

**[00:00:00]**    <music>

**Annie:**        Hey friends! Welcome to a bonus Friday episode of That Sounds Fun. It's also kind of an episode of Human Hope. This is going to be interesting. I am your host Annie F. Downs. I'm really happy to be here with you today. I love getting to see you on a Friday. And we've got a great little show in store for you.

Today on the show, I get to talk with... Well, technically he talks with me. It's my friend Carlos Whittaker, my Here For You tour buddy. We are in the middle of packing and finishing up tour prep, loading the bus. And before we hit the road next week, we want to sit down and talk about why we even wanted to do this tour together in the first place.

We realized recently that maybe some of you around here are new and don't know who Carlos is—and I always want my friends to meet my friends—and a lot of Carlos' friends don't know who I am. So we actually took a few minutes to chat about our friendship and give you some inside scoop all about the tour and what to expect. Carlos kind of interviews me and I kind of just stole this episode and put it on my show too. So it's kind of a Human Hope episode that we're just letting us also hear on That Sounds Fun. It's cool, you guys.

The Here For You tour is going to be so fun. It is brought to you by our friends at African New Life. African New Life exists to provide access to education, leadership, training, and healthcare in Africa, through church planting and Christian discipleship and through holistic care for vulnerable children and women and men in need.

So while we get to hang out here in the States in June and remind each other that we are here for each other, we also get to reach out to new friends across Africa to remind them that we are here for them too. It is going to be such a special part of every night. Okay, you guys, I am beside myself to get the story started. And this is a great first appetizer.

So here is our conversation all about the Here For You tour.

**[00:02:01]** <music>

**Carlos:**        Annie Downs.

**Annie:**        Carlos Whittaker.

**Carlos:**        Annie F. Downs.

**Annie:** Carlos F. Whittaker.

**Carlos:** B. Whitaker.

**Annie:** Either one or.

**Carlos:** FYI, I was thinking a couple weeks ago, (a) I've actually never had you on my Human Hope podcast.

**Annie:** Oh, yeah. I haven't been on Human Hope. I was on-

**Carlos:** The Pew Party podcast.

**Annie:** The Pew Party podcast.

**Carlos:** Yes, you were.

**Annie:** In 2013.

**Carlos:** But I'm 111 episodes in now. So I apologize.

**Annie:** You're doing awesome by the way.

**Carlos:** I mean, you've had me on yours three times already, or something. And I just thought to myself, We're going on tour together-

**Annie:** Yes, next week.

**Carlos:** Next week we're going on tour together.

**Annie:** Dude!

**Carlos:** We literally right now around this table had a couple team members in here and we already have like moment number one of freak-out excitement, like, "Oh my gosh, this is gonna happen at the beginning of the week. We can do this. And what are we gonna do?" And there's just a lot of like... I'm just getting goosebumps right now.

**Annie:** I know. Isn't it fun?

**Carlos:** Are you excited?

**Annie:** Oh, I'm really excited. I mean, (a) you and I have dreamed of doing this. I mean, we've floated it into the atmosphere for years. So that is fun to me. We've never done anything like this.

**Carlos:** Never.

**Annie:** Neither you nor I have ever done anything like this. So that feels interesting, that there are aspects of this show that have never existed before.

**Carlos:** Right.

**Annie:** And because you and I are both people of faith, we have the undergirding and the backing of "if God switches it up, we're open to that." So that means we're going to do 12 shows that are different.

**Carlos:** Yes.

**Annie:** And I love doing 12 shows that are different.

**Carlos:** Well, I've never done shows. Like this my first tour. I want to get into the tour because I do want to talk a little bit about the tour. I want to talk about just some dreams we have for the night and maybe even dropped in a couple of little surprises here.

**Annie:** Not all of them.

**Carlos:** Not all of them.

**Annie:** Some of them.

**Carlos:** Some of them.

**Annie:** I agree.

**Carlos:** But really, I got a couple DMs a few weeks ago from followers that were like, "I'm really excited about everything that you do and I'm excited about this tour thing, but it's not a Carlos tour. It's a Carlos and Annie tour." And I just realized some people-

**Annie:** "Who is Annie?"

**Carlos:** ...don't know who you are, some people that follow you don't know who I am. And I was like, "Oh my gosh, I need to introduce Annie F. Downs to my Instagram, my

Human Hope, all the places for people that don't know who you are. And I think just so that they can make sense of "Oh, this is why both of them together are doing this." So I'm literally just punting a ball to you going, Annie, who are you? I'm sitting next to you on a plane, who are you, Annie?

**Annie:** So hello everyone. Annie F. Downs. I don't know if we've ever talked about this, Carlos, but the reason we have to use the F is because there's another Annie Downs. She's a very famous quilter in Australia.

**Carlos:** Wow.

**Annie:** She is like the top of the quilting world.

**Carlos:** Have you ever had her on your podcast?

**Annie:** No, she doesn't want to be friends as much as I want to be friends. It's been my experience. She may feel different now. But in history that is... she's running her life and I respect her.

**Carlos:** Absolutely.

**Annie:** But if you look at the hashtag Annie Downs, it floats between one of my books, one of my podcasts, and a puppy dog.

