

[00:00:00] <music>

Annie: Hi Friends! Happy Tuesday. Yes, Tuesday. Welcome to a surprise drop-in episode That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm really happy to be here with you today. We've got a great show. You've already read the title. You already know what's happening. I can't believe it either, you guys.

But before we dive into this fun little announcement we have to share today, I want to tell you about one of our amazing partners, the Extraordinary Women's Conference. Okay, so the most fun thing about the Extraordinary Women's Conference October 7th and 8th in Lynchburg, Virginia is that I get to be there. I can't wait. With Chonda Pierce, Shannon Bream, Margaret Feinberg, Alli Worthington, I'm sorry, all my best friends, Julie Clinton, and our guy, Phil Wickham. You guys, Phil, and I are already stoked to be at the same event. So many amazing friends.

The only thing that can make it more fun is if you join us too. If you live within a few hours of Lynchburg, Virginia, or if you're due for a little road trip, get your tickets now because I have it on good authority that they will sell out. The theme this year is Pursuing an Unfailing God. I know. It's going to be so good. I cannot wait.

Get that group text going with your friends and make your plans so that you can buy your tickets today. Tickets are only \$69. And if you can't join us in person, the Extraordinary Women team is making it possible to attend via live stream with your church or small group for only \$129. That's less than the price of two tickets.

If you choose to attend virtually, you have access to the conference for 14 days. So even if you're not able to watch it live, you will still be able to watch it anytime over the next two weeks.

With nearly 5,000 extraordinary women already registered, this is shaping up to be an event you do not want to miss. Me either. Again, I hope you'll join me and some of my favorite friends of the Extraordinary Women's Conference coming up on October 7th and 8th.

To register simply go to ewomen.net. That's ewomen.net to register. And you can, of course, find that link in the show notes if you need it.

And also if you don't want to know where I'm speaking this fall or any even into next year, you can just go to anniefdowns.com and all the information is there of where I'll be speaking.

The surprise Tuesday party in your podcast feed is to let you know the latest and greatest news happening at the That Sounds Fun Network. If you're like Annie, what does a podcast network even do? I'll tell you.

We like to think of a network as an amusement park of five guests like each of the podcast is a different ride or attraction. There's something for everyone. Snack stands, wild roller coasters, a carousel, a train, maybe even a water ride. But if you like one of the rides, there's a good chance you'll like the others too.

There's Imagine Faith Talk with Kevin Olusola and Donovan Dee Donell, or The Best of You with Dr. Alison Cook, Where We Are with Michael and Melissa Wear and many more. Be sure to check out thatsoundsfunnetwork.com to see all the rides in this amusement park.

We love having this group of like-minded hosts with a wide variety of passions in areas of expertise as part of the network. And then we get to help with the behind-the-scenes stuff like strategy and advertising and building community so they never feel like they're doing this podcast journey on their own.

Well, drumroll please because the newest podcast—I am smiling from ear to ear—to join the That Sounds Fun Network is none other than the Raising Boys and Girls Podcast. Probably sounds familiar because we've talked with two of the three hosts before, and y'all love them just as much as we do.

So David Thomas and Sissy Goff have both been guests on That Sounds Fun before. We'll link to those episodes in the show notes too. But based on the fact that we know over half of this friend group is made up of parents, and many of you who aren't parents are aunts, uncles, teachers, youth ministry volunteers, and coaches, and so on and so on, who have up close relationships and influence in the lives of MiniBFFs and young people. And you all have these huge hearts in common.

Well, Sissy Goff and David Thomas, and Melissa Trevathan, who all work together at Daystar Counseling Ministries here in Nashville, bring what they are learning through counseling countless children, teens, and their families to our ears on Raising Boys and Girls.

It's a perfect addition to the network because we want to serve all of you who have kids in your lives in practical and helpful ways. We hope we're doing that with the MiniBFF Podcast, but honestly, we want it to be the experts who teach all of us how to love kids well.

So here's how this is gonna work. We'll share a conversation with me, David, and Sissy, take a quick break, and then come back with a sneak peek at one of the

upcoming episodes of Raising Boys and Girls. They are starting Season 5. We are honored to be a part of it.

So here's my conversation with David Thomas and Sissy Goff, hosts of Raising Boys and Girls, the newest podcast on the That Sounds Fun Network.

[00:04:48] <music>

Annie: Sissy and David, welcome back to That Sounds Fun the show

Sissy: Thank you for having us, Annie.

David: So happy to be here.

Annie: But the real welcome, I can't believe I get to say, welcome, Raising Boys and Girls to the That Sounds Fun Network.

Sissy: Yay.

David: I cannot believe this is happening.

Annie: I can't either. This is just the coolest.

Sissy: Yes. Dreamed about it for so long.

Annie: Oh, us too. I told y'all before we started that everybody who walks into the office, we already have your graphic hung up in the office and literally multiple times in the last week, people have gone, "Raising Boys and Girls have joined the network?" I'm like, "Yeah, yeah, don't tell them. Don't tell them."

