that you want to do, look at the currency that you don't have to do it. So you want to see the world but you don't have unlimited financial or time currencies.

**Ashley:** Right.

**Annie:** Right? So what does it look like to shrink that down in a different way? Something that happens here is a lot of times there's museums that will bring in different-

**Ashley:** Like exhibit.

**Annie:** Exhibits. So I don't have to fly anywhere but I can see art from Paris. Is it the same as sitting in a Paris cafe? It is not. But is it giving me a taste of the bigger experience I want? Because we want to go to Paris, but what we really want is the feeling you feel when you're standing in front of the Mona Lisa.

**Ashley:** Right.

**Annie:** Okay, so can we get a taste of that standing in front of a Monet that has come to our town? So pay attention to the constraint that you have and use it to your advantage.

**Ashley:** Love that.

**Annie:** So your health constraints, so whether it is... I mean, I got COVID over my break, which really messed up my plans for how I wanted to spend my time on this summer Sabbath. What did I get to do? Well, I got to go through all my bookshelves and pull out the ones that I'm going to take to our local booksellers and resale. That's not like the most fun, but it's something I've been wanting to do is shrink up my bookshelf. So I got to do that. I really got a lot done in my cross stitch. I really advanced.

**Ashley:** Well done.

**Annie:** Because not only was I constrained by ability because I was sick, I was constrained by the rules of how sickness work. So I was stuck in my house. And I was constrained by financial because I just didn't want to use my money to do things in my... You know, I have Disney plus, and I have my cross stitch.

So I think there's a way for whether it's time or money or your health that you can go, "Hey, I recognize there's a limitation here," because there's a limitation for everyone. "I recognize there's a limitation here. I will do my best to find a way around it." You know?

**Ashley:** Yeah.

**Annie:** But it's true for everyone. Your limitation that is keeping you from having the fun you want to have, there is someone else who has a limitation that's keeping them from the fun too.

I mean, you know, there's a lot of opportunity online to connect with people who are experiencing what you're experiencing, you know, whatever your limitation is. Whether it's how do we have fun on the cheap or we're a busy family, how do we

find fun, or I am in a group online of people who have the same illness I have? And can we talk about how we have fun in that group?"

**Ashley:** That's brilliant. You've touched on this in a couple of the conversations that you had earlier, but how do you find fun when you're dealing with some of the heavier or more difficult emotions or conditions, dealing with depression or anxiety or grief?

**Annie:** I've sat in all of those at one point or another. It is really hard. Pulling yourself up by your bootstraps is like the dumbest to me. I just think like, no, there are times we cannot do that.

**Ashley:** Sure.

**Annie:** I think getting your community involved matters, even if that's one person. If that's one person that you can pick up your phone and call and say, "Hey, I am having a super hard day. I don't want to leave my house. Can we go on a walk? Will you meet me at Sonic and we can get slushies? And then I'll go back home?" or "I think I should leave my house for 40 minutes today. Do you have an idea?" Right?

So I think it's getting other people. Pulling yourself up by your bootstraps is an image that actually doesn't work. But someone else pulling you up is an image that I can see in my head. I can't lift myself off the ground.

**Ashley:** But you can reach a hand up to a hand that is reaching out to you.

**Annie:** Yes, yes. So I think you need to invite somebody in.

**Ashley:** Okay. I love that. This is an interesting question. I think we'll wrap up with this one.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Ashley:** But I love that it bridges between two of the topics that you're most passionate about. But what about when you're scared to reach out for fun if it feels vulnerable, if you feel alone? How do you muster up the bravery to have fun when you're scared?

**Annie:** When courage and fun meet?

**Ashley:** Mm-hmm.

**Annie:** You know I love these two things.

**Ashley:** I know you do.

**Annie:** You're right.

**Annie:** I think one begets the other.

**Ashley:** Okay. I think if you will choose fun and step toward it, you will feel braver. Kind of a nature of courage is... And for our friends listening that may not know this, we have a devotional like this, like *Chase the Fun*, called *100 Days to Brave* that is also 100 days, that is also about pursuing courage. So that came out in 2017.

So I've spent five years in the world of bravery and courage. It does not mean I'm a professional. It just means that I am an expert at the information, if not an expert in the action.

But what is true about courage is it is kind of like a snowball rolling down a hill. But you have to get started. And fun could be the catalyst. I do not like roller coasters very much. I am scared of them. I don't think they're incredibly fun. Also, the thing I say to myself a lot is I am not going to let fear make me miss once in a lifetime opportunity. So I get to decide if it's once in a lifetime.

**Ashley:** For sure.

**Annie:** For example, last week, I was at a waterpark with a family that I love—the Barnes. Everybody knows Dave and Annie Barnes. So the Barnes and I were at a waterpark. And the boys said, "Annie, will you go down..." Not Dave. The children. Said, Annie, will you go down waterslides with us?" And I am not a huge water slide fan. I thought, "This may be once in a lifetime with these kids."

**Ashley:** Sure.

**Annie:** And I want to say, Yes, it will be fun and it is scary to me. So what I said is... there were two water slides: a green and a yellow. And I said, "I will do one, you pick which one we're doing."