**Carlos:** Oh, that's amazing.

**Annie:** And Christmas. It just goes bananas.

**Carlos:** It shifts.

**Annie:** It's great. I mean, I think the easiest way, I've been writing books and traveling and speaking. This has been my full-time job since 2012. So for 11 years. I've written 11 books and traveling, speak two to three times a month most months. I'm doing women's conferences and some teen events very rarely, but that's how I started—my first three were all for teenagers.

**Carlos:** Yeah, you are. You're like touring on tour buses to talk to teenagers.

**Annie:** I was on the Girls of Grace tour with Christian group called Point of Grace.

**Carlos:** Oh, yeah.

**Annie:** It was awesome. It was a great way to jump in. Because honestly, Carlos, when you start in this career, the people who hire you to speak want you to have a book and the people who want you writing the books want you to be speaking. So I was really honored and blessed (I don't use that lightly) to get to start my career by going like, Hey, your books coming out and you're on a tour for two school years. It was a huge gift. And the funny part was, is it was a sponsorship slot.

**Carlos:** Oh, wow.

**Annie:** Like my publisher was a sponsor of the tour. They had part of the sponsorship gig was the tour gets one bunk for that sponsor person and they have to bust out of Nashville, and I was the only new author for teen girls that lived here.

**Carlos:** No way.

**Annie:** It was just providence. Right? It was just how it worked. So started my podcast, That Sounds Fun, in 2014. So we're at year nine. And then, for the past few years, I've written books, created our shows for That Sounds Fun, and then traveled and spoke at events. Like I said, conferences and Sunday mornings, some corporate things, not like you do, but a handful of mainstream things.

And then 2020 I helped launch a podcast network called The That Sounds Fun Network. And the reason to do that is there a lot of people who wanted to make shows that (a) wanted community, (b) wanted knowledge, and (c) wanted income from it. And we knew how to do all that. So three years later, the That Sounds Fun Network has shows on it like Human Hope.

**Carlos:** Like Human Hope.

**Annie:** I mean, you're a perfect example of why we're so honored to get to run the network. Because you've always had a podcast in you.

**Carlos:** Sure.

**Annie:** You've done it over and over. What you needed was for a team to come along and say, Sign this dotted line and let us help you get this out every week. And you nail it. So that's really fun to me. So that's what I do. Those are my four legs of the stool. Live in Nashville, not married yet, get to have a great group of friends. I mean, I love your family. I mean, what else do you want me to say?

**Carlos:** This is what I want to say.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Carlos:** So hearing that and actually listening to your journey, like rewind back to, you know, 2011, 2012-

**Annie:** Gosh. When did y'all move here? '10?

**Carlos:** We moved here 2010.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Carlos:** I think my third iteration attempt of having a podcast was like 2010. And it was called The Pew Party podcast. And you came over and you were... You know, we were both blogging back in the day.

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

**Carlos:** We had like big blogs. I was doing music. I was full-time worship leader traveling. But as I listened to you tell your story, this is what I need people to hear about you. Annie is not only... Again, listen, I don't know how you take compliments.

**Annie:** Can't wait.

**Carlos:** I've never necessarily sat straight across from you. Some people don't like these. But what you are so gifted at in my life, in particular, is as you talk about your journey, I literally am realizing how many things that you have literally shifted the trajectory of my life. Like me. These for you may just be you're so good at loving your friends, you're so good at loving people and introducing people and all these things.

**Annie:** Oh, yeah. When my friends become friends of my friends is my favorite thing.

**Carlos:** So here I sit. Here I sit, 49 years old. And as you listen to podcasts, I could be 50, if you listen in three months. But here I sit and I'm like, "Okay, wait a second. I am a full-time corporate speaker leaning to the faith in some spaces with Premiere Speakers Bureau. Annie was literally the one that put me in a group text with Brian at Premiere Speakers Bureau and said, "You need to meet this guy." Because I was just kind of trying to figure out on my own. I was booking stuff on my own. And it was okay, I was paying the bills, barely-

**Annie:** Yes, you were doing great.

**Carlos:** But you put me in touch with them. And suddenly they helped me kind of take off on the speaking thing. Because the thing was I was Going from musician to

speaker. Not a lot of people make that transition and it work. And now probably 95% of people that are listening to this podcast are like, "You were a singer?" Like they just don't even know.

**Annie:** Yeah, they don't remember that.

**Carlos:** Because that's called a successful career transition. You did that. You helped me with that.

**Annie:** I'm glad I got to help.

**Carlos:** There's number one. Ready? Ready? Carlos, the speaker. Thank you, Annie, for helping me with that. Get a text, "You should really think about starting a podcast." I was like, "Yeah, Annie, I've started like three or four and I only make it through like 10 episodes." "No, no, you should join our network, start a podcast." You're listening to the fruit of Annie reaching out to me again, Annie, and saying, "I think you can do this." And now I love it. It's fun. It's part of my business plan, it feeds my family, all of these things because Annie invited me, again, into something else. Hold on, I'm not done.