David: We just stood pointing at that graphic. We just can't believe it. We just can't believe it.

Annie: How long have y'all been doing the podcast?

David: This is the fifth season. We started officially in what year?

Sissy: Well, probably six years ago. What year is it now? We've been counseling too long. We don't remember much of anything. I don't know.

David: Four years of podcasting, for sure. Four seasons.

Annie: Okay. Okay. And today starts your fifth season?

Sissy: Yes.

Annie: Tell me a little bit, for our friends listening, what is the purpose of having a podcast for adults that helps kids?

Sissy: We have been counseling now... I have since 1993 and David has since '97. So we don't even like to add up the years we have collectively because it's a lot.

David: We were six and seven when we started.

Annie: You've done two generations of children is what we know, which is amazing.

Sissy: It is crazy. You know, we're still doing it. I mean, we're still sitting with kids and families every day during the week in our offices. And we can reach a lot of families that way, but not nearly as many as we felt like we could with a podcast.

Sarah Bragg is a dear friend who brought the opportunity to us. And so it felt like a place to get to help a lot of families. And we're just grateful to now be at this many seasons and be with you. That means we're gonna reach even more families because kids are hurting in ways and parents are hurting. I mean, we talk about that often, that we have seen more parents feel discouraged, disheartened, feel like failures than ever before.

Annie: Really?

Sissy: And so getting to step into those spaces with families and provide some hope and some practical help-

Annie: Yeah, because that's the joke of it all, right? David, y'all aren't just counseling kids. You are literally counseling families regularly.

David: We are.

Annie: How often do you see the parents of the kids that are in your office?

David: You know, when we meet with kids, we'll come together with parents every third appointment to check in and just have an opportunity to hear from them, what are you seeing, what are you observing and share ideas together.

We also offer what we call parent consultations. And so it could be parents who are coming in who don't have kids in counseling and just want to be preventative and think about what could I be doing right now with kids in this space, with these

concerns we're raising. And we love any and all of those opportunities to sit with parents for the reason Sissy named because they're just more overwhelmed than ever.

And I think I'd add to that question to say, I think because they're more overwhelmed than ever, even the idea of reading a parenting book sometimes feels like, "I can't figure out how to squeeze that in." And the thought of us being able to just jump on the carpool drive with them while they're sitting at carpool or on the walk and just share 15 to 30 minutes worth of ideas and encouragement, that's so important to us, you know.

I think so often parenting books, parenting conferences, parenting content of any kind can make parents feel more overwhelmed. And we're always wanting to make sure that parents are hearing us say, We want to laugh with you and learn with you. And we think both are possible.

Sissy: And that there's so much grace in parenting.

Annie: How do y'all pick the topics you're gonna talk about on the podcast?

David: We've structured several seasons around books that we've written, and wanted to really develop more of that content in particular. And then we've had some really fun guest on and just had them talk about their journey of parenting,-

Sissy: Like you.

Annie: Yes, love getting to do it.

David: ...their journey of caring for kids.

Annie: So when you're looking at Season 5, what kind of things are we going to talk about this season?

Sissy: Well, our books are often based on where we're seeing the need, where we're seeing the need the most.

Annie: Y'all turnout books so quickly. Your publisher goes, "Oh, we need this now," and they are out. It is amazing.

Sissy: Well, we just worry about kids and families. And our most recent content has been for me with girls, because girls are leading the statistics on anxiety about anxious kids. So *Raising Worry-Free Girls* is going to be a part of our next season. And then David has a brand new book that is amazing that I know y'all talked about

called *Raising Emotionally Strong Boys*. And so we're going to be really talking about both in this next season of our podcast.

Annie: So for our friends that are listening who are teachers, what are y'all seeing and saying to teachers right now who may be raising kids at home or not, but I mean, they're raising kids for eight hours a day, 180 days of this year?

David: The first thing we're saying is we're grateful for you more than ever. Your job's always been unbelievably hard and harder than ever. I'm so hopeful. I'm challenging parents all the time. Now that you've had an opportunity to be a teacher during the pandemic, let's be more grateful for teachers than we've ever been.

And that as you said, you know, their job is not only as an educator, but also a lot of times they're doing some of the work we're doing in their space as well because the needs are everything Sissy named.

So we love being able to write and speak to teachers. And you talk about it in my new book, I talked about creating space where boys can work through their emotions in some healthy, constructive ways. And I love talking with teachers about creating a calm corner and a space where kids can do that in a classroom setting. So many ideas we hope we can push out to parents and educators as possible.

Sissy: And grandparents and aunts and uncles.

Annie: Sissy, I think it's so interesting when I think about... So I taught five years of elementary school. And I remember thinking-

Sissy: I can't even imagine what a fun.

Annie: It was so fun.

Sissy: Can you imagine having Annie as your teacher? A blast.

Annie: Now they are all like 30. They all have their own kids. They are so old those people. I love them. But I remember there were times where I was like, "I am not only teaching the curriculum, but I'm like teaching them about manners and I'm checking to see if they have lice, and I am noticing if they're..." Like I was so undereducated...