**Ashley:** Nice.

**Annie:** Right. So what I was able to do is kind of say... In my head, I said, "I'm scared of this." What matters more to me is the experience than my fear. No, I will not get hurt here. My fears are pretty irrational. My fears are that I'm gonna go too fast because I'm bigger than the kids. So I'm afraid of water slides because I don't like how fast you end up going. And it triggers my thoughts about my body.



**Ashley:** Yes. Yeah.

**Annie:** So I didn't have to explain all that to a ten-year-old and a five-year-old.

**Ashley:** But that's what you're walking with in your mind.

**Annie:** That's in my head because I'm going like, "No, I don't want to do this because I go so fast and it triggers all these thoughts about you're going fast because of your body." So what I do say to them is like, "Hey, I don't love water slides but I love you, and I love fun things, and I want to do this with you."

So I did it, and we laughed. It was super fun. And we went down the green one, and then I ended up going down the yellow one. And I ended up doing them both.

**Ashley:** You're right about one begetting the other, and then courage begets more courage, just like fun begets more fun.

**Annie:** Right.

**Ashley:** When you started telling that story, I was like, "I wonder if she ends up, based on the experience of the first one, doing the second?" I'm so glad you did.

**Annie:** Totally. We did.

**Ashley:** How have you-

**Annie:** And then they said, "Come and do it again," and I said, "No."

**Ashley:** No.

**Annie:** "I did the yellow. I did the green. Now we're done. That is it." To me, one of the things we get to do when it comes to fun and courage is let them lead each other. Sometimes the fun thing is going to walk you toward vulnerability or connectivity in a way that's going to require courage. The fun will be the engine, and the courage will be the cars that come along with the train.

There are other times where you will be brave and end up having fun. So if you will go after one, the other usually is a car connected to that engine.

**Ashley:** So as we wrap up this episode, celebrating the release of *Chase the Fun*, I'll ask the question that you always ask. Is there anything we didn't talk about that you want to talk about?

**Annie:** You know, the thing about these 100 Day devotionals is this is deeply true for *100 Days to Brave*, and I believe it's going to be true for *Chase the Fun* that's also 100 days, is that anything you do for 100 days changes your life. How you eat, if you go on a walk, if you decide to read the Bible for 100 days, if you call someone for 100 days, if you do this devotional.

I mean nobody's perfect. You know, I'm doing John Eldridge's 30 day to resilience on the Pause app. And I started the beginning of June and I am not done yet. The math is it took me more than 30 days. So if it takes you more than 100 days, fine. But just don't quit.

So that would be my encouragement is if you start, don't stop. Even if you miss a day here or miss a day there, they're very short each day. Some of them are going to feel very fluffy to you. And then the person who lives next door to you is going to read that same one, and it's going to matter to them deeply.

**Ashley:** Right.

**Annie:** So pay attention to the ones that matter to you deeply and enjoy the ones that are fluffier for you. At the end of the book, I look forward to what happens in 100 days. So if you start *Chase the Fun* with us on August 15, we will end on Tuesday, November 22nd, which is very interesting, because it's right before advents-

**Ashley:** And Thanksgiving.

**Annie:** And Thanksgiving. And we have some fun things planned for that.

**Ashley:** Yes, we do.

**Annie:** So we will finish the year with you. So we will not abandon you at day 100. We have something fun coming for the last part of the year too. So if you start with us and you go every day and just read a little bit every day, I will be so interested to hear from people in November and December about what hobbies they've picked back up, what relationships have rekindled, what surprising joy and sadness have come along, how different their lives might be. It'll be really fun to hear in the end of the year.

And I know I said at the beginning, but thank you again for making this book a reality. I was unable to finish it, and you were able to help me finish it. So thank you very, very much.

**Ashley:** Thanks for inviting me in.

**Annie:** I really appreciate.

**Ashley:** It was so fun.

**Annie:** It was so fun.

[01:21:32] <music>

**Outro:** You guys, weren't they the best? What a joy! And don't you love when Ashley is on the pod? Me too. What a great episode! What a great way to jump back into the second half of the year and get things rolling, y'all. I'm glad to be back. I'm glad that we're back. I'm glad you're back.

And listen, I hope you'll grab a copy of *Chase the Fun*. It is out tomorrow. Wherever you love to buy books, jump in with a big group of us that'll be going through it together starting on August 15. You sign up at the link in the show notes below to join us and tag me when you get your book in the mail or when you pick it up from Target or Walmart. It is my favorite thing seeing them in your hands.

And I'm always gonna encourage you to tell our guests how thankful we are for them. But since I'm not going to put our friends from today on blast on Instagram, will you just come to the comments on my post about this episode and throw a thank you party for them. Let them know how grateful you are for their courage and vulnerability and what you learned about fun that you want to add to your own life. I think it'd be really, really kind.

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

So today what sounds fun to me, well, y'all know what I always say to our author friends when they are on the show—you celebrate the night before the book comes out. So that's what I'm doing tonight. I'm celebrating that the work is done that we put our hands to, that we felt God invited us to. And the book is out and now it is

not just mine anymore. It is ours tomorrow. So I am celebrating tonight. 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 fellow author who has a book launching on August 2nd, Ainsley Britton. You guys have a great week. We'll see you Thursday.