**Annie:** Wait, can I say my favorite part of that?

**Carlos:** Okay.

**Annie:** One time you said, "I thought the podcast would help me buy gas and instead it bought me a truck."

**Carlos:** Yes. O Lord.

**Annie:** And when I tell you that that brought tears to my eyes then and it is... I mean, it is what you do... The reason that is true is because of what you invest in this show brings listeners who believe you. So man, that is one of the highest compliments you've ever given my network.

**Carlos:** Let's go! Ooh, I love that. So there's Annie infiltrating that part of my life. Then Annie is like, "Hey, let's think about doing a tour together." And I've always been the like... when I was in Christian music, I was on the Newsboys tour. So it was The Newsboys, Kutless, Disciple. I'm trying to think of all these bands.

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh, that's such a fun tour.

**Carlos:** And then maybe one other band, Finding Favor maybe, and then it was me and Tracks. And we were in arenas. And I just remember walking out-

**Annie:** Were you the first guy?

**Carlos:** I was the first guy. All the lights on, no one's in the room. And I'm out there with my merch. And you know, if I sold five CDs.

**Annie:** Right.

**Carlos:** Five CDs. I was like begging people, you know. And here I am co-headlining a tour with you, first time for that. I honestly believe this is just going to springboard me into the next 10 years of my life doing this.

**Annie:** I think so too.

**Carlos:** And I've been waiting my whole life to find help, to help me do this whole thing. I actually just shared last week on my Instagram, because I hadn't told anybody that we now share a management team. Annie, you're so literally... Like, you've just led the way for me. So I just want to say thank you. All of these things in my life that people are enjoying the fruits of me being brave, it's because you invite people into your life and you just cheer them on.

**Annie:** Oh, thanks.

**Carlos:** I just am so grateful. I'm never gonna be able to tell you thank you.

**Annie:** That means a lot to me. I believe you. And it has been an honor. And it is an honor to get to walk beside you and doing this. It is what makes... We both moved here from Atlanta. It is what makes living here, not that everybody has to live here to do this well, but there's a real advantage to being neighbors. There's a real advantage to sharing life. Because then you go like, I will always cheer. What does it look like to cheer for you next? To say, do a show. What does it look like to cheer for you next? To say, Come talk to my management team. Get involved here." So I'm thrilled.

I mean, anything we can do to move someone else's calling in the way that God's invited them to spend their lives. Because when it gets really hard, and it does get really hard, when it gets really hard we go like, "Okay, at least I'm not the only one who believes in me."

**Carlos:** Right. Right.

**Annie:** At least someone else said I could do this.



**Carlos:** Who is that for you? Who cheers for you?

**Annie:** Oh, man, that's a great question.

**Carlos:** Because you're so good at doing it for other people. Who does it for Annie?

**Annie:** You know, it's funny you would ask that. There are certainly people. There have been people who've opened doors for me all along the way. So that. But also there are times where the thing we're best at is the thing we longed for.

**Carlos:** Yeah, yeah. True.

**Annie:** So I think there's a portion of me that the thing I'm best at is what I wish would happen for me or does happen for me, or did happen for me. But there's also people like... and you're this way, too. Like I have those little blips on your radar, but there are so many people. I mean, Reggie Joiner. There's so many people in your life too who have done so many things. And that's true of me too. That's true of me too.

I think of Leigh Holt, who is Lauren Daigle's manager. When she started her Maddjett company, I was the first client. And then she signed Lauren and was like... took me to Peter's Sushi and was like, "Hey..." And I was like, "I think I know where this is going. And it's beautiful. She offers this with us now-

**Carlos:** Oh, yeah. Totally.

**Annie:** ...and she's still. And the beautiful thing about that relationship for me is it's still a phone call I can make.

**Carlos:** Sure.

**Annie:** Kelly, your team and my team, Kelly, Jamie, Haley, Lonnie, they're amazing. And we have the benefit of other managers that we go, "Hey, would you vote this way too? Okay, talk to me about that." Especially when something goes sideways, it's helpful. Or when I'm dreaming of something. So Leigh's probably the voice when I think professionally the person who has done the most of "Hey, I think you can do this. I think you can do this." Now also it's my team. Right?

**Carlos:** Yeah.

**Annie:** It's the people that work with us. You have a new team member coming. Is that public?

**Carlos:** She's actually, at the point of this recording, I think day one.

**Annie:** Oh, great. Welcome to the team. So that's the other thing is you don't necessarily need someone higher up the mountain to pull you up.

**Carlos:** Sure.

**Annie:** If you have people next to you on the mountain-

**Carlos:** Let's go!

**Annie:** ...y'all can pull each other up. But also my strength, and this is true of you too, Carlos, though, but I see myself and identify as Enneagram seven. But my eightness is very dominant. If I didn't know to pay attention to motivation more than behavior, I would think I was an eight.

**Carlos:** Wow.

**Annie:** And part of that is I love conquering mountains. And when I get to the top of that mountain, the way I keep winning is by bringing other people up the mountain. So it's okay if someone throws me a rope part of the way, but I don't have a ton of rope. Because what God made me to do is go to the top of mountains, but people have helped me. I mean, fam. I mean, my dad has rescued this company before financially. I got in a real bad spot. So there has been people who stepped... we just can't do this by ourselves.