This breaks my heart. I had a student who, in fourth grade, was wetting her pants a lot and I didn't know that was signs of certain things. And so it wasn't until two weeks that another teacher said to me, "Hey, that's more than just something going

on in her body. We need to help her." And so thank God for that other teacher. But there are things like that that I didn't get trained on necessarily and didn't know.

So I'm hoping and thinking through Raising Boys and Girls, I mean, you'll just give so many red flag signs for educators, for parents, for... When we're looking back over the first four seasons even, what should we look for to kind of help us with some of the Okay, it's a new school year, how do we see some red flags in kids when they're coming home from school or if I'm with them at school?

Sissy: We're trying to quarterly do episodes now on what kids need right now. So based on what we're seeing in our offices in this moment. So we did one of those even what kids need for the summer. Because, you know, thinking about coming out of the pandemic, we're all kind of done. I mean, we've moved out of it, they have not in the same way.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Sissy: And they are still struggling. And so being able to track with them right where they are I think is so important and what they need, because there are specific things we're even seeing today that we weren't seeing six months ago.

Annie: No way!

Sissy: Yes.

Annie: This is why podcast rule.

Sissy: Yes. Anything that you can kind of latch on to that's happening in the present moment I think is really helpful. And then we've got some past seasons that we would say are really evergreen that are so important to go back to.

Annie: You're bingeable is what I like to say.

Sissy: That's very kind.

Annie: It's very helpful. It's really helpful for all of us. David, what are you seeing right now in boys and girls that you didn't see six months ago?

David: I would say we've talked so much culturally about the academic lags we're concerned about with kids, not as much as I wish we were talking about the emotional and social lags. And we've seen so much evidence of that, of, you know, where kids just missed these opportunities for what we call practice socially and emotionally that they've not had.

Interestingly enough, I had a conversation with a parent of preschooler who was born during COVID. And the mom was talking about how long they went without being able to have playdates and that they went to the park and he was playing with another boy and the boy took a toy from him and he just started screaming. Like just stood and screamed. And she was like, "I realize he's not got down sharing because he's not had enough practice."

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

David: We think about that. Jump forward a decade, how many conversations I'm having with adolescent boys about how nervous they feel about asking a girl do a dance because they haven't had practice because most dances were canceled? So all the different practice that kids are going to need that they've just had missed opportunities, and we're playing catch up.

Annie: Is that what you're seeing in girls, too?

Sissy: Yes. You know, it's funny, you know, at Daystar we have a little summer retreat program called Hopetown. And so living with kids this summer was fascinating for me, because I saw things I haven't seen in counseling. With the little ones, I saw more entitlement than I've ever seen before with the girls.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Sissy: And I think some of that's that same idea. They're not practicing sharing, they're not having to accommodate the life of other people. So this precious little girl that was so anxious about getting on a boat, she got on a boat, she tubed, got off and said, "I'm ready to go back to camp now." And we were all out on the lake, everyone was gonna get a chance to tube, but there's no sense of, "Oh, it's their turn next and then it's their turn."

And then with the adolescent girls, I saw more attention-seeking behavior than I've ever seen this past summer. And I think it was the same idea of I don't know how to get you to pay attention to me or want to be my friend, so I'm going to fake an ankle injury," or "I'm going to pretend like this has happened," or "I'm really struggling in this way that maybe I'm struggling a little to get you to respond to me.

And even in that, all of those things, the having to share, having to let someone else go first, all those things move kids forward developmentally. That's what it felt like this summer. The ninth and 10th graders felt like seventh and eighth graders. Seventh and eighth graders felt like fifth and sixth graders-

Annie: And yet what they're exposed to... The ninth and tenth graders are exposed to what I was exposed to in college.

Sissy: Absolutely.

Annie: So they're younger than ever emotionally, they're more exposed than ever culturally.

David: That is the truth.

Sissy: Yeah. Yes.

Annie: That is a wild dichotomy to deal with.

Sissy: It is.

Annie: Good on y'all.

Sissy: And parent, I mean, they need help. They need us to lean in in ways that we've never leaned in before.

Annie: What are you saying to parents when you know that none of us have gone through a pandemic before? They don't know either. So what's the hope for parents when none of us grownups know how to do this either?

David: Back to that word I used. I keep saying to parent, Just keep practicing. Keep practicing. And keep the span of development in mind. That, you know, these kids are not going to play full catch up in six weeks or even six months. But we're stretching out development and looking at... You know, I always talk about with boys, they're not finishing adolescence at 19. Nineteen to 20s is more for girls. For boys it's more 23 to 25.

Annie: Wow.

David: So if we stretch out development, acknowledging he's still finishing out adolescence in that space, we've got a longer runway in front of us to be practicing a lot of these needed skills.

Annie: Sissy, the thinking around listening to a podcast while you're in carpool line and then your kids get in the car and you've got eight minutes left. Can we finish it in front of the kids? Do we need to not finish listening to the podcast in front of kids? What's the thought on that?

