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**Annie:** Hi 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 as we celebrate Veterans Day coming tomorrow. Happy Veterans Day. Those of you who are listening who serve in any branch of the armed forces, we honor you and your families. This weekend we're so so grateful. And with that in mind, we have a really interesting and great Veterans Day conversation for you here.

But before we dive into today's conversation, I wanted to let you know that this episode is sponsored by [BetterHelp](#). I know we all face situations when our prayers sound a lot like, "Hey, God, could you just give me a bulleted list of instructions to follow to fix this one?" And that's just not the way it typically works, is it?

It's normal to feel stuck in times like that. Navigating any of life's challenges can make you feel unsure, whether it's a career change or new relationship or becoming a parent. Therapists are trained to help you figure out the cause of challenging emotions and learn productive coping skills, which makes therapy the closest thing to that list of instructions we'd love to have sometimes.

My therapist has walked me through a variety of challenging seasons and has been an invaluable guide toward healthier ways of walking through tough times. I want that for you, too.

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And if you didn't catch that whole URL, that is okay. We have got you. All the links to our sponsors, the transcript of the show, and even the place you can sign up to get an email from me every Friday, the AFD Week in Review, those are all in the show notes below.

**Intro:** Today on the show, I get to talk with my new friends Evan and Dr. Jenny Owens. They are the founders of Reboot Recovery, the largest faith-based trauma healing organization in the world.

Evan and Jenny have helped thousands of people around the world overcome the worst days of their lives. Now they share practical steps to resilience and healing with churches and conferences and workshops around the world.

They are authors of *Healing What's Hidden: Practical Steps to Overcoming Trauma*. And Evan is out on tour right now with our guy, Brandon Lake, doing something I think it's so cool. We're going to talk about it. But their work with veterans is remarkable, which is what made them the perfect guest for this Veterans Day episode.

So here is my conversation with Dr. Jenny Owens and Evan Owens.

[00:03:00] <music>

**Annie:** Dr. Jenny Owen!

**Evan:** I call her that when I'm at home.

**Annie:** Do you?

**Jenny:** I don't put it out that a lot.

**Evan:** Only at key moments, though.

**Annie:** You should. What is your doctorate in?

**Evan:** It's a clinical doctorate in occupational therapy. So it's kind of along the lines of like optometrist or physical therapist who goes further. This is the highest level of clinical degree. So not a PhD, not an MD but it is a certain type of clinical sort of research-driven-

**Annie:** In therapy.

**Jenny:** Yes, in occupational therapy.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Annie:** Occupational therapy, meaning things that happen at work?

**Jenny:** No. That's a whole different field.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Jenny:** It's a professional-

**Evan:** You'd have stepped out and let her answer those questions a little bit.

**Annie:** No, no, no, that was great.

**Jenny:** We work in all sorts of practice areas with all kinds of people, helping them with the skills for the job of living and whether that's because you have an illness or disability, or you're coming out of prison. We equip people with life skills to function well and to do the things that are meaningful to them.

**Annie:** Right.

**Evan:** But her job specifically is like she... The return to duty was what she did. So it was like when people would get injured they would come back to her clinic and she would work with them and test them to see if they were ready to go back to combat with these crazy like Humvee rollovers,-

**Jenny:** We did neurological rehabilitation.

**Evan:** ...and people running out of buildings and shooting at you and all those crazy stuff.

**Jenny:** Oh, yeah. I had a really awesome job.

**Annie:** Did y'all live in DC?

**Jenny:** It was at Fort Campbell in Kentucky.

**Annie:** Oh, okay.

**Jenny:** With active duty soldiers.

**Evan:** Which is why we live up in Clarksville.

**Annie:** Now I understand.

**Evan:** That is the connection, yeah.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Evan:** And then Nashville prices out of moving back.

**Annie:** Fair.

**Evan:** Like in real-time. It was like we bought too late.

**Jenny:** I worked at a brain injury clinic. So we were interdisciplinary. We had OT, PT, speech therapy, behavioral health, MDs, and we're all just surrounding these men and women who were trying to come back from brain injury to go back to combat.

**Annie:** Okay. A lot of what Reboot does is not only veterans but also first responders.

**Jenny:** Yes.

**Annie:** So were you dealing with first responders at the time, too, or it was just that?

**Jenny:** Just military. Just military. But once we started Reboot after a few years, we recognized that first responders were coming to our combat recovery courses that we had built because they were searching for healing for trauma and that was almost like a closest audience that was similar to theirs. Because, especially with mass shootings and things that our first responders deal with, it's like they're on a deployment, but it's in their own backyard, friends and neighbors and loved ones.

**Evan:** And that's actually what happened. That's when it started was the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando. We had a military group, like, I don't know, three blocks away that went down there. And they were like, "Hey, can we help?" And so all these police officers and EMS and EMT started showing up. And so we had a chance to say like, "Let's build something just for them."

**Annie:** I mean, when I was reading your book and just reading about Reboot, I thought, "Is there more similar about military families and military service men and women and first responders than I ever realized?"

**Evan:** There is. I think it's also because you're married to the job. Think about it. Uniform becomes that identity. So you do it for x number of years, there's very much sort of these handcuffs that sort of say like, "If you just do this many years, then you get retirement."

So it's kind of a different culture than maybe corporate world where you're sort of a free agent, where you go where you're most valued versus like I'm in a long-term contract basically with my job. And when I take off the uniform, it's like, "What now?"

**Jenny:** It's like taking off Superman's cape; not a hero anymore. I think the impact on the families too, because they will never be able to fully understand what their loved one endures. And so there becomes sometimes a gap where the emotional centers

of that veteran or first responders sort of shut down because they don't want to traumatize their family, but they have these experiences that just sort of distance them from their families, and even just friends and loved ones in the community. So it's similar, for sure.

And the spouses need that support, too. They aren't always connected with other spouses who understand, but it's very unique what they walk through.

**Annie:** What is the overlap? Because I think of like with Air Force, the overlap from Air Force to flying my Delta flights I'm on are very high. Right? Like, it's kind of like a feeder system. Is there overlap between military and first responders?

**Jenny:** Oh, yeah. A very high percentage of first responders are veterans.

**Evan:** Especially law enforcement. Especially law enforcement.

**Annie:** Oh, really?

**Evan:** That's probably the most common, I would say. Like when we go out and speak and stuff like that, tons of police officers line up and all of them... we have this banner that has our three programs: our military trauma course, our first responder one, and then our general public one. And they always say, like, "Well, I've gotten numbers one and two."

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Evan:** It's what they always say when the backdrops.

**Jenny:** It's the most familiar for them. If you think about if all you've ever known is this kind of really regimented, sort of hierarchical, and very intense, focused work, getting out in the civilian world where you're your own boss or you have to just, you know, create a plan and figure out how to get from point A to point B, that's hard, I think for them.

So first responders, very structured. Yeah, rank. Like, Evan said, how long you're signing up for. And there's retirements at the end of it. I think it appeals.

**Annie:** Wow. How'd y'all get into this? Neither of you are first responders or veterans, right?

**Jenny:** Mm-mm.

**Evan:** Correct.

**Annie:** So why was this the yes for your life?

**Evan:** We didn't just wake up one day and was like, "You know what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna quit my job and just let's just move to the middle of nowhere."

**Annie:** Right.

**Jenny:** No. Well, it's a long story so I'll try to make it short. But I was working in the civilian sector as an occupational therapist working with brain injury at Vanderbilt. So we were treating people who had strokes, spinal cord injuries, that kind of stuff.

They started a program where they were receiving Fort Campbell soldiers because they had traumatic brain injuries and the military hospital wasn't equipped to do rehab for them. This was in early 2007. And my caseload quickly shifted from 75-year-old people to these young 18 to 25-year-old, mostly male, who looked fine on the outside but who were struggling with very basic things: memory, sleep problems, you know, tear trigger, anger, identity, like, "What am I going to do if I get kicked out of the military because I can't perform my job?"

So I just fell in love with that population, with their heroism, their courage. I was shocked by the fact that they wanted to go back to duty. They didn't want to get out. Like they wanted to fulfill their mission and they wanted to live up to what their brothers and sisters were expecting of them downrange because they want to get back to them.