So my team goes... Say we're climbing these mountains. I mean, we use this language of we have mountains in this career. We have my speaking, my writing, and my podcasting. When we're climbing those mountains, having them go, "Hey, I put another carabiner on here. Hey, we can keep going. Hey, you gotta rest. We put a tent up right here because you gotta rest." Having that team alongside me. And even when I only had one assistant or when I had an intern, anybody helps. But also at that point, I had a board of directors that were volunteering, and I was paying them in food once a quarter. Kelly was one of them, our manager.

**Carlos:** Oh, wow.

**Annie:** That's how we started.

**Carlos:** Oh, really?

**Annie:** I mean, we were friends first, but she was on my volunteer board of directors. Her and Kyle Chowning and Keith Bordeaux from Compassion.

**Carlos:** Okay, wow.

**Annie:** The three of them really were... They're all brilliant in different arenas. And I'm telling you, because I'm not married yet, Carlos. Do you not know this about-

**Carlos:** About you're not married?

**Annie:** You're like, "Oh, Annie, I've heard you say it. You won't be single because people didn't know. That's it. You weren't single because you haven't told."

**Carlos:** No.

**Annie:** About having a board?

**Carlos:** No.

**Annie:** So they would come over once a quarter. Because I'm not married, I didn't have anybody to process things with on a daily basis who I felt good about seeing my finances and all that stuff. So I gave the three of them. I was like, "You can see my phone. You can see my bank accounts. You can see my emails. You can see anything." And it also once a quarter made me type up like a business plan and how I was doing.

**Carlos:** Yeah, that's good. Interesting.

**Annie:** That probably went for five or six years, where they came over once a quarter to my house and I brought in dinner.

**Carlos:** And that's when you started speaking and you're writing books?

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Carlos:** Okay.

**Annie:** So having anybody alongside you, spouse, friends, pastors, board, intern is really what... Those are the people. So when I look and go, "Man, I wish someone..." I have some names of people I'm like, I wish you brought me along. We were friends and you didn't invite me to open for you or you didn't invite me to do this with you? I wish you'd brought me along. I have those wishes. I mean, I bet you do too of like, "I wish you would have taken me out on the road. You took that person but I wish you had taken me. So I feel all that and also I have such a village that has partnered with me and helped me.

**Carlos:** No, you do. So hopefully people are listening to podcast right now, they're like, Okay, oh my gosh, this is not only a friend of Carlos, this is like someone that he believes in-

**Annie:** Oh, thanks. I feel that.

**Carlos:** Which is why we're... I wouldn't just go on a tour.

**Annie:** Sure.

**Carlos:** Honestly. I honestly probably can't even think of anybody else I would want to do this with, share a stage with, and trust to be able to share a stage with because one thing I love about you and we're both people of faith, we both have strong convictions, we have strong... but you aren't scared of navigating difficult conversations. You're not scared of doing that.

For the person that's listening that doesn't know who you are, tell us kind of how you... how does Annie walk with people because you've done it so well. You know, I have this thing I say all the time is don't stand on issues, walk with people. And you're so good at walking with so many different types of people. You've got friends with all kinds of different worldviews. And really on the tour, we're going to be talking a little bit about that.

**Annie:** I hope so.

**Carlos:** What's your kind of navigation tool when it comes to maybe those kinds of conversations and relationships?

**Annie:** For better or for worse, I kind of lean on what Jesus said a lot, which was Love God and love other people. So my filter is—and I have gotten a lot of pushback about this.

**Carlos:** Sure. Same.

**Annie:** But my filter is, does that person feel loved by me? And if they don't feel loved by me, then why? Okay, is it because of what they heard me say? Here's a great example. I went to a musical a couple of weeks ago. My friends and I sitting around us, we're having a very good conversation. This family is trying to sort out a church that is right for their family. And they've adopted a child that is not their same race and the parents have conflicting views on affirming LGBTQ, and what do they do about that?

So we're having this conversation, well, I realize in the moment, the row behind us is five Black women, the row in front of us is to gay couples. And my radar goes up of they are not going to hear this. I'm afraid they will not hear this well. I'm afraid they will hear us. I don't care about Annie F. Downs. It was, "They're not going to feel loved because we can't win with either row in this conversation right here between a handful of white straight women who are trying to sort this out, right? So I just felt sick to my stomach.

And at one point, something funny happens in a play and one of the guys in front of us turns around, looks at me, and said, "You love that?" I said, "I loved it." And I went, Okay. Okay. Now, if he and I were in long-term relationship, there's more opportunity to have conversations about where we land on things. But when you're sitting in a room, and I think that room can either be Instagram, that room can be TPAC in Nashville, that room can be our 12 rooms where we're doing the Here For You tour, that room can be at a restaurant, I really want people to feel loved.