Sissy: I love the idea of finishing in front of the kids. I mean, there are certain episodes they might not need to hear but I think a lot of them... I had a family years ago... We have one on a season on *Are My Kids on Track?*, which is a book that we read about the for emotional, for social, and for spiritual milestones we think all kids need to hit.

And I remember a mom coming in to counseling one afternoon and saying exactly that. "I was listening, I hadn't finished, my son got in the car and all of a sudden we had this great conversation about perspective emotionally, and what it means to regulate our own emotions. And he said, 'I don't think I know how to do that like I'm supposed to.'" So I do think it can create some amazing conversations.

Annie: Boys... Talk to me, David. I've never been a boy. Talk to me about when a dude gets in a car and his mom is listening to a counseling podcast. Does she ask a question? Does she let it sit? Is he really listening?

David: Chances are great he's not that interested. And if we're in the carpool line, if it's at pickup, I wouldn't do a lot of talking then. And I think boys expend a lot of energy, mental energy, emotional energy, relational energy throughout the day. And to get in the car and get bombarded with a lot of questions can feel like an interrogation.

And so I'm a huge advocate of maybe only asking the question like, "Hey, do you want to just listen to some music? I brought a snack. Do you want to just ride home in silence?" Giving him some space and acknowledging the fact that he's been expending all this energy. And maybe after he has a chance to get a little fuel in his system, go outside and ride his bike, shoot some hoops, then might be a better opportunity to talk and check-in.

Annie: Because, Sissy, my guess is girls will chit chat given the shots.

Sissy: A little more likely to, until they hit 13 and then they kind of shut down. But yes. Younger ones especially.

Annie: So the older ones, so I'm thinking about our friends who are listening that aren't Raising Boys and Girls, they're raising young men and young women. You know, they've got 14, 15-year-olds. So they aren't carpooling, they don't have this window of time anymore.

Now, it's she gets home after soccer, it's six o'clock, they eat dinner, she goes and does her homework and she's back on the bus at seven in the morning. Is Raising Boys and Girls thinking about older kids, too or are we mostly talking about elementary?

Sissy: All ages.

Annie: Okay. Okay.

Sissy: Absolutely all ages. Because we feel like teenagers need help just as much as the little ones. And it's more complicated because you can't be... Melissa, who's our director and is part of the podcast with us, she talks about to the degree that teenagers can predict you, they'll dismiss you.

Annie: Wow.

Sissy: And so if they get in the car, and we say, "How was your day?" You know, that's why we get those one word answers. And so thinking about connecting with an adolescent requires more creativity. So we do talk a lot about those ideas. Really, we try to cater each episode to both ends of the spectrum.

Annie: Oh, good. Okay.

David: And this season we're talking about being so excited about, we're gonna have parents who are in the trenches come on at different moments, and we're gonna have parents of preschoolers. We're super excited about a conversation with some friends we've got coming up and they have young adult children. So we're gonna be dialoguing with parents of kids of all ages.

Annie: That's perfect. We're gonna take a break right here and then when we come back from the break, everybody will get to hear a little bit of today's episode, the start of Season 5.

[00:19:30] <music>

Sponsor: So I've been podcasting since 2014. And let me tell you, things are definitely changing and have definitely changed and grown in the podcast world. From the technology to the variety of options to the number of people listening to podcast. It's part of the reason we grew from the That Sounds Fun podcast to the That Sounds Fun Network.

All that growth experience and learning leads us to refine the tools we use for bringing you all of these great shows. And one that we absolutely cannot live without is Anchor. You've probably heard me say it before, but Anchor is seriously the easiest way to make a podcast.

It's free as in it costs you zero doll hairs, but it has simple-to-use creation tools that allow you to record and edit your podcast right from your phone or computer.

Anchor will distribute your podcast for you as well, helping you get your content to so many people on Spotify, Apple podcasts and all the other platforms where people love to listen to shows. Anchor even has ways that you can monetize your podcast with no minimum number of listeners. It's everything you need to create a podcast all in one place.

We hear from people all the time who have great ideas and are looking for how to get their podcast started. Well, Anchor is what we use across the That Sounds Fun Network. And we are just huge fans of how easy they make it to create great-sounding, far-reaching podcast episodes.

Just download the free Anchor app or go to anchor.fm to get started. Again, that's anchor.fm or you can download the free anchor app today.

Okay, now back to hear a sneak peek into the newest episode of Raising Boys and Girls.

[00:21:01] <music>

Sissy: Welcome to the Raising Boys and Girls Podcast. I'm Sissy Goff.

David: I'm David Thomas.

Melissa: And I'm Melissa Trevathan.

Sissy: And we are so glad you set aside a few minutes to spend with us today. In each episode of this podcast, we'll share some of what we're learning in the work we do with kids and families on a daily basis at Daystar counseling in Nashville, Tennessee.

Our goal was to help you care for the kids in your life with a little more understanding, a little more practical help, and a whole lot of hope. So, pull up a chair and join us on this journey from our little yellow house to yours.