So that put us on a journey where eventually I took a job at Fort Campbell when they started their own brain injury clinic. I was like, "I don't want anybody else to have that job." I had a couple years of experience of working with them and so I helped build a program, the return to duty program there, and worked exclusively just with combat veterans.

And recognized, though, very quickly, because of every single conversation that trauma catalyzes a conversation about God. Why does a good God let bad things happen to good people? Why did I survive and my buddy die? How do I live with the burden of feeling like I have to live two lives?"

Those things just were so on the surface. Feeling guilty about being in a lose lose situation. "I don't know if I should have pulled the trigger or not. God can never forgive me for what I've done." So that was just like every day I'd come home with these stories. I felt my Spirit began to be arrested by like I'm giving them tools in the medical sense but there is this other aspect of their woundedness that's invisible. It's not a physical wound, it's on a mental wound; it's a soul wound.

How do we help heal the soul wound? Well, I know the soul healer. Evens knows the soul healer. And we just asked the Lord, like, "Show us what we can do to help these people." We began to think of ourselves as bridge people. We wanted to lay down our lives to help someone get to this place of hopelessness and despair, because it was real. Suicides were happening in the parking lot of where I worked-

**Annie:** No.

**Jenny:** ...at that time frame? In their car, they had a bad appointment with the doctor, got a diagnosis that they thought they could never come back from, taking their lives.

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh!

**Jenny:** So the despair was very heavy. And we said we can lay down our lives and help bring people to a place of joy and purpose. And we believe that you can live a life of joy and purpose, you can have an abundant life despite having trauma, despite having brain injury. We believe that because we know that our God is a God of new creation and healing.

So that was the origin of it. Lots of stories related to that that we could share. But we just felt it was a calling. It was like a missionary calling because we are not military. And we didn't have really any right to speak into this, except we felt like God has equipped all of us to show up with love and grace and with this idea that we're only here because we want to be here.

They're not paying us to be here, this is outside of my work. I just want to make sure that you know that your life matters and that God can bring you out of this darkness.

**Annie:** Did y'all get married in college at Belmont?

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Evan:** Right after school.

**Annie:** Right after school.

**Evan:** Sixteen years ago?

**Annie:** Oh, congratulations.

**Evan:** Thank you.

**Annie:** So Evan, why was this a yes for you? I mean, because you could have moved up to Fort Campbell area and taught school or whatever you were... what did you study?

**Evan:** I was actually the CEO of a technology company in Nashville.

**Annie:** Very similar.

**Evan:** We had great income. So I just thought to myself, "I hate stability. I hate income. I'll just quit everything and we'll just become missionaries in military. Why not?" No, I think that, honestly, there was this sense... and this is gonna sound terrible. But I know some of us have these mundane jobs where it meant a lot to me and I was really passionate but I was having a difficult time hearing the stories I was hearing and getting all worked up about some healthcare companies' websites launching a day late.

I was like, "This is not life and death. Chill out. It's a website. Nobody's going to die. Nobody's freaking out." And meanwhile I'm hearing these stories and I'm like, "I want to do that." Her job sounded way cooler. Like if I could go back to school and get her degree, you know?

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Evan:** So really it started with just inviting people into our living room and saying, like, "Hey, we're gonna have conversations about where faith and trauma collide," and everything I could get my hands on. And during that period of my life, too, I was going through kind of a personal crisis and was really struggling with feeling like... I was feeling like I had flown really high on these borrowed wings and now things at my company weren't going well and I was having to lay people off and financial decline. So all this was happening.

So I was kind of dealing with my own trauma anyway, so I was reading everything I could get my hands on. And then I would like baby bird it. It was like I would chew it up and then just kind of like spit it back out into other people's ears. It was cool. It was really fun.

**Jenny:** And it was crazy because they didn't have a lot of reasons to listen to us. But Evan has this great ability of communicating. He has the self-deprecating humor. He-

**Evan:** Lot of material there to pull.

**Jenny:** I don't know. They just showed up. We had free food. And we said, "We're going to take care of your children, so you just come and lay it all the door." And like they



just showed up. And it grew and grew and grew to where we're like, "I think we need to do this full time."

**Evan:** Four years later we finally quit our jobs.

**Annie:** Wow. So this is full-time now?

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Evan:** Yeah. It's been since 2016. So we did it for almost five years. We would lead groups every single night. So we'd work all day-

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh.

**Jenny:** Not every single night. Every week.

**Evan:** But I was leaving three nights a week to work-

**Jenny:** You did, yeah.

**Annie:** Yeah. Oh, my gosh!

**Evan:** And so it was just this, you know, people always say like, "How did you come up with the material if you weren't a veteran?" It's like, "Well, if you sit with a group of people four to five nights a week, every night for five years, you pretty much learn it."

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

**Evan:** Yeah. So I would say it was less about writing, it was more about... And even with the book, I would say like it's less me writing my own thoughts. It's more sort of cataloging, organizing, and-

**Jenny:** Distilling

**Evan:** ...distilling down what other people have found most helpful and putting it in a way that's maybe a little packaged for people to absorb. I think that's really what we've done.

**Annie:** Does everybody have trauma?

**Jenny:** It's a good question.

**Evan:** I would say yes.

**Jenny:** Yeah. We wrote in the book... this came to me one day in the bathroom, always in the shower: what is trauma? And I said, "Trauma is our own personal intersection with the brokenness of the world." We're all going to experience it someday.

It's that moment when the rug gets pulled out from under you, when what you thought or expected of this life proves to be wrong or unstable because it's a fallen world.

**Annie:** Right.

**Jenny:** And Evan always says, "God row eternity in our hearts." Like there's a part of us that knows and that cries out that this isn't the way it was supposed to be. And when we have those experiences, it leaves a wound.

We were trying to think of "where did the first trauma happen?" We went back to the garden in Genesis 3. When sin entered the world and the consequences that follow, that's traumatic for Adam and Eve and for all of humanity. So I'm not trying-

**Evan:** It's traumatic every time I end up naked.

**Jenny:** I don't want to oversimplify trauma, and there are certainly a spectrum, but I do believe that everybody is going to encounter it at one point, if they haven't already.

**Annie:** One of the things I'll say in the book that I thought was really important was when you talk about fighting for your younger self and how... you tell in the book about you got an award and they said y'all give people second chances. I just would love for you to talk about a lot of times how when children experience trauma we aren't giving them a second chance because they actually never had a first chance.

**Evan:** Yeah, that's right. First off, when people talk about trauma, usually they're thinking the bad things happening to them, right? "Here's all the bad things that are happening." But a lot of times the truth about trauma is it's also the good things not happening. It's not experiencing how to forgive, it's not being taught how to love graciously or love self and others.

**Jenny:** Unconditionally.

**Evan:** Right. So we have a generation of people that have been neglected or abandoned growing up by one or both of their parents. So when we talk about trauma, I think

it's important that we frame it that way. But yeah, we got this thing and they were like, Reboot is giving people a second chance.

The data actually shows that really these people never had a fair first chance. And most of us, right? So I mean, if you experience trauma before the age of 18, you're 15 times more likely to die by suicide.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Evan:** You're like 11 more times to have severe career issues and transition issues.

**Jenny:** Addiction issues.

**Evan:** Substance abuse, all these. Basically, everything from incarceration all the way up to severe mental health issues. All the database says you're more likely to struggle in these areas.

So that's what we kind of feel like for a lot of people, it's like they were given a playbook but with nothing but plays that don't work.

**Annie:** Yeah, wow.

**Evan:** So then they start running these plays as an adult, and it's like, this isn't working. And so they have to figure out, we have to figure out how do we write a totally new playbook? And that's why I think community is so important because you're able to look at somebody and be like, "Hey, what play do you run when your marriage is in trouble? What play do you run when your go-to is to go drink? And that's what my family has always done to deal with our pain."

And I think that was the cool part for us is because of us being civilians, we had a different set of playbook because we have different set of challenges. And then they had their own plays where they were trying to teach me to be a man, learn to ride motorcycles and do stuff. And all that did not take the other stuff did.