**Carlos:** That are just eavesdropping in the conversation.

**Annie:** Yes. Yes.

**Carlos:** So good.

**Annie:** So while I wanted to help her and wanted to... I kept saying, "Because of where we're sitting, can we do this later?" And she was like, "Yeah, of course." Because she was turned toward her-

**Carlos:** She couldn't see.

**Annie:** She couldn't see everything that I could see. So I just said-

**Carlos:** Annie, that's so good.

**Annie:** "...I think we are having a conversation that could make people feel unloved." Now, in every scenario, I have to work to find truth in love. I'm much quicker to find gray in love. And that's not what we're called to either. Even this morning someone had a conversation with me about like, Hey, if you love that person, why haven't you told them (fill in the blank)?

**Carlos:** Sure.

**Annie:** About a relationship they're in. And I thought, That is a great question and also maybe I'm a little scared, and also I want them to feel loved and I don't want to lose them. So the balance of do people feel loved and my people pleasing feels like a

thin road to me. And I feel like the Lord wants to remind me like this is a river. You're all right.

**Carlos:** It's a river and it's you know... A river is... When you look at a river, it goes up, it goes down, it goes wide, it will flood, it will move boulders, it can go down to a trickle. So our humaneness and relationships are like rivers and I do feel like they... it's gonna shift. It's gonna move. It's not clean. I was at freaking water park where I know where the river was gonna go. And so I'm like, But that's not reality for relationships that we're in.

**Annie:** And the interesting thing about being people who are a little bit public in our lives is that one of the beautiful things that your friends let you do and my friends let me do on the other side of the word, majority, not all of them but majority is they let us be humans who learn. So when this internet gets turned sideways on me, I go, like, "Give me time to order a book. Give me time to learn. I cannot learn at the speed of the internet but I can learn at the speed of learning.

**Carlos:** I quoted you on that many times.

**Annie:** So just give me time to learn and let me grow and change. So even when I'm hopeful about our tour and thinking, I'm like, Man, y'all are going to come and we're going to tell you what we've learned about how to be there for people and what it really looks like. And in five years we'll have more ideas and I'll have wished I did that a little different and this little different. I guess we just have to... I mean, it's why How to Human is great and Human Hope is great is being a human is the central part of this. And I am going to make mistakes in it and I'm going to do my best and I'm not going to... Sometimes I'm going to have wins that people are proud of and sometimes I'm gonna have losses that people are disappointed with me about.

**Carlos:** Absolutely.

**Annie:** Guess what? I've a perfect attendance to my wins and I have perfected attendance to my sins. So I haven't missed either of them. So I know who I am. Y'all have missed more of my sins than I have.

**Carlos:** Oh, no, it's totally true. I was just... I don't think by the time this comes out... Al Andrews is going to be on my podcast. He was my therapist, when I went through the darkest season of my life. So, you know, he gets to come on. But one of the things that I told him that I was always scared of is that, you know, I'm just scared, I'm going to get exposed. Everyone's getting exposed. Everyone has cancelable, right? Like, we're all... But I used to have this fear that I would be standing on stage and somebody would walk in and stand up and look me in the eye and say,

"Everybody, this is Carlos' sin." This is... you know...? And I just had this big fear of that.

And Al just told me, he's like, "Carlos," he's like, "You simply let them do that. (a) that's never gonna happen. But if it did, you'd let them do that. And then you say, actually, I'm actually a lot worse than that.

**Annie:** That part you said.

**Carlos:** Thanks for sharing. Oh, my gosh, that's cute. But can I tell you, this is what the Bible tells me. The Bible tells me that I'm a liar. Even before, I'm a liar. I'm a thief. I'm an adulterer. I'm all these things. So actually I'm a lot more than. But because of Jesus, I am clean and I am forgiven and I'm all these things.

So to hear you talking about, you know, just navigating relationships where, yes, sometimes you're gonna win, sometimes we're gonna lose. But the humanity of it, I think is what will spill into this tour, honestly. I think it's going to be... like you said, it could be 12 different conversations. It could be 12 different shows because we're just going to be human on stage. We're just going to look at the audience and say, You've been here for us, we're going to be here for you. And what's that going to look like? So I'm excited.

**Annie:** The cancelable thing I think is so interesting because if everybody can be canceled, nobody can be canceled. So you get to keep doing your work. And I love that we've gotten there. When people yell at me on the internet, it really hurts my feelings. I mean, I won't pretend like it gets sideways for me. I left Twitter over it. I mean, it gets sideways for me.

But also the beautiful thing is people go like, once that calms down, Oh, Annie is still Annie. You know what? She actually has some chinks in her arm. Oh, she's not great at everything. Oh, great. So I love that. I think if God asked us to be anything but human in front of each other, what a hard thing to actually navigate. But because He's like, "No, Annie and Carlos are humans who are flawed."

I'm the same way. If someone walked in and said, "Hey, everybody, listen up. Here's what Annie does," I'd be like, "Yes, seven people know that already. You're not saying anything that my small group doesn't know. You're not saying any sin that somebody..." It's why we don't wanna have secret lives, right?

**Carlos:** Yes, totally.

**Annie:** You and I's biggest days of fear were when there were secrets. Now that we don't have secrets, besides some fun things we're doing on tour-

**Carlos:** Exactly.

**Annie:** ...I don't have sin secrets. You know, I don't bring Oreos in my house without telling Nancy, my mentor who you know. Nancy knows if they come in my house. And I'll tell you why. Oreos are not the problem, right? But if I start keeping that secret, I'm like three Google searches away or three television shows or three deep, dark moments of sadness. I am not far from lots of secrets.