[00:21:34] <music>

David: Well, hey, Sissy Goff.

Sissy: Hi David Thomas.

David: Can you believe that we are starting our fifth season of the Raising Boys and Girls Podcast?

- Sissy:** I cannot believe it. But I'm so glad.
- David:** I'm so grateful.
- Sissy:** Me too. It has been such a fun journey. And I feel like we've learned so much.
- David:** We sure have. We've had some amazing guests on.
- Sissy:** We have had some amazing people and more amazing people to come.
- David:** Really incredible people we're excited about. I'm so thankful people are still listening. Or I hope they are listening. Is anyone listening?
- Sissy:** Wave at us if you're listening. I hope they are too. Lucy is listening.
- David:** She's listening. Lucy, thanks for being in the room.
- Sissy:** Lucy, my Havanese puppy. Yeah.
- David:** We're excited to talk about what this new season is going to be about.
- Sissy:** Yes, we are. So should we say the title first? Okay, y'all ready? Drumroll.
- David:** Raising emotionally strong—
- Sissy:** And worry-free—
- David:** Kids.
- Sissy:** Wooo.
- David:** Which is based on some books that we have had the great privilege of writing. We're excited to talk about those and talk about how we want to translate that content into this new season.
- Sissy:** Yes. Okay. So let's jump in with yours first because I'm so excited about it. It is a much needed book in the world and in my world these days with two little nephews. So will you tell them what prompted you to write *Raising Emotionally Strong Boys*? Tell them the subtitle. And then what prompted you to write this book? And why are we talking about it on our podcast? Both.

David: Great question. The title is *Raising Emotionally Strong Boys*. And the subtitle is *Tools Your Son Can Build On for Life*.

Sissy: Ooh, that's good. Tools.

David: And then I wrote a workbook for elementary-aged boys called *Strong and Smart*, which is all about helping boys build healthy emotions. And I am super excited about both those things.

And you know, if I were to think about the why that I think after doing this work for as long as you and I have been doing it, we just see a lot of trends and a lot of the same places, certainly some new places where kids are struggling, but a lot of the same places too.

And I think, you know, if I were going to put my finger on... Sometimes I'm even asked that in interviews. Like, "What's the one thing you feel the most concerned about with boys?" When I think about all the things I feel concerned about with boys, they do all seem to go back to where I really want to help boys develop strong emotional muscles.

I talk a lot in the new book about how boys and adolescent males and adult men lead some of the scariest stats out there. Men lead the stats for suicide and substance abuse, for infidelity, and internet pornography. And you know, the common denominator being that it's a male's way of trying to numb out whatever it is that he's feeling. That he doesn't know how to work it through and so he wants to shut it down, numb it out, make it stop.

And so I just think about how much I want boys on the front side of development to develop the skills that make it always seem normal to talk about how they feel and to work that through in healthy, constructive way.

So the workbook really is kind of a guide of how to do that for boys. And I talk about how my two grandfathers growing up, one of my grandfathers, as you know, was a builder and I worked for him when I was in high school, and my other grandfather was a fisherman.

And I have all these memories of both working with my grandfather who was the builder and going fishing with my other grandfather. And I thought about when I was writing the books how, you know, my grandfather the builder always had a toolbox in the back of his truck and my grandfather fishermen always had his tackle box with him.

And it's like, any fisherman would ever go out on the water without a tackle box, any builder is not going to show up at a site without the tools he needs. And what would it look like that boys are armed with the tools they need emotionally all throughout life, and always have them with them?

So, in the workbook, I kind of walk boys through building a tool set, a literal toolset of things that they have on hand for whatever they face in life.

And I think that desire to equip boys is the very desire in you to equip girls. So talk a little bit about why you wrote some of my all time favorite books on anxiety in girls.

Sissy: Well, before I do, I don't know that I've ever told you this. Henry, my oldest nephew, is three as we're talking. And pretty soon after he was talking, talking, not just saying kind of random words, but really talking, he started saying, "I'm so sad."

When I'm in town, I try to have Henry in now over for what... In Arkansas, where I grew up, we call them bunking parties, but you know, most of the world calls them sleepovers whatever. Bunking party is a better word. So I try and have them over one night a weekend for a bunk and party.

Anyway, so I was standing with Henry and his dad, Aaron, and Henry said something about "I'm so sad," and he slumped his little shoulders. And Aaron looked at me and said, "What are y'all doing it the bunking party?" You know what? If that's my legacy, that Henry is learning how to say, "I'm sad." I'm so excited about that-

David: I love that.

Sissy: ... because I have heard you talk about that so much, how preventative it is for boys to learn how to talk about their emotions early on. So we're working hard at our bunking parties learning-

David: I love that you are.

Sissy: ...emotions in boys. Yes. So the girls books. They originated... It's kind of a funny story. The first book came up because we wrote a book that some of y'all know about. It's the first season of our podcast called *Are My Kids on Track?* And I didn't even remember that I had written this blurb about girls and anxiety and kids and anxiety in general that at that point, which was... David, what year did we write *Are My Kids on Track??* We gotta find it.