**Jenny:** I'm thinking of a guy named Brandon who his father died by suicide when he was five.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Jenny:** And his uncle stepped in and was basically like, "You're the man in this house. I don't want to see you cry." Those are the words that sort of define the rest of his life. He goes into the military, he's got a chip on his shoulder and anger is what drives him. And then he loses a few of his close comrades and comes back and he's

wounded. And this guy, just... he was one of my patients. He was angry. And he used sarcasm and just harsh words just everywhere he went.

But we invited him to Reboot. And I think because he had seen that I cared enough to like listen, he showed up, which was shocking. And we just saw over the next 12 weeks this crazy transformation of softening and beginning to let other people in. I mean, by the end, he was playing with other people's kids. He brought in a bucket of chicken. He was like, "I want to bring in fried chicken. I like fried..." He's from North Carolina.

**Evan:** Is that how he talks, is he put his hands awkward just like that?

**Jenny:** I was gonna say that Evan befriended him. It was just this unlikely pairing because he's so rough around the edges. But Evan took him suit shopping. He was getting out. He's like, "I gotta get a job." He didn't have a father figure who ever taught him those things.

We had him over at her house and I made him hot chocolate with homemade whipped cream. He never had that. I feel like we were giving him things that he had missed out on in his upbringing. And then like Evan said, he helped us in return. He fixed Evan's car stereo. He helped me through my trauma. I had a miscarriage and Evan was out of town had to go to the hospital.

Brandon came to our house, cleaned up the mess that was left and brought me home from the hospital the next day, stayed with me. Like incredible. So I'm saying all this to say that I think we all bring something to the table. And it's the evidence of the connectivity and the relationships that draws people out of the darkness of trauma.

[00:19:21] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hi friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our amazing partners, [Ritual](#). We can't overlook or ignore the fact that what we eat doesn't always cover everything our bodies need, right? Over 97% of women aged 19 to 50 are not getting enough vitamin D, you guys, and 95% are not getting their recommended daily intake of omega 3s. But don't worry, Ritual's got us.

Ritual's Essential for Women 18+ multivitamin was formulated by exhaustive research to help fill nutrient gaps in the diets of women that are over 18. It is formulated with nutrients to help support brain health, bone health, blood health, and provide antioxidant support.

But Ritual did not stop there. They invested in a gold standard, University-led clinical trial to prove the impact of Essential for Women 18+ multivitamin. And they did it. The results: Essential for Women 18+ was shown to increase vitamin D levels by 43% and Omega 3 DHA levels by 41% in 12 weeks.

A published clinical study is a big deal and a serious commitment to a first-of-its-kind standard in the industry. And it tells us that we can trust them. Ritual is committed to third-party testing from USP and the Non-GMO Project, traceable and vegan-friendly ingredients, always clear communication, no shady stuff.

Ritual just released Symbiotic+, a gut health supplement with clinically studied prebiotics, probiotics and a post-biotic all in one minty capsule. You know I love a minty aftertaste instead of a vitamin E one. Just one delayed release, Synbiotic+ capsule per day supports your gut with all the quality and traceability you'd expect from Ritual.

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

**Sponsor:** And I want to tell you about another one of our incredible partners, [The Chosen](#). Y'all know The Chosen. It's a series of shows based on the Gospels and it's an incredible visual retelling of the stories of Jesus's life.

There are only two seasons available. I recommend a binge of those immediately because The Chosen Season 3 is hitting theaters on November 18th. So soon. We have got our tickets here at Downs Books and the That Sounds Fun Network. You need to get yours too.

The theme of Season 3 is something we all need this time of year. It's from the scripture in Matthew 11:28, which says, "Come to me all you who are weary and heavy burdened and I will give you rest." Season 3 picks up right where Season Two left off, but things are getting a little more heated. We see Jesus deliver the most famous sermon in history, and then see the story of what follows, the consequences of living out His teachings.

The shiny and the new have worn off. The group of people curious about following Jesus and the group of people who oppose Him are both growing. There are new troubles, tensions, and tough questions. But in the midst of all that upheaval, Jesus brings rest. He gives rest.

Episodes 1 and 2 will begin in theaters starting November 18th. And the episodes will start releasing for free in The Chosen app before Christmas. For more information, visit [thechosentickets.com](http://thechosentickets.com). Again, mark your calendars. November 18th. Visit thechosentickets.com for all the info.

And now back to our conversation with Evan and Jenny.

[00:22:36] <music>

**Annie:** I was in the airport last week and walked by five soldiers who were also flying. They look 11 years old. I mean, that's the other thing is I was like, I understand-

**Evan:** They're babies.

**Annie:** ...I understand I'm a pure, for real, grown-up now. But I could not believe how young they looked. I knew y'all were coming and I was like, "How do you do ministry healing trauma to when 18 year olds are seeing...?" And that's true for first responders too. We have a lot of guys and women going into the fire department at 18 and 19 years old. Do you see a different experience with these people who enlisted 18 than with maybe the people who go to West Point and are 25 or 30 by the time you see them at Fort Campbell?

**Evan:** Yeah. I think there's also a difference too... You know, the military today is in a different place than it was in 2010. Right? I mean, we were at war. So the likelihood that you were a 19-year-old being deployed to Afghanistan was really high. Now when we go into active duty bases, we see a lot of people without combat patches versus when we were on a military base-

**Annie:** You get a special patch once you-

**Jenny:** Mm-hmm.

**Evan:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Evan:** So every day, we were on a military base, I mean, you never saw anybody without combat patch. And now it's like we're going to a base and there's like tons of people without-

**Jenny:** Stuff sergeants without combat.

**Evan:** It's very restrained.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Evan:** So for all the vets who do listen to this, they'll be like, "Yeah, that's right." So I think there's a big separation there. Because what we're actually seeing is that a lot of the issues that the chaplains and all these people are telling us about now are traumas that have nothing to do with combat, they're traumas that really were brought in with them.

**Annie:** Interesting!

**Evan:** There was like luggage they brought in, and so it's kind of going along. But then also when we're working with people who are older... I mean, if you're an officer, maybe it's age, but it's also a little bit I think of sometimes there was a different kind of stock upbringing.

**Annie:** It's a socioeconomic difference.

**Evan:** Correct. So you had the opportunity to apply and probably went to a different kind of school, you grew up in a different area. So a lot of people would think like, "Oh, yeah, I'm gonna go to this super elite academic institution." Because it helps if you know somebody, if you have sponsors, things of that nature. You're like, "Oh, my dad went to this school or my grandpa."

So for a lot of the folks that we've worked with, honestly, West Point wasn't even in the mix because college wasn't in the mix.

**Annie:** Got it. Got it.

**Evan:** You know what I mean?

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Jenny:** Not to say that you can't endure trauma if you have gone that route.

**Evan:** Oh, yeah, a lot of officers have to.

**Jenny:** There is a difference. I think if you have resources, and you have family support. You see people handle the trauma differently.

**Evan:** You've got more safety net.

**Annie:** I have a couple of good friends who have been in the military and have done very elite undercover things. I don't know what any of them are. But I have certainly been the recipient of, oh, this has nothing to do with me.

But because they have all this training and they've taught them how to keep secrets and they've taught them how to deal with their things in a way, they just keep it all inside. But they haven't been in the military... I still have some belief they might still be doing things but they haven't been in the military in years and years.

**Jenny:** I don't think it goes away.

**Annie:** It doesn't go away. Right? Because they still saw all that trauma and experienced all these things and had to make all these choices that civilians don't make-

**Jenny:** And they are wired to manage that differently than we are.

**Annie:** Yes.

**Jenny:** Because they have to because you can't fall apart in the middle of a mission. You have to compartmentalize.

**Annie:** So for our friends listening whose family members have come home or who are out of the military, or who are married to retired policemen, or retired firefighters or EMTs, how do we deal with living life with the people who have trauma that we don't know about?

**Evan:** One of the most common conversations I have is people will say, well... So in all of our Reboot courses, whether it's our military, first responder or anything, it's like, people always say, "Well, how does that work?" Because the first responder, the veteran, they're not gonna want to open up in front of their spouse. They're only going to want to talk about what they've experienced with people who have lived... Because what they're trying to do is they're trying to shield people from seeing the things that they've seen. And I get that.