**Carlos:** That's so good.

**Annie:** So if I will back it up, then someone walks in and goes, "Annie, eats Oreos at her house," I'm like, "Nancy knows. Nancy knows."

**Carlos:** So good. I love it. What's something we can clue in the listeners that they're gonna get to experience?

**Annie:** Oh, on the Here For You tour?

**Carlos:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Well, I haven't told you.

**Carlos:** oh, wow.

**Annie:** Can we talk about your learning 50 things by 50?

**Carlos:** Yes. I really need this tour because-

**Annie:** You're behind.

**Carlos:** I'm behind.

**Annie:** You need to do 50 things in your 50th year.

**Carlos:** Or the 50s.

**Annie:** In the 50s. So every night of the tour, I'm teaching you something new.

**Carlos:** Yes. Yes, you are.

**Annie:** Do you have boundaries around that?



**Carlos:** Zero.

**Annie:** So are you finding that I'm surprising you every night? We have got a great list.

**Carlos:** Really?

**Annie:** But I didn't know if you wanted to approve anything.

**Carlos:** No, no, no, no, no. So, again, everyone there's gonna be a segment every single night where Annie is going to teach me something new. And the beautiful thing is everyone in the room is gonna learn how to do it too.

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

**Carlos:** So we're all gonna be learning.

**Annie:** That's exactly right. I need you to know that we've had people reach out and offer to be guest experts on things.

**Carlos:** Oh, wow.

**Annie:** So we have some surprise humans.

**Carlos:** Oh, great.

**Annie:** We have some things I've got to learn first. I'll tell you the one that I am sure you don't know that I am borderline an expert on is folding a fitted sheet. Do you know how to fold a fitted sheet?

**Carlos:** What? I do not know how to fold a fitted sheet.

**Annie:** We're gonna for sure. That is one of our nights, we're gonna learn how to fold a fitted sheet.

**Carlos:** My wife is going to be so excited.

**Annie:** It's so much easier than you've put energy to it.

**Carlos:** Really?

**Annie:** So that's a surprise that you don't know.

**Carlos:** How do you get the squishy corner parts?

**Annie:** There's one out of 12. That's one you're gonna learn. You're gonna learn how to fold a fitted sheet.

**Carlos:** Wow, okay, okay.

**Annie:** So, I mean, we can actually tell people... what do we want to tell them? I mean, let's talk about the stage.

**Carlos:** Yes, yes. So the stage we kind of dreamed of, what's it gonna look like. First of all, we're gonna be on stage the entire time together.

**Annie:** There is no intermission. You and I never leave the stage.

**Carlos:** Let's go.

**Annie:** We're up there the whole time together. It is going to be insane.

**Carlos:** I mean, at that point, you know, like, who knows, like we could be in Ohio and Annie just interrupts my talk in the middle and is like, "Wait, wait, wait, Carlos, the last night you said this..." I'm really excited about the fact that we're gonna be on stage the whole time together. And you know, it's gonna feel... I think it's gonna feel very vibey, very happy shopee.

**Annie:** Have you finished your talk?

**Carlos:** Last night with Heather.

**Annie:** I have not finished mine.

**Carlos:** Here's the thing. Obviously, I'm gonna be talking about how to human. That's just kind of my message these days.

**Annie:** But that's what the tour is about is how do we do that?

**Carlos:** Oh, sure. But also, you know, as a communicator, when I have a successful talk that moves the needle and helps people move, I have a hard time leaving that right. So I have my How to human talk that... I need to let everyone know, that is not the talk that I'm giving. I'm writing a complete new "how to human".

**Annie:** No.

**Carlos:** The framework is still the same: be humans, see humans, free humans. But it's a whole other thing. So I'm excited because I'm gonna really be testing this out in front of... I think it's safe because it's in front of family and friends. Right?

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

**Carlos:** So I'm like, what if I just do 12 different talks so that I can have 12 different things to talk about the rest of the year?

**Annie:** That's right. And we're not recording any of them?

**Carlos:** No, we're not.

**Annie:** And we're not live streaming. I have not finished mine yet, either. But, you know, when we dreamed up Here For You, the idea was you and I need community and love our communities and we are standing because we have communities behind us. And so many of our friends listening, we have people coming by themselves, we have people coming from a city they don't live in. We're not going to their city so they're coming to us. And it's this opportunity to go like, Okay, let us give you some low-hanging fruit on how you find what you found in this room. So there's going to be such opp... So really, for me, I don't know if you saw this, but I lost my grandmother's ring last week.

**Carlos:** Oh, I did.

**Annie:** And God and I went on this really intense journey about it. Because I mean, I'll just tell you this. I haven't told you this because we haven't been on the bus yet. And this is bus talk. I had a really intense weekend the weekend after I lost the ring, because I thought, You're gonna take that from me. You're gonna let that happen to me? And people kept saying, there's a Catholic saint that helps you find things, St. Anthony. So people kept talking to me about St. Anthony. And people kept saying, He is the King of kings, He knows where everything is. God is not St. Anthony. And I went like this, you know where everything I want is.