David: 2015 I think.

Sissy: How did you know that?

David: Maybe it released in 2015.

Sissy: How did you know that?

David: Well, I might have made it up.

Sissy: Well, okay. So 2015 the statistics were one in eight kids were dealing with anxiety. And I talked in that section about how much more prevalent it was among girls. An editor that we did not know at the time, who we have now come to love dearly, Jeff Braun, emailed me and he said, "Hey, I just read this blurb." You also talked in it about how the average age of onset was eight. And he said, "I was wondering if you would ever write a book for young girls about anxiety."

And, of course, doing the work that we do, and as you said, we have done for a long time, my immediate response was, "Not unless I can write one for parents too." I wrote those books in 2018, I think they came out, or early 2019. After looking the copyright section of the book every time. It's terrible. Pre-pandemic, I wrote them.

So *Raising Worry-Free Girls* is for parents and *Braver, Stronger, Smarter* is for elementary and early middle school girls. And at that point, I did a deep dive into research on anxiety and read 23 books I think to get ready to write those two.

And shockingly—so that's probably five years from when we wrote *Are My Kids on Track?* or four to when I wrote those books—the statistics had jumped from one in eight kids to one in four kids with girls twice as likely. And the average age of onset that was eight had dropped to six with signs as young as four and five.

And I think where I also felt so inspired to do it is we just sit with so many parents, both of us. But again, I'm seeing more of it because of girls who are describing a lot of frustration with their kids and using words like angry and controlling and manipulative and demanding, those parents feel weary and frustrated as a result, rather than understanding what's really going on underneath those emotions.

And like we talked about, we quote our good friend, Tina Bryson, when we had her on and where she talks about all behaviors communication. And so understanding that often what's at root of that for girls is anxiety.

And so I'm very excited this season of the podcast to talk more about that. And we're going to talk about it with boys and girls, but what we're seeing that's so

prevalent, and how can we equip them with tools to handle it on the back side and what can we do on the front side.

[00:29:49] <music>

Annie: Oh, you guys, Season 5. Here we go. I'm so, so honored we get to be part of this work with you.

Sissy: We are so honored to be part of it with you.

Annie: What a gift! Y'all are such a gift. It is almost unfair when we share about Daystar in Nashville because so many of our listeners can't live here. Like I even asked you when you got here, a friend of mine needs a counselor in another city, she wished they were here. It feels like your resources, like your books, and the podcast, or the way that you can have global impact the way that people are needing.

Sissy, will you tell us what books you have that exist right now so that people when they're looking for resources know what to look for?

Sissy: Well, I would say the predominant ones I would recommend right now, even pertaining to where kids are and what they're needing, *Are My Kids on Track?* that we did together that talks about those milestones I think is very helpful. I hope is very helpful.

And then the three books I've done at this point on anxiety. One is particularly for girls, about girls, *Raising Worry-Free Girls*. Then there's one for little girls, it's a workbook called *Braver, Stronger, Smarter*. And then one for teenage girls called *Brave*. And I have one coming out in August that is I decided to go to the source.

Annie: August of this year or 2023?

Sissy: Yeah, '23. Not that it's your fault, but we're just sitting with so many anxious parents. So I have one coming out called *The Worry-Free Parent*.

Annie: Oh, well done.

Sissy: Thank you.

Annie: Great.

David: Cannot wait for that to be out.

Sissy: Y'all are so kind. And you have.

Annie: People are like, "For the next 11 months I just have to live with this?" Yeah, you got a podcast, everybody. Don't worry.

Sissy: That's right.

Annie: And yeah, you, David.

David: I would say, talking about stretching out boy development, I have a book called *Wild Things: The Art of Nurturing Boys* where I track boys' development from birth all the way into the mid-20s. And then my newest book that you kindly let me talk about on this podcast, *Raising Emotionally Strong Boys*, I'm really thankful is out in the world. And then wrote a companion workbook for elementary-aged boys called *Strong and Smart*.

Annie: Okay. How many days a week do y'all have? Because I only have seven. And y'all are traveling and speaking all the time, you're writing all the time, you're counseling children and their parents, and you're recording a podcast. So tell me what you have that I don't have. How do y'all do this?

Sissy: We're tired. Is we have gray hair. We have more gray hair than you do.

David: That's right.

Annie: That's it. Are y'all traveling a lot this fall?

David: We are traveling a lot this fall.

Sissy: Yes.

Annie: When people bring you in, what are they bringing you in to do? Are they having parents sit with you? What does it look like? Is it conferences?

Sissy: Yes.

David: It is.

Annie: Okay.

Sissy: Parenting conferences.

David: Parents, educators, grandparents, coaches. It's so fun when churches or schools will open up their space to the community and say, "Everybody who cares about kids, let's just come together and have some conversation." We love it.

Annie: Where can we find out about that... well, your speaking stuff?