**Annie:** They don't want to re-traumatize... or give someone else trauma.

**Evan:** Share. Pass it on. But I think what's interesting is scripturally we talked about, you know, when people are married, especially the two become one flesh. So instantly, we have to assume, Okay, the trauma is already contagious. It's already spreading. We think we're protecting them, but really it's coming out in other ways. It's coming out through guilt. It's coming out through aggression. It's coming out through unforgiveness and bitterness. It's coming out through being-



**Annie:** Silenced.

**Evan:** ...evulnerable? Unvulnerable? Devulnerable? All those vulnerable words.

**Jenny:** Nonvulnerable.

**Annie:** Devulnerable. I'm sure that's it.

**Evan:** Unvulnerable. So I think for us, that's the thing. So it leads with that. So if you're a spouse, if you're a caregiver, if you're a girlfriend, boyfriend, I would say a couple things. One is lead with vulnerability and curiosity. Say like, "Help me understand. Help me understand. I wanna understand."

And then no matter what they tell you, unfortunately, you're gonna have to keep a stiff upper lip and not act shocked and surprised. Because if you act shocked or overwhelmed by it, they're gonna say, "I didn't even tell you something that was heavy. I started with like an appetizer. There's no way you can handle the main thing."

**Annie:** That's so hard, though, because it's shocking.

**Evan:** It is.

**Jenny:** Yeah.

**Annie:** And so it's hard to go like, "How do I contain my response?"

**Evan:** It is. People ask all the time, "Evan, how has Reboot changed you?" One, it's changed me in valuing community more than I ever have. Realized you can make it through hell on earth if you've got the right people around you.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Evan:** But number two is it's taught me also to never underestimate the depravity of what man can do to mankind. And I think even though in our trauma Reboot, which is trauma, healing for anybody, every group, there's like, "I think I've heard the worst," and there's this new story that somebody tells me, and I sit and I think, like, "Who invents this way of doing evil? Who's the one that says, 'You know what, I've never heard of someone doing this terrible thing to somebody. I'm going to be the one that does that.'"

And I think for us, that's the part that probably for us we have to guard our hearts, because it's just so much darkness and there is so much evil in the world. And I think that more and more people, unfortunately, are encountering it directly.

**Jenny:** But we have to expose it to the light. If we allow it to stay in darkness it just grows.

**Evan:** It mold.

**Jenny:** I was going to add on just one thing that is unique about the courses that we developed—again, it's a 12-week course. It happens in the evenings, one night a week. Kind of like a small group. But we don't call it a small group because some people don't have that frame of reference—we include the family.

So the spouses who are there are hearing maybe not their loved one share but somebody else's loved one share. And it gives them insight to better understand their own partner. And that goes both ways. So maybe the person who's experienced trauma hears from another spouse that gives them insight reciprocally towards theirs.

So it raises eyebrows because a lot of programs, especially military, separate them out. So like, "Well, they can't understand." As Evan said, we realize they're one body and we've got to address it all in this kind of open space, in this open, safe space. And that carries on when you go home. It kind of creates a framework and it makes it okay to take some of those topics off the shelf and engage them. And it has to happen.

**Annie:** Is there an uptick in the needs of our first responders? That would be my assumption. That's why I'm asking like that. That would be my-

**Evan:** Due to COVID and all that.

**Annie:** Yeah, COVID and how the changing perception of policemen across our country... I mean, some undeserve it, some deserve it, of course. But has that made first responders in more need of help than maybe 10 years ago?

**Evan:** Yes. But I would also, people in general, I think when it comes to trauma have more-

**Annie:** Humans. Sure.

**Evan:** Human beings. So yes. I think when you look at suicide data, unfortunately... I mean, you know, our vision is to mobilize the largest faith-based response to trauma and suicide ever. And so we track these data points. And you look at, I

mean a hundred and like eighty billion dollars spent last year to prevent veteran suicide and mental health issues. And it still was a record year. It's still climbing.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Evan:** And the same thing we see... You know, I was just in San Antonio, and we were at the event and-

**Annie:** With Brandon Lake?

**Evan:** With Brandon Lake.

**Annie:** We're gonna talk about it?

**Evan:** Yeah. We were there and this group of three dudes come up to the table. And all of them are like... they're looking at the back of the book, but I noticed they're shaking. I've learned that sign.

**Annie:** You know.

**Evan:** So I walk around the table to them and I'm like, "Hey, guys, can I help you?" And they're like, "Yeah, what's this about?" So I started to describe it and it turns out in San Antonio, where we have lots of groups starting, which is cool, there's been seven officers take their life in the last nine months.

**Annie:** Police officers not military officers?

**Evan:** Correct. Yes, yes.

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh.

**Evan:** And they were burying one of them on Wednesday. That's tomorrow. And they all just broke down and cried. And I started to just pray with them and hear their stories. And all of them I could just see that look of hopelessness and despair of like, "We've done everything we know to do and people are still taking their life this way." But also I think when we talk about suicides, specifically, which I know is a really heavy topic for That Sounds Fun podcast-

**Annie:** No, no, no. We want to do this.

**Evan:** But I just think that there's so much data that shows that it is contagious. That when one happens, there's a rash of them usually.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Evan:** So I think that's what we're seeing more than anything. And we have all this money and funding go into suicide awareness but we have found that awareness is not the issue; connectedness is.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Evan:** And so we're raising more awareness about suicide. But like that's not always mathematically actually proven to work that well. And so I think we're trying to approach it from a different stance. It does feel bigger than us a lot of times, quite honestly. Especially we get a lot of criticism. Like, "Who are you to tell us? You've never walked a mile in our boots" kind of thing. Like, we hear that everywhere I go. Literally, everywhere I go. Especially me as the guy, probably more so than her.

And I feel like I always am quick to say like, "Great, if you want to join us, if you want to take over leading, here's my chair. Go for it. It's not that easy and it's doesn't pay that much and it's really not that fun because you get to be in everybody's worst part of their lives all the time. Like whatever their worst day is, that's what they talk to you about all the time.

So I think for us just that growing need, it feels overwhelming at times. And that's why I feel like it's so important that we've decentralized it and said like, "We're all going to share the burden a little bit." And so if people are listening, that's what I would just encourage them to do is find out like, how can you be responsible this year for that one person? Say like, "I know this person is struggling, I'm going to invest deeply in this one person, because probably will stop it.

**Annie:** Jenny, besides the book, *Healing What's Hidden*, which I loved, I think that is... I mean, I think it is great for the audience and the people that you serve directly but for any of us. I think this is one of those trauma books I think everybody... It's very digestible and very readable. Y'all did a beautiful job on it. So people can read through that and also find y'all through that. How else do people get connected with Reboot?

**Jenny:** Rebootrecovery.com. Evan was just alluding to the fact we are decentralized model. So we started this group thing and we saw these incredible results. It was meeting in our living room, eventually we moved it in the military sector. But we've spread because we recognize our other people who feel passionate about helping their friends and loved ones and neighbors to heal and are willing to get some basic life support training. That's what we have called people to do.

So we have groups. Now we've grown from one to now I don't know 350 in the United States. We want to make this available in every small town and big city. So if you go to our website, you can see a tab that's "lead". You can look at what is involved with that process. You don't have to have a degree in counseling or be a pastor. We really believe every day people have what it takes to respond.

But also join. There's a tab. So if you feel like you need this material, like I said we have those courses. We also have a growing catalog of virtual courses over Zoom.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Jenny:** So in every time zone that's our goal is to always have courses every few weeks available in every time zone for people to plug into.

**Annie:** That's awesome.

**Jenny:** So please check out the website. We also are on social media.

**Evan:** You can find @Evan and Jenny's thing. Both of our followers are parents on there. We're not really great at social media.

**Jenny:** We're not really great at social media. But @RebootRecovery for Instagram and Facebook.

**Annie:** That's great. But also, Evan, you're out on the road with Brandon Lake.

**Evan:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Our dude. We love him.

**Evan:** Which is the weirdest thing. It's like an alternate reality for me of like, Oh, I'm on this tour bus and there's these famous people. Last night I'm sitting around, Chandler Moore just comes in sits down, Kirk Franklin. And I'm just like, "I'm gonna be cool. I'm gonna be super super cool." So I'm over here like awkwardly-

**Annie:** Are y'all on one bus tour? No.

**Evan:** No, two. But it's like I'm awkwardly like... I looked like, you know... Ever seen Donald Trump drink his water with two hands. I'm like, "Look cool. Try to look cool" the whole time. And then I don't say anything and then they leave.