**Carlos:** Oh.

**Annie:** You know where my ring is. You know where my spouse is-

**Carlos:** O Lord.

**Annie:** ...You know where the finances are that we need and you don't give me any of them.

**Carlos:** Wow.

**Annie:** I mean, it got spicy. And I think it can, right?

**Carlos:** Mm-hmm.

**Annie:** I think we're gonna have those moments. So part of what I want to talk about on tour is the stuff we don't talk about all microphones and stuff we don't talk about on podcast and go like, Hey, the way God ended that story for me required community. And I could not do it by myself. It took four other people getting involved for the Lord to end the story about my grandmother's ring.

**Carlos:** Wow.

**Annie:** And it has marked me. So that's gonna be kind of...

**Carlos:** Wow.

**Annie:** I mean, I had a whole talk I was gonna do, and then that happened and I went, "Oh, no, this is something I want to work out on Here For You.

**Carlos:** Yeah, that's good.

**Annie:** I want to work out what does it mean if people are there for you whether you know them or not? I didn't know everybody involved in my grandmother's ring story and what happens when you don't get the thing.

**Carlos:** Exactly.

**Annie:** Because I had this pause when the ring returned of "do I even tell people?" Because there are so many people who don't get the thing they want.

**Carlos:** Totally.

**Annie:** And that is hard. But then Revelation says, We overcome the enemy by the blood of the Lamb, which we can't control but the word of our testimony that we can. So then I was like, No, the only way we overcome the enemy is if I talk about God overcoming the darkness in the story. And yet... And. I say yes...and a lot. Yes, that's true, and-

**Carlos:** 30 seconds, well, for those that don't know what happened to your ring. Give us the ring story.

**Annie:** Oh, yeah. One of my neighbors found it near my house.

**Carlos:** Crazy.

**Annie:** Crazy. I couldn't tell you when it fell off. I noticed it on dinner on a Friday night. I knew I had it on Friday morning because I saw it in an Insta story. Because I thought did I not even put it on today?

**Carlos:** Wow.

**Annie:** I saw it on Insta story and I thought, "Oh no, it was on this morning." And it wasn't on by Friday night at dinner. I looked down and I was like, "Wait, I have my other ring on. Why don't I have that ring on?"

**Carlos:** Do you have it saved in the highlighter any or is the story anywhere?

**Annie:** Yes, it's a highlight.

**Carlos:** Or just come to tour and Annie will tell you about it.

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah. I'm really gonna really talk about it on tour for sure. And then the next Thursday-

**Carlos:** Wow.

**Annie:** Oh, sorry, Wednesday night. I lost it on Friday and my neighbor found it Wednesday night.

**Carlos:** Crazy.

**Annie:** That is a lot of days for a piece of metal.

**Carlos:** On the grounds.

**Annie:** ...to lay on the ground.

**Carlos:** Wow.

**Annie:** In a place I didn't even look. I was looking at... One of our friends, you know, Burger Up, right here.

**Carlos:** Sure.

- Annie:** We had walked back and forth from Burger Up. So I was... I mean, the analogies. I was spending all my time on Paris Avenue. I was going from house to house. I dug in my friend's trash and my ring was at home.
- Carlos:** Wow, wow. Wow.
- Annie:** I know. I put all my attention on Paris Avenue and the Lord said, "How about someone finds it at your house?"
- Carlos:** Let's go.
- Annie:** Right. So we're gonna... There may be a book out of this.
- Carlos:** Yeah. You never know.
- Annie:** But I got to work it out on Here For You for us. So we're both doing that.
- Carlos:** We're doing that.
- Annie:** We're talking.
- Carlos:** We're talking.
- Annie:** We got surprises.
- Carlos:** We're learning. We got surprises.
- Annie:** Oh, can't wait.
- Carlos:** We were just talking about just the intro and just like what that's gonna feel like and lots of surprises.
- Annie:** And there's a pre-party and post-party. That's our language for the VIP.
- Carlos:** Right.
- Annie:** But what people want is to make friends.
- Carlos:** Absolutely.
- Annie:** There's so many spots, and the pre-party in the post-party are the way to do that.
- Carlos:** Absolutely.

**Annie:** Is another way to like, yeah, my friend... I think one of them sold out as... I hope they aren't sold out by the time this comes out. I think I want people to meet each other.

**Carlos:** Yes, absolutely. And just so people know, I do not have the capacity to do Insta Familia meetups on this tour. So the post party for me is going to be that place where-

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

**Carlos:** Okay, I can hang and we can hang and we can do all those things. So make sure you... I mean, there's definitely level.

**Annie:** We're going to have to drag you out when the bus is ready to go. I know how this is gonna go because that's why we made you the post-party because I wane after about 10 o'clock and you wax, I believe.

**Carlos:** Yes. Yes.

**Annie:** And you get better.

**Carlos:** Oh, yeah.

**Annie:** So I'll do my pre-party at five and then I'm gonna come stop-

**Carlos:** The amount of Insta Familia meetups that I've done. It's like 11:30 pm. I'm at a bar in Frisco, Texas. Anyone show up? And 15 people show up. You know, it's fun.