David: RaisingBoysandGirls.com. Our website would take you to everything: where we're going to be traveling, our books and resources, our podcasts, all the things.

Annie: Okay, great. So we'll make sure to link to that because I want people... If y'all are coming to their city, you know, I want them to be there because the in-person is magic.

Sissy: It's fun, yeah.

Annie: Being with y'all in-person is magic. Okay, so tell me what is y'all's hope for the podcast?

Sissy: So we talk often about Larry Crabb. Have you ever read any of his stuff?

Annie: Yes.

Sissy: So at some point along the way, he said, "If the body of Christ was being who the body of Christ is called to be, we wouldn't need counselors anyway," which is fascinating.

Annie: What do you feel about that?

Sissy: Well, I love it in some ways. I mean, obviously, there are times we need counselors and therapists. But I think that so much of the hope of the podcast is that we can put tools in parents' hands that they can do from the moment they hear the episode to start making a difference in the lives of their kids.

And so I think that's really our greatest hope is how can we equip, give them... We talked so much about understanding help and hope. That it's all three in lots of families.

Annie: What do you think, David? What's your hope?

David: Just this week, this mom wrote a note to both of us and send it to Daystar and said, "Your voices have been in my ear and I feel like you're always in my corner." It was like the best of compliments. That's what I want parents to feel from the podcast.

We're in your corner. We're cheering you on. We're rooting for you. We're throwing out some ideas. And we want to encourage you.

Annie: I mean, someone the other day said, "What is it about this medium that you love?" And I was like, It is that we are in their ears? And you don't get access like that on a TV show. You don't get access like that in a book? Because when they're reading our books, that's the only thing they can do. They have to focus on that. So they can then give us 10, 15 minutes. But 45 minutes or whatever, while they're cooking dinner or sitting in carpool and we are their friends like this. So yes, I'm grateful.

Okay, the last question we always ask that I can't wait to hear your answers. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, because the network you just joined is called That Sounds Fun Network, tell me what sounds fun to you.

Sissy: Can we both just say joining the network?

David: That was my answer. I'm like, "Being on this network sounds fun."

Sissy: In every meeting, I catch myself saying, "That sounds so fun," all the time. We really.

David: We literally just had a meeting and we brought cake.

Annie: Tell the whole truth. You brought cake-

David: And champagne.

Annie: And champagne. Yes, you did. Yes, you did. You tell the whole truth. It is 10 a.m and we've been through one bottle already between the whole... All of us, not just the three of us.

David: You see why we want to be on the network.

Annie: That's right. That's right. Okay. So outside of this experience that we're getting to have together... And we are the winners. Let me tell you, the listeners and the network win here. What sounds fun to you outside of this? What are you working on? What's the fun in your life right now?

Sissy: Well, I have had three trips really close together in the last two weeks. One was a fun trip where I got to go on safari to Africa and then two speaking once. And so right now, for me, I'm an introvert that lives in a very extroverted world, so the most fun thing is sitting on my couch with my dog and watching a show.

Annie: Yes. Is that what you're gonna do this weekend? Are you just sitting home and...?

Sissy: We have a board retreat this weekend.

Annie: Okay. Okay. So maybe tonight you'll sit at home?

Sissy: Yes. Yes.

Annie: What's the show? Are you watching anything right now?

Sissy: I knew you were gonna ask me that. I can't think of one that's appropriate for-

Annie: Sure.

Sissy: I mean-

Annie: You're allowed to watch whatever you want to watch. You don't have to tell us.

David: You're a grown-up.

Sissy: I just watched *Loot*.

Annie: Yes, I loved *Loot*.

Sissy: It was so funny.

Annie: It's so funny.

Sissy: I'm a one on the enneagram, so I don't laugh out loud that often except when I'm around you. And Maya Rudolph made me laugh a lot.

Annie: Maya Rudolph is very funny in *Loot*.

Sissy: Yes.

Annie: The line she has, the writers of that show had her-

Sissy: And the dance moves.

Annie: Oh!

David: The cousin Howard. Love that guy.

Annie: Oh, my gosh. They do a beautiful job. I think maybe this is where TV is going that makes me really grateful, of like there can be side stories that are like the cousin that are very like emotionally mature. You know, like him sorting out his girlfriend and all that, and the friendship with Maya Rudolph's assistant is all very like... oh, that's like very emotionally mature friendships I thought. I just thought that this is very good modeling for us. I love that show, too.

David, what sounds fun to you?

David: I'm gonna sound as boring as you because my answer is gonna be reading.

Annie: Okay, great.

David: And I'm so curious what you would say to this. But I know a lot of writers who read a lot while they're writing and believe that really benefits are writing, I can't do that. Like I can only write and I can't read other things. I think I start as an Enneagram one critiquing myself. And look, you don't sound like that.

Annie: Y'all are both ones?

David: Yes.

Sissy: Yes. You should see us in the airport. When we travel together we are like a machine.

David: We could knock someone over. We move so fast.

Annie: I am sure. I am sure. That is so impressive. Wow.