**Annie:** Did you just get home this morning?

**Evan:** Last night.

**Jenny:** Yesterday. The days are all planning to go.

**Annie:** It gets weird. Touring is kind of an alternate reality for a minute.

**Evan:** It can be sustainable for people. Like people who do it for like three months in the end, I'm like-

**Annie:** Yeah, you're about to have a third wing of trauma and recovery.

**Evan:** If you are my age... Like on my bus it's a lot of like 20-year-olds, and we're out with this amazing, awesome artist named Blessing Offor anyway. They're all young, and I'm like 40. I'm like, "I'm going to bed y'all. I don't know how you guys do this. Like two o'clock they wake up at like six in the morning and seven and I'm like, "That is not enough."

**Annie:** That is not enough.

**Evan:** "I need more." Like I have to step away for some naps." They're like rock stars in it and I'm like, "I'm gonna go take a nap."

**Annie:** I mean, you're also at the start of the tour. So that is-

**Evan:** I've not adjusted.

**Annie:** So are you getting up in the middle of the show?

**Evan:** Yeah. World Vision does the big pitch. But we do get up before the show actually and we talk about it.

**Annie:** Oh, cool.

**Evan:** And we get to invite people to come in. We're actually giving out literally thousands of copies of the book.

**Annie:** Y'all are just giving your book away?

**Evan:** Yeah. And you know what we compare it to? So I grew up in the hood. So in Cincinnati, the inner city high school, and so I remember these dudes who would like have these mixtapes. And they would give out their mixtapes and then they hope that if people liked the mixtapes, they tell people about it and then they would buy an album or the show.

And I realized that the book really is like a mixtape of our greatest hits from all three of our courses put into a book. And so I was like, "Let's just see the market as much as we can. Let's try to make it as available as we can kind of trusting that like, I know it helps. So if we can get it into your hands of people, then they'll join. And it's pretty remarkable. I think we've had-

**Jenny:** We've had a big response.

**Evan:** ...almost 500 people say they want to join the courses already in six shows.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh.

**Evan:** We're getting like 100 people a night and I think like 70 or 80 people said they want to start locations.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Evan:** For us, I really view it as a 12-month... This is unusual for touring. Usually, the way it works in touring. This is like you want instant ROI. But for us, we're actually looking at it as a 12-month ROI, because chances are in 12 months, you or someone you love will have a worst day of their life. And when that happens, we want you to be like, "Who was that group that we were at that concert? What was that thing?" And we want them to call us. So we're just gonna be there and be like, "You need this yet?" Nope." Okay, how about now?

**Annie:** So you just stand at the table, and people walk up and you can see in their faces?

**Evan:** Yeah. And it's intense.

**Annie:** I bet they do the slow walk by and then come back by.

**Evan:** Yeah. And it's really intense. I've had a lot of fathers actually. I'll get emotional talking about it. I had a lot of fathers come who were like, "My daughter's been raped," or "My kids are going through this. What can I do?" And it's hard because there's, I mean, no joke. Like, at times, there's been two and 300 people in line waiting to get these resources.

**Annie:** And you're the guy at the table?

**Evan:** Well, I have volunteers. And so there's a group of us, but it's this tense moment of, like, I can't give you a soundbite that's gonna save your daughter's life right now but I want to invest in this. And I want to follow up with everyone individually, but

that's not always possible, obviously. So it has been overwhelming, it's been exhausting, and a learning experience for me.

And it's a whole world that I never thought I would be doing. So we're just trying to be faithful with it. And yeah, people look at me like I'm crazy when I'm giving away books. And I get that that's crazy. But I also kinda feel like we were at a point in our organization where it's like we have to do something to kind of start reversing things. Something has to be done more than just say like, "Have you talked to somebody about this?" Because like the person they're talking to is-

**Annie:** Is the somebody. Yeah.

**Jenny:** You don't outsource it. It's you.

**Annie:** Yeah, it's you. That's it. Right.

**Evan:** There's no referral system.

**Annie:** I think one of the reasons I'm excited for friends to read *Healing What's Hidden* because it also helps me have language for things I'm hearing for. I took pictures that to send today to someone who's going through a breakup of your drawing of the-

**Evan:** The grief.

**Jenny:** The grief cycle.

**Annie:** The grief cycle that's like not predictable.

**Evan:** And I actually personally drew that.

**Annie:** Well done. I'll post it today so everybody can see your intense art. But yeah, I sent that to someone who's going through a breakup because I was like, "Man, that is how it feels." The grief cycle is like, "I appreciate the people who created it, and also it has led us astray."

**Evan:** Oh, my gosh, yeah.

**Annie:** Because you're like, "Oh, I'm mad. Good. I'm almost finished."

**Evan:** And the same is true with any type of counseling. I think we go into it like, "Okay, I'm gonna get an appointee and we're going to have these eight sessions. And at the



end I'm going to feel this instant aha moment." And I love our counselors, but they're also not miracle workers.

**Jenny:** And you can't see everyone forever.

**Evan:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Right. At some point-

**Jenny:** Also the demand has already surpassed the supply.

**Evan:** I said earlier it's not awareness, is more connectedness Like we've gotten to a crazy place in culture—Sorry, this will be a little preachy-

**Annie:** No, I'm into it.

**Evan:** ...where like if someone comes to me, my natural inclination probably is, "You should go speak to somebody," which is really a nonverbal way of saying, like, "I'm a little too busy to get into all the weeds of your problems. Go pay somebody to be your best friend. Like go and pay someone to listen to your problems, because I'm a little busy."

And we even do that with prayer time. Like people come forward after prayer and it's like we listen for a couple seconds, we're like, "Can I pray for you?" Which is really like our exit strategy for a difficult conversation. So it's like "in Jesus name." And that's your signal that I'm done hearing your problems.

And then we don't really invest in each other that way. And we go back even 30, 40 years ago, and it was different. People sit in porches and most counseling was done by friends and family. And most trauma was done by friends and family, too, by the way. But the point is, I just think we need to get back to that. And that's what we're trying to do in our groups.

**Jenny:** I love what you said about that it gives you language. That was our hope was that it would help the person you might give the book to but also you if you read a copy. Evan always says that so often we see a person who's drowning, and we throw them a book: "That's how to swim, learn how to swim in five easy steps."

But this book is about getting down in the deep end with them and empowering you to know that you don't have to have all the answers, but you just have to show up and like I said, Listen with love and you stick around for the answers to your questions, and follow up and be authentic yourself. Set the tone of vulnerability as we tried to do on our courses.

**Evan:** And don't be weird.

**Jenny:** Yeah, don't be weird.

**Annie:** Yeah. Okay.

**Evan:** That's one thing. I mean, it goes to many inner healing things. The Holy Spirit is not weird, but sometimes weird people are weird. And especially if you have trauma... like some of the parenting people at one of these events, there was a bunch of friends of mine was a vet. And like these parenting people come up, and they start being, you know, the three, two, one snap healer kind of people. And it's like it's great, but he finally had to stop them in prayer and he's like, "You're making me really uncomfortable right now."

And I was like, That's not a witness. Don't be weird. If you want to reach people who have trauma and mental health, be emotionally intelligent." Like if I realize I'm making you uncomfortable... And if you're talking and you never realize you're making someone uncomfortable, you're probably not as socially intelligent person. Back off. Give people space, you know?

**Annie:** Right.

**Evan:** And all the time people come to our groups and are like, "I went to church for prayer, and people started yelling at me and snapping and doing all this crazy stuff." It's like, "There's a time and a place for that for sure. But not when a person's like-

**Jenny:** Just taken a really big first step.

**Evan:** Especially if you wanna reach combat veterans, the fastest way to get them to go away is touch them out and get in their corner and push them into a corner. That's the fastest way that it's gonna end bad for you.

**Annie:** But Evan, I'll tell you you're giving us a little bit of a catch 22 because you're like, "Be the solution but don't be weird."