**Annie:** How do you feel about bus life? Do you like it in general?

**Carlos:** Yeah, I do. I really like it.

**Annie:** Have you done a one bus tour? I feel like you've been on big once.

**Carlos:** I've been on a one bus tour. My very first tour ever was the Shanes, John Mark McMillan, and me. And the Shanes drove their own bus.

**Annie:** I've heard that about them. That's hardcore.

**Carlos:** And they did their own sound. They cut corners. I mean, it was amazing. Great business people.

**Annie:** I don't have my CDL. Is that what it's called?

**Carlos:** Oh, yeah.

**Annie:** So you don't either. We ain't driving. We got a driver.

**Carlos:** No, but I do. I love it. I mean, people will know this by the time we go on tour, but I'm taking one of my family members with me. She's gonna be working.

**Annie:** I can't believe it.

**Carlos:** So it's just so fun.

**Annie:** For people listening, there's 12 people. I mean, you will see me and Carlos on the show. But there are 12 people that it takes to make... and the driver. So 13 people it takes to pull off every one of these nights. Everyone we're traveling with except one, you and I already know. That's bananas. That's the best part.

**Carlos:** It's gonna be fun. And you talk about bus talk, you know, like because it is. We get off and you get it... The bus is driving down the freeway and we're chatting about deep stuff.

**Annie:** I'm always a little bit... I call it people drunk. I'm always a little people drunk after show because I'm hyped. I've been around people, my adrenaline is super high. And I don't eat dinner before. I wait and eat dinner after. So I just have to get on the bus and start calming down because you have to go to bed because we do... I mean, our first weekend is five shows.

**Carlos:** Five.

**Annie:** We can't call it a weekend anymore.

**Annie:** No, that's a week.

**Carlos:** That's a week.

**Annie:** It's five shows.

**Carlos:** Five shows. And our first bus drive is like 79 hours long.

**Annie:** I know. I'm gonna have to take... What's it called? Dramamine.

**Carlos:** Yes.



**Annie:** My max is about 15.

**Carlos:** Okay.

**Annie:** At 15 I start to feel a little woozy. But it's also, to me, my really long ones like that have been where you get on the bus after a show and you go to bed and then you wake up and still have. And we won't do that. We're the opposite. We're leaving in the middle of the afternoon next week and going.

**Carlos:** Have you ever done a little patches for-

**Annie:** No. Is that what I should do?

**Carlos:** Yes. It is a game changer.

**Annie:** Okay, okay. I think that for that first one when we... I mean, we'll stop for dinner next Wednesday. But other than that, we're rolling. Tuesday. No, because our first show is Wednesday. We're stopping Tuesday.

**Carlos:** And then we do rehearsals-

**Annie:** On Monday.

**Carlos:** Monday.

**Annie:** We'll do the whole show on Monday twice.

**Carlos:** Amazing.

**Annie:** That is crazy.

**Carlos:** Let's go.

**Annie:** And I just want to say again, 12 local businesses, one in every city that we get to feature. I cannot wait.

**Carlos:** And that's so cool. They're gonna have a place in the lobby. You guys can pour into them, you know, out there, get their stuff. It's gonna be awesome.

**Annie:** That's awesome. Thank you for thinking of that. I think that is such a neat thing we get to do is be there for these local businesses.

**Carlos:** We'll deposit into the communities, you know, that we're going into.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Carlos:** Well, I love you.

**Annie:** I love you too. Thanks for doing that. I can't believe it.

**Carlos:** Some people love you now too that didn't even know who you were. I told you, guys. I told you. Now you know.

**Annie:** Well, it's gonna be really fun. I am honored to get to do this tour with you. I wouldn't have picked anybody else either.

**Carlos:** You're the best. I love you.

**Annie:** Love you too, friend.

**[00:40:01] <music>**

**Outro:** You guys, are you as ready for this as I am? I cannot wait. Okay, it is not too late to grab a ticket and join us. A couple of the VIPs are really close to sold out, some of the rooms are getting full. But we've still got a seat for you as of recording this this week. We are headed to 12 different cities. Invite your friends, your mom, your sister, your husband, your wife, your small group, your book club, your everybody, and y'all just come hang out with us. We are going to have a blast. I cannot wait to see you there.

Just head to [hereforyoutour.com](http://hereforyoutour.com) and that is where you can get your tickets. And a huge thank you again to our friends at African New Life for helping make this tour happen.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. I'm real embarrassingly easy to find in June. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and on the tour bus. Y'all, I'm smiling with every tooth. I just am so ready. All the places you may need me, that is how you can find me. Don't forget you can find the That Sounds Fun podcast on Instagram, [@thatsoundsfunpodcast](https://www.instagram.com/thatsoundsfunpodcast).

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, y'all know already. I get home today from a little travel this week and I get to start really packing. I mean my guest room is already covered in my things for this tour. But I'm really ready to get packing now. And I cannot wait.

Y'all have a great weekend. We'll see you back here on Monday for more of our Summer Lovin' series on dating with licensed therapist and author, Debra Fileta and my friends Becca and Lucas. It's gonna be really fun. Y'all, we'll see you on Monday.