David: So because I am not reading and writing, I feel like I'm playing catch up. And I just started some fiction, which I have not read in months. So I'm reading *Turtles All the Way Down*-

Annie: By John Green.

David: Yes. I love John Green.

Annie: Oh, man, I bet you do love John Green because he writes teenagers so interestingly.

David: Yes, he does.

Annie: Yes. I can't wait to hear what you think about *Turtles All the Way Down*. Why did you pick that one up of all his?

David: I had a great friend who was like, "This needs to be your next read." And I really trust her recommendations so I was like, "Okay." So I'm only like four chapters in-

Annie: Because there's real emotional and mental sickness in that book. It is-

David: We're going to have a conversation then when I'm done. And then I want to know from the two of you, do you read while you're writing? Can you read while writing?

Annie: I read fiction while I'm writing non-fiction.

David: You do?

Annie: I cannot read... So I'm working on a fiction anything, I cannot read fiction while I'm writing fiction. And I can't read trade books, like our friends' nonfiction books while I'm writing. In fact, I pretty much don't read anybody else while I'm writing so there is no chance... Because I'm a parrot and I'll accidentally steal and go like, "Oh, that sentence was in a book I read this morning." So I have to be really careful.

Someone mailed us like three chapters of their book for me to read, not someone I know, and just said, "Hey, will you just read this and see?" And we have to write back and go, "I can't. I can't read anything that someone writes that isn't published because then if I accidentally write something that looks like that, there's a world where they go, "Well, I sent you that chapter that said that and now you wrote in. So I can't read when people email us." Do you read when you're writing?

Sissy: Not much. Not much for the same reason. I felt like I'll start comparing myself and go down the rabbit hole.

Annie: That is so funny. You two ones are like, "I'll compare myself." And I'm like, "I'll steal it. It'll help me finish quicker."

Sissy: That's so good.

Annie: So I'll be done and y'all are like, "I will judge myself." I'm like, "No, I will hit my word count." That's what I will do if I'm reading someone else's writing.

Sissy: That's so funny.

Annie: That's so fun. Okay, I cannot wait to hear what you think. Are you reading anything good right now?

Sissy: I'm reading Shauna Niequist.

Annie: Oh, it's really good.

Sissy: *I Guess I Haven't Learned That Yet.*

David: It is a great book.

Annie: It's a great book.

Sissy: I'm finishing it up. I have loved it. I've loved it.

David: I love that book too.

Annie: She's so honest.

Sissy: She's so honest.

Annie: I just started a novel last night that I'm not gonna remember the title of but it has "wardrobe" in it so people can Google it. It's about a little boy who is sick that reads *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*. And it's set in 1950. And his sister goes to Oxford. And so he starts asking all these questions about Narnia and the sister goes and finds C. S. Lewis, and starts asking him.

Sissy: No.

Annie: Yeah. I'll look at the title and link to it so people can... But I mean, I'm 19% in it says in my Kindle. So I'd have no idea if it's gonna be terrible in the end. But so far it's great.

Sissy: Do you know who it's by?

Annie: No. I can show it to you on my Kindle. I actually have my Kindle here. I can show it to you on my Kindle.

Sissy: Okay.

Annie: I love novels like that that you're like, "Oh, no, it's 11:20. I was supposed to be asleep at hour ago." I love that kind of reading. All right, you guys. You're the best. Welcome to the network fast.

Sissy: You're the best. We're so excited.

Annie: What a dream! Raising Boys and Girls. You guys can go subscribe right now. They can get new season five right now. Here we go.

[00:40:49] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, don't you love them? I'm telling you, I mean, I know y'all believe me. But I want you to hear me say I don't know two people who have given their lives more truly to helping families than David and Sissy.

And so the work they do here in Nashville, this is how it can go global. And how it does go global? This is how people and parents and friends and aunts and uncles and grandparents are able to learn from Sissy and David without having to be right here in our town. It's just incredible. This podcast is so good.

Okay, go now wherever you are listening to me and subscribe to Raising Boys and Girls. And listen, you can go ahead and leave them a review. Rate and review the show, share it with your friends who you know will love it and benefit from it. And follow them on social media. It's Raising Boys and Girls. Tell them welcome to the TSF Network. We are so, so, so honored.

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. I will do the same.

Today what sounds fun to me, I'm sorry to do this but it is just true, dreaming up more shows that can be a part of the That Sounds Fun Network. Hey, you just tell us. Let us know who else should be joining the network. Man, it's such an honor to do this work alongside what we get to do at That Sounds Fun Podcast and with our books and speaking. It is an honor to be a part of what the network is doing.

I'm just a very small part of it at this point. But man, I'm grateful. They are doing some good work across the hall in that office. I'm really thankful for the That Sounds Fun Network.

Y'all have a great couple of days. We'll be back here on Thursday with a first-timer on the podcast, someone I love and respect, Pastor Chad Veach. You guys, it's so good. You're gonna love it. You want to talk about prayer? We do too. Me and Chad will see y'all hear on Thursday.