**Evan:** I know. But what if you're already weird?

**Annie:** But people don't know if they're weird.

**Evan:** I know. I know.

**Annie:** That's the problem.

**Jenny:** That's why you gotta be in a group.

**Evan:** Then you're telling us, well, then we got to push them off. Well, then don't send them to somebody else but don't be weird if you tell them to stay.

**Evan:** I think if you lead with curiosity and grace and questions versus advice. And maybe not even leading with prayer necessarily, which is your go to. But I think if you just lead with questions. And I always give people advice to ask five questions before you share any truth or advice.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Evan:** So when you're talking to somebody, lead with five questions. Because I mean, you've never felt judged when somebody lead with grace and questions.

**Annie:** Yes.

**Evan:** Ever. But if somebody leads with advice, a lot of times you know that feeling can feel judged. And so if you lead with grace and curiosity and questions, usually you don't have to carry the conversation. They will.

That's what I do. I just ask three to five questions before I say anything. And then I never tried to personally relate. I just usually say like, "I'm really, really sorry." Then I start there. That's usually when they're like, "Thank you. Nobody's said that." But just don't be weird. I'm weird, too, though. There's probably somebody listening going like, "Evan is telling people not to be weird."

[00:44:00] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Just taken a little bit of a turn from this important convo to tell you about another one of our amazing partners, [ThirdLove](#). Here is a thing that should be addressed. Are you ready?

Some of the prettiest bras are the opposite of comfortable. Am I right? And the super comfortable ones have no personality. You shouldn't have to choose between the two, you guys. Well, ThirdLove says there is a third way.

They have spent years researching and designing the perfect bras that feel just as good as they look. And they're created by women for women. I love that. Their t-shirt bras are the absolute best, my favorite bras, technically, and the fitting room quiz makes it so easy to get the sizing just right. We love a quiz.

With their data-driven approach to sizing, ThirdLove found that 50% of women are in between sizes. So they invented half cups and carry more than 60 sizes from A to H. And with tagless labels, slip-free straps and fabrics that feel so luxurious, they've upped the game in all the ways.

Co-founders Heidi and Rael are both moms. So ThirdLove has bras for every stage of life, including nursing. Break the bad bra cycle with ThirdLove and join their club of more than 10 million happy customers, including a lot of your friends at Downs Books. Take the fitting room quiz and get 20% off your first order at [thirdlove.com/soundsfun](https://thirdlove.com/soundsfun). That's 20% off when you shop now at [thirdlove.com/soundsfun](https://thirdlove.com/soundsfun).

**Sponsor:** Well, as long as we're talking about getting dressed, I want to tell you about another one of our incredible partners, [Stitch Fix](#). You know we say around here: all you need is a village and a ring light to be who you want to be. I stand by it. And when you find yourself looking at your closet, but still feeling like you have nothing to wear, you need to add Stitch Fix to your village.

Stitch Fix is the best way to discover new styles and brands just for you. Think of Stitch Fix as your style partner. Your stylist will learn about your tastes and collaborate with you on looks you love. All you have to do is answer a few questions. We love a quiz.

And their questions about where you typically like to shop and what you like to wear and your price range. With your choices in mind and a wide range of sizes available from extra small to three XL, they'll find your perfect fit. They've got you covered with over 1,000 brands and styles.

Try your pieces at home before you buy them, just keep what you love, send back the rest. Plus shipping, returns and exchanges are always free. There's no subscription required. Simply order a refresh as needed or set it and forget it with regular seasonal fixes. You are the boss. I love how personalized Stitch Fix is. They just get me, you know?

Right now Stitch Fix is offering my friends \$20 off their first fix at [stitchfix.com/thatoundsfun](https://stitchfix.com/thatoundsfun). That's [stitchfix.com/thatoundsfun](https://stitchfix.com/thatoundsfun) for \$20 off today. [Stitchfix.com/thatoundsfun](https://stitchfix.com/thatoundsfun).

And now back to finish up our conversation with Evan and Jenny Owens.

[00:46:47] <music>

**Annie:** Jenny, we just in October had Dr. Diane Langberg on who specializes in trauma. We also had Richard Foster on. And they're all saying the same thing. They're all talking about humility. And that's what you're saying. So maybe I'm a little embarrassed that for some reason the Lord has a theme around my life of like, get humble. So okay.

But I mean, it just keeps happening on shows of people going like the actual answer to this is humility. And you write about that. Y'all write about humility and trauma and how much humility matters.

So will you kind of talk for a minute as we finish up, why is humility important in our own trauma, but also when we're living surrounded by humans who are traumatized? Capital t, lowercase t, however you want to describe your trauma?

**Jenny:** Well, we talked about this in the book. You've got to lower your barricades. I think trauma breaks your trust in other people, it breaks down your trust in God. It even breaks down your trust and your confidence in yourself. So we put up these walls, these protective barriers. And maybe that shields us from further trauma, but it really traps our true selves inside. And so how do we access and heal those wounds if we've got all these layers to protect them?

And so we realize that in order for you to seek and receive the healing, it's kind of like going to the doctor and you have this wound, but you're going to be like, "I'm going to tell you how to handle this. I'm going to tell you the circumstances under which I want you to heal this and I'm going to explain it all to you." Like you don't trust that the physician knows more than you do.

And I think sometimes we don't mean to but we only want healing on our terms. But with this, with trauma, we've got to lay it down, allow others in, allow the Healer to have access to those places. That's the only way that the healing is going to begin.

**Evan:** And I'll just say to the veterans who are listening, I just had this conversation... I mean, so 0.04% of eligible population went to the war that we just got out of. 0.4%. Verses World War II, it was like 20%.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh.

**Evan:** To put that perspective. So one out of every five people you were having a beer with went to battle as well. Now, one out of every whatever that math is, 1,000 or whatever. So I think a lot of times vets will say things like, "Only veterans can help veterans. Only veterans can understand veterans."

If you live your life that way, that means 99.6% of people in the world are inaccessible to your pain. What an isolating way to live and what a limiting way to live. So what I would say is you're right, they didn't do what you did. Like thank you for that. But also realize that we can build fences, not walls. We can let some things through and still have those slats for stuff to get in and out. And that's what we're seeing. So, good answer. Jenny, that was a really good answer by the way.

**Jenny:** And you also asked about humility as a helper. I think that we had to be humble because we didn't have the qualifications that people were expecting of us. But I think that's okay. I just want to encourage people to just be your authentic self and maybe open up by saying like, "I may not have all the answers for us today." And that's okay.

**Evan:** Or "I don't understand but I want to."

**Jenny:** "I don't understand but I want to." Like I said, you set the tone for the vulnerability and the healing in the conversation if you're willing to not put on airs and not try to, you know, prescribe something, but just to be, as I've said so many times, to be present and to have that gracious, curious heart, loving you.

**Annie:** Right. And that's true for our first responders and people who are living in... You know, when you're sitting with a policeman or EMT or firemen or anybody who serves us like that. Five questions. That's great. Start with five questions before you give any advice. That is such a good tool.

**Evan:** And usually you wouldn't have to give advice because it's like they're going to talk for like an hour.

**Jenny:** And they say, "I feel so much better."

**Evan:** Well, it's like food poisoning. It's like, if you throw up afterwards, you're like, "Yeah, I feel so much better. It's amazing."

**Annie:** Let's get it out. So for our friends who are gonna go look up the Reboot courses and [rebootrecovery.com](http://rebootrecovery.com) today, what are the courses like?

**Evan:** There's three courses. One for veterans and families, one for first responders, and one for anybody who's gone through trauma. They're 12 weeks long, one night per week. You can go online, go to the "join", click that "find a location near you". And then there's typically... there about two hours per night, sometimes a little bit shorter, depending if they do a meal, and not many of them provide meals and childcare to remove barriers.

And each week tackles a different topic of the way trauma wounds us. We talk about the root wounds that usually feed the symptoms. A lot of times people... we want the relief of the symptom, we want less anxiety, less depression, less whatever. But a lot of times we have found that like unresolved grief is what leads to depression. So there's this not a one-to-one correlation.

**Jenny:** Guilt, shame, and regret leads to anger.

**Evan:** So each week we tackle a different wound of trauma. So go check it out.

**Annie:** That's great. And people should grab copies of *Healing What's Hidden*.

**Evan:** That would be amazing.

**Annie:** That is going to be... It's such a-

**Jenny:** It's such a good starting point.

**Annie:** It's a good starting point. That's right. Okay, well, the last question we always ask you guys. You both get to answer. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

**Evan:** I got a new answer that I just thought of.

**Annie:** Oh, great.

**Jenny:** Okay. I thought about this. I had this opportunity in the last year to revive something that I had sort of thought was dead in my life, which was musical theater.

**Annie:** What? You brought it back into your life?

**Jenny:** I did.

**Annie:** How?

**Jenny:** After 20 years. Well, I had an amazingly talented 9-year-old son and he wanted to get into musical theater. So I found a community production up in Springfield that had a great role for him. And I auditioned too just because I thought, "Wouldn't it be fun to share that experience with him?"

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh! Jenny!

**Jenny:** So we're both through in *The Secret Garden*. And I can tell you that I haven't had so much fun since before I had kids. Just pure unadulterated bliss of being with creative people, of putting on this amazing production and doing it with my son. So it was awesome.

**Annie:** How many kids do y'all have?

**Jenny:** Three boys.

**Annie:** Okay, nine and a how old?

**Jenny:** Nine, six and he'll be four tomorrow.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh. Wow, nine, six, and four. That is a house.

**Jenny:** It's really fun.

**Annie:** That is fun. I think dudes are fun. That's really fun. What about you, Evan? What sounds fun to you? You had a brand new answer.

**Evan:** My favorite thing to do in the world is eat good food. I don't know what time it is. It's always lunchtime in my mind. So all I want is fruit tea.

**Annie:** Where are you gonna go?

**Evan:** What sounds good is Calypso. Calypso Cafe.

**Annie:** Fascinating take. That's the best fruit tea in Nashville?

**Evan:** Green Hills Grill would be my second. I think they have fruit tea too.

**Jenny:** What do you think it is?

**Annie:** Wow.

**Jenny:** I'm curious.

**Evan:** Let's just not talk about trauma. Let's talk about only fruit tea.

**Annie:** Yeah, we should have started this eight minutes ago.

**Evan:** Yes, we should have.



**Annie:** I would say first best fruit... Well, just for our friends listening who have never been to Nashville or do not know fruit tea, it is regular brewed tea with juice in it.

**Evan:** And a bunch of sugar.

**Annie:** Well, possibly. Yeah, sweet tea with free juice in it.

**Evan:** With fruit juice in it.

**Annie:** I would say Bread & Co was far and above.

**Evan:** It had the meat in it that made it a little something-

**Annie:** But now they're closed. So RIP Bread & Co fruit tea.

**Evan:** RIP.

**Annie:** I mean, my next favorite is Baja Burrito.

**Evan:** Okay, I love Baja.

**Jenny:** Oh, yeah, that's dope.

**Evan:** I can go down in Baja too.

**Jenny:** I love that. Yeah, yeah.

**Evan:** You know, my favorite horchata...

**Annie:** Oh, yeah.

**Evan:** And I'm like, you know-

**Annie:** Jamie that works here, she loves that horchata, man. That stuff is gross.

**Evan:** I would agree. If I had to choose, really I would only eat on Thompson Lane.

**Annie:** That's right. There's one road that you can get it all knocked out. There's a Krispy Kreme, there's Vui's kitchens, so you get Vietnamese.

**Evan:** You're right, bro. You're right there.

**Annie:** You're exactly right. And you're not far from Pfunky Griddle. You can make your own pancakes.

**Evan:** Pancakes in the morning.

**Annie:** So are y'all gonna eat Calypso today?

**Jenny:** Probably.

**Evan:** Jenny, would you like to go on a lunch date with me to Calypso?

**Jenny:** I will never say no to that.

**Annie:** What do you have at Calypso? Oh, what do you eat?

**Jenny:** Oh, either the black bean salad with white meat chicken.

**Annie:** Black beans salad with white meat chicken. That is it. That is the one.

**Jenny:** Or the chicken breast sandwich with sweet potatoes inside salad.

**Evan:** She makes fun of me. Every time I order... Does anybody else do this? Like you mimic with your hands what is your ordering?

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, sure.

**Evan:** So like, "Can I get a little cup of something?" Or I'll be like, "Can I get a glass of water?" As if like they're gonna bring me a glass of water-

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

**Evan:** And so it's this constant thing. So I'll say like, "Can I get a little more sauce? Can I get a little more sauce?"

**Jenny:** So funny.

**Annie:** And you show them the cup. What are you gonna get at Calypso?

**Evan:** Nachos. Black bean nachos.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Evan:** Here's the deal-

**Annie:** With white meat chicken though?

**Evan:** Yeah. Yeah, of course.

**Jenny:** You got to pay the extra \$2 for that one.

[crosstalk 00:55:14]

**Evan:** There was at one point... This is never gonna make the podcast.

**Annie:** Oh, for sure it is.

**Evan:** The one that was in East Nashville, my office, for years and years and years was right across the bridge. And I went so often that eventually Rebecca who ran it stopped charging me and I just had a tab.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh.

**Evan:** So she would just bill me at the end of every month and I would just even up at the end of the month.

**Jenny:** It was like a cafeteria for his office.

**Evan:** That year I looked at total expenses-

**Jenny:** Oh, my gosh.

**Evan:** ...because I was on a health kick and Calypso you can eat healthy. And I haven't been on health kick since then.

**Annie:** Because it was too expensive.

**Jenny:** Probably.

**Evan:** No. And I'm just super lazy. But all that being said is I looked at it and I asked her what number customer I was in terms of total revenue and she's like, "Oh, you're number one by like \$10,000."

**Annie:** No.

**Jenny:** That's scary.

**Evan:** It wasn't just my bill. It was the company bill too. Everybody who wanted to meet always was like, "Let's go to Germantown cafe." I'm like, "I'm not eating..." Or Monell's. Like, I'm not gonna eat fried chicken-

**Annie:** Fried chicken every day. No.

**Evan:** I'll be bigger than I am. And so we always went there. So anyway, when she told me we were like 10,000 more than the next closest, I was like, "That's a lot of black bean salad."

**Annie:** It's a lot of black bean salad and white meat chicken.

**Evan:** That's a lot of fruit tea.

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

**Evan:** And so I was like, "You know, next year I'm gonna have to cut back."

**Jenny:** COVID cut it back for us. It's only one Calypso now. It's so sad.

**Annie:** I know. I used to love the one also that was by Vandy.

**Evan:** Sure.

**Jenny:** Oh, yeah. That one-

**Annie:** That one by Vandy was really good.

**Jenny:** That's where we built our relationship back when we were in Belmont. We would just go there. We saw Keith Urban there once.

**Annie:** Oh!

**Jenny:** Yeah, we did.

**Evan:** I think for us, we did sit next to Keith Urban. And he ordered... I'm just kidding.

**Annie:** He also got a black bean salad with white meat chicken.

**Evan:** He probably did. So anyway, Yeah, I like Baja.

**Jenny:** That's what you would do for fun is just eat Calypso. Like we're gonna go realize your dream today.

**Evan:** And I will say I did music and school, went to Belmont. Moving out of Nashville, moving to all military folks and having them be my friends, I really feel like a part of me I'd really not connected with in a long time, which was like I love listening to music that I've never heard before and just talking about it awkwardly for like 45 minutes.

**Jenny:**

**Annie:** And now you do that every night on the bus.

**Evan:** And there's a couple guys in the bus that like it rekindled to me. And I actually texted them last night and I said, "Guys, I just want you to know you were such a gift to me and that you reminded me of a part of myself that I haven't thought about in 20 years." I'm hoping one of my kids gets into it so I can do that with them. That would be super fun.

**Annie:** Yeah. The first Calypso.

**Evan:** Always.

**Annie:** Can I just say? Have y'all had Ladybird Taco yet?

**Evan:** You know what? It's so funny. It's like the one spot I haven't been to that everybody tells me I gotta go to.

**Annie:** Yeah. So I mean, even just maybe on your way home, after you... Eat your normal lunch and then just get like a Taco.

**Jenny:** Okay.

**Evan:** A taco?

**Annie:** They're not very big. They're smaller than your palm. And so if you just get one to try, just so you can say I had Ladybird.

**Evan:** Never have I ever eaten one taco.

**Annie:** I know. You're gonna lunch and then you're gonna-

**Jenny:** Sample.

**Evan:** Like a dessert taco.

**Annie:** It's a dessert taco with meat in it.

**Evan:** A meat dessert taco?

**Annie:** That's what you need to have today. Because it's same neighborhood-ish. Right?

**Jenny:** Where is it?

**Annie:** It's on Tenth.

**Evan:** I thought it was in Brentwood.

**Annie:** No, uh-uh. It's on Tenth.

**Jenny:** All right.

**Annie:** I know. You're actually probably hequal-shequal getting to Calypso from here and getting to Ladybird from here. But they do not have fruit tea yet.

**Evan:** You know what? They should.

**Annie:** I wish they would. I know.

**Evan:** I don't understand why any restaurant doesn't have fruit tea. I feel like all restaurants should have fruit tea.

**Annie:** I know. They really should have it. They also took away my favorite taco last week and I really laid into them in DMs. I'd say, "What are you doing?"

**Evan:** And I think it's funny to do that on the air with the platform like and everyone stopped going into bring it back. We're gonna do like a political boycott.

**Annie:** Here's what they just said. They said... Number six my favorite now it's Amigas Taco, which is delicious. But they're like "Oh, number six is now just number 11 without pico. I'm like, "No, I don't want to say number 11 without pico. I want my number six. I always tell people number one and number six in the case of..."

**Evan:** I have a question. Who do they think they are?

**Annie:** I have a question.

**Evan:** This is my question.

**Annie:** Who do you think you are, Lady Bird going after my number two favorite taco? Get out of here.

**Jenny:** Have you been in Nashville a long time?

**Annie:** 14 years. I came in 2008.

**Jenny:** I was thinking another good place I think it was gone by then was Cooker. It had good fruit tea but it-

**Annie:** I went all the time.

**Evan:** The Cooker.

**Jenny:** The Cooker.

**Annie:** I went once and then I switched over mostly to... Oh, it was on granny white right by Lipscomb.

**Evan:** Copper Kettle.

**Annie:** Copper Kettle.

**Jenny:** Oh, wow. Nailed it.

**Evan:** Boom! I jump on it quick.

**Annie:** That's exactly right. Well done! You knew it..

**Evan:** Yes. Copper Kettle was strange place. It's like, is it like a cafeteria? Is it a restaurant? It's like, Yep.

**Annie:** It's a RIP now, man.

**Evan:** I know.

**Annie:** It's gone. It's the worse because they had great coconut chicken. What have we done? What show have we created?

**Jenny:** I don't know.

**Annie:** A Nashville Foods Show.

**Evan:** I would legit do nothing but a food show every day of my life.

**Jenny:** He's spent a lot of restaurants in Nashville.

**Annie:** Have you listened to our Snack Show yet? You know the That Sounds Fun Network has a snack show?

**Evan:** Let me tell you why I haven't. It's actually been a strategic dieting decision.

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

**Jenny:** We don't need to know.

**Evan:** Because I feel like once somebody tells me about something, it's all I think about food wise. Some people are like, Oh, I really like food." I'm like, "No, if you're eating like kale chips, you are probably not my tribe."

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah, you're not my people.

**Evan:** You're not my people. And that's cool. Like, you go do that, do some hot yoga, eat some kale chips, and have one glass of wine and you're good. But I'm gonna not do that.

**Annie:** I'm on the Oreo episode of the Snack pod. And I'm like, so how much do I have to try to get there? Oreos are kind of my sin spot. And so I can't.

**Evan:** Hey, if you only got one, that's good. If you only got one. On the bus this dude had Oreos, and he had a cup. Like a giant cup. And he would just put them in a cup, crunch them up and make cereal. And he called it Oreo cereal.

**Jenny:** Oh, my!

**Evan:** And I thought to myself-

**Annie:** He's 19?

**Evan:** 21.

**Annie:** Yes, yeah, yes, certainly.

**Evan:** And I thought to myself, if I did that, I would weigh like 8,000 pounds.



**Jenny:** Talk about cavities.

**Annie:** That feels terrible. That cavities, the sugar-

**Evan:** Right. But if you eat it with a spoon-

**Annie:** But when you're 21, live your best life.

**Evan:** And what's funny, he's finished it and then he went back to the sink. And I saw him get out another-

**Annie:** He did it twice?

**Jenny:** He ate a second?

**Evan:** He ate a second. And I thought to myself like I remember a time when I would go two bowls of like cinnamon toast crunch in one city. And I thought I was like edgy. But this dude is like-

**Jenny:** To the full sleeve of Oreos.

**Annie:** He probably sleeved. He probably sleeved.

**Evan:** He full-sleeved it.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Evan:** That should be an expression. Like he went full sleeve.

**Annie:** He did. Well, now it is because your guy did.

**Evan:** He went full sleeve.

**Annie:** You need to tell him.

**Evan:** He went full sleeve.

**Annie:** And his name is Brandon Lake.

**Evan:** No, it was not. That's another thing. This dude Jason who's on the tour, Jason Roy was like, "Hey, we're gonna go to the gym in the morning. We're gonna do a quick Murph in the morning."

**Annie:** Oh, boy.

**Evan:** To which I was like, "No."

**Annie:** No. There's nothing quick about a Murphing. Those are hard.

**Jenny:** "I'm gonna unload 500 books from this truck instead."

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah. That counts. That counts.

**Evan:** That's what I did for real. But it was also kind of one of those things of like, No one says that. No one has ever thought like, I'm gonna go just you know, do the super intense workout real quick.

**Annie:** Tour bros. Tour bros do. You have a whole new life now that you're in a tour bro life.

**Evan:** I'm fine with the fact that I probably won't fit into that part of it. I want to sleep-

**Annie:** Those guys full sleeve and they Murph. That's who they are.

**Evan:** All the time.

**Annie:** That's who they are.

**Evan:** Maybe that's why they Murph because they fall asleep.

**Annie:** Maybe they fall asleep because they murphed.

**Evan:** Maybe that's what it is.

**Annie:** That's it. That's what it is.

**Jenny:** A new language.

**Annie:** Hey, come back anytime. Thanks for doing this.

**Jenny:** Thank you so much.

**Evan:** Thank you.

**Annie:** Oh, I just can't wait for people to get to hear this and read this book.

**Evan:** Amazing.

**Annie:** Well done. Let's full-sleeve and Murph our way into 2023.

**Evan:** Full sleeve.

[01:02:58] <music>

**Outro:** Oh, you guys, don't you love Evan and Jenny? Oh my gosh. I mean, we could have sat here and talked for another two hours. I just loved it, loved it, loved it. Be sure to pick up a copy of their book, *Healing What's Hidden*. Be sure to follow them on social media, tell them thanks for being on the show.

And if this is a show that you think will help someone that you love, please share it. Either put it on your social media and let them click on it themselves or send it in a text. Let's get these kinds of helpful shows about trauma and pain, and learning and growth particularly for our first responders and our veterans... Whatever we can do to help them, let's help them. So put this show in front of the people that you love that fit in those categories or just the people that you think might need a little boost today.

I hope you're all signed up to join us for our advent series. Remember, it'll be an episode on the podcast every day, but we've got a lot more for you that you can go learn all about at [Anniefdowns.com/advent](http://Anniefdowns.com/advent). Do not miss out on this, you guys. Go check it out. [Anniefdowns.com/advent](http://Anniefdowns.com/advent) and get in it with us.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. All the places you may need me, that is how you can find me.

And I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home, do something that sounds fun to you. I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me is I'm headed out of town with some girlfriends just to hang out. I cannot wait. It's gonna be the best. I cannot wait to be with them.

So y'all have a great weekend. Thank you again to our first responders and our veterans. We celebrate you today. And we are grateful, grateful, grateful for how you spend your days and your life for the safety of others. We're really thankful.

Y'all have a great weekend. We'll see you back here on Monday with one of our favorites Lysa TerKeurst. See you guys then.