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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. Today is our final episode of our special series called Summer Lovin', except for that Q&A that's coming in the fall.

But this is really our final episode of this series we planned. It's a That Sounds Fun podcast series in which we wanted to restore hope in dating and bridge y'all to helpful conversations, practical resources, and amazing experts so that you can see the changes in your dating life that you want, starting with you.

During Summer Lovin' we've been talking through so many aspects of dating. I mean, y'all we did attachment theory and love languages and sex and breakups. We've really covered a lot of the bases and yet these conversations are just a jumping-off point for you to go back to your people and talk more about what you took away when you agree or when you don't agree with us and what you want to work on yourself.

Each episode features, as you know, an expert on the topic. And today as we wrap up some of those hot-button dating topics you've been wanting to hear, it's just me and our expert dating coach, Jackie Dorman, around the table. As always, we want to bridge you to these experts in their resources so you have something practical to walk away with. In the end of the episode, we'll make sure and tell you how to find all the experts and their resources.

Before we dive into today's conversation, don't forget to send in your questions after you've listened to this series. I know some of the episodes have been like all mind-blown emoji. So let us know what questions have popped up for you. Also, what did we not talk about that you want to hear more about? There's so many factors and facets of dating for Christians right now in 2023 that we absolutely want to hear from you.

We're going to do an entire follow-up episode in September where we sit down and answer some of your questions. And a lot of you have already sent some great ones in. But keep them coming. We'll compile them all and go through as many as we can on that episode.

Today on the show, we have Summer Lovin' expert Jackie Dorman. Y'all, I love Jackie Dorman. She's a relationship coach, a professional matchmaker, a speaker, bestselling author who has been empowering men and women to live their best lives for decades.

Her breakthrough program for dating and relationships called Your Last Year Single has helped thousands of singles find love and rediscover hope and healing for their lives. And her latest book, *Married in 12 Months Or Less*, helps you get out of your own way with the help of some practical tips to overcome some of those key barriers that keep us from finding a healthy relationship.

And listen, the proof with Jackie Dorman is in the pudding. All you gotta do is go look at her Instagram and look at the couples that she shares that she has matched that have been in her courses. It is impressive.

Today we're diving into all the things, dating apps, yellow, green, and red flags, the importance of physical attraction, and more. You are going to love her, you guys. Consider this your free one-hour session with a matchmaker because she's gonna have plenty of notes for you to walk away with.

So here's my Summer Lovin' conversation on flags, apps and so much more with Jackie Dorman.

Annie: Jackie Dorman, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

Jackie: Thank you so much.

Annie: What a treat! I'm so happy you're here.

Jackie: I am so happy to be here.

Annie: And we get to finish the Summer Lovin' series.

Jackie: Yeah. I love to be a closer.

Annie: Yeah, you are closing us out. This has been quite a month. A lot of content, a lot of experts that we get to bridge people to, and you are one of those. You are such a gift in my life. I love your book. I think it lands in people's hands and hearts at the exact right time it is supposed to. And I love your expertise. Will you kind of give us a little bio? Give people what are you most passionate about and why are you the one sitting here.

Jackie: I am the most passionate about people being in love and in the right kind of love. I have a huge back history of why. My mom was married three times before I was 10. I've seen love that is dysfunctional and unhealthy. I've lived through that myself. I married my next-door neighbor, you know? So things come-

Annie: I can't believe he's here. I was so surprised. I was like, Ah, I'm so happy.

Jackie: In the porch and 16 years ago. So it's going to work out everyone who's worried about that. It's gonna work out. So I really like to see people to be able to partner because I believe that we've been created for this. It's not something that we want, it's something God wants for us. But it's so hard for people nowadays. So I'm passionate about people being able to do that.

But just like you just said, I come in people's life right at that time. I call myself the mystical magical matchmaking Nanny McPhee. I just kind of drops in out of nowhere, like you hear me on the radio or someone tells you about me right when you're crying out like, Smite Me, Almighty Smiter!. Like you're so angry about your love life. Like, how did I even get here?

So I have always been the matchmaker. I helped 15 of my friends get married because even though it wasn't working for me, it's like I somehow knew how to help other people do it, which is so often the case, right?

Annie: Yeah.

Jackie: And then of course, I had my own moments with marrying my neighbor and I'm like, "Whoa." And I did this thing that I call the heart work and it just changed my life and it's changed so many people's lives. I have a bestselling book now. That has a crazy title that you have to be brave to even pick up in the first place, *Married in 12 Months Or Less*. And then I've helped so many, thousands of single Christians get out of their own way. And now over 400 people get married in the last 29 months.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Jackie: Right? Engaged and married in the last 29 months. So since the end of COVID, since the end of our forced sabbatical, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of chronically single people have been able to step into love. I can't tell you. That just makes me want to cry. Just even thinking about being part of those lineages and legacies.

Annie: It's one of my favorite things about your Instagram account. I've told you this a lot. But following you, you see all these couples that have met either in your groups or because you've helped one of them do their work, put them in the right place at the right time. And none of the couples look the same. No two couples that you match look the same: age, race, where they live, what they-

Jackie: All the crazy stories of how they met?

Annie: Yes.

Jackie: And that's why I do it because people need to see that a lot of people are stuck because they think it has to look a certain way and they think the person has to be a certain way. So by showing that in real-time, people are like, "Oh, wait, hold on a minute. Maybe I'm thinking about this in a way that's keeping me back from the love that might be right in front of me. Right?"

Annie: Yeah. We have got a lot of questions to go through. We're trying to kind of wrap our arms around this whole series and kind of finish it up. We are going to do a Q&A in a couple of months. But this is our Q&A before the Q&A.

Jackie: Gotcha.

Annie: We've gotten all these questions in from people. One of them that hundreds of people have asked, where do I meet someone? Where do people-

Jackie: Where are they?

Annie: Where are they? Where are they?

Jackie: Where are the men? Where are the women? Where are they? And not just any because obviously we have a plus billion people in the world. But where are the ones that are what I'm looking for? And the answer is, they're everywhere. The most important lie that I think we believe in this area, especially if you're a Christian or a person of faith, is that I have to meet them in a context of faith. So I have to meet them at church. I have to meet them at a spiritual community of some sort. I have to meet them at synagogue. I have to meet them someplace where it's in a context of you're spiritual, I'm spiritual. But guess what, all of us spiritual people go everywhere. We go to the grocery, we go to the bowling alley-

Annie: We go to baseball games.

Jackie: We go to baseball games, yeah. We go all those places. So it's more important than being in the right place at the right time is being in the right place at the right time with the right heart.

Annie: Oh, listen, if you knew how many times I've written that in my journal since you told me. Right place, right time, right heart. That matters.

Jackie: I'm telling you, there's a highlight situation that happens. A lot of people are like, But wait, I've tried that, and it doesn't work. It does work. But I will tell you, there is a massive migration of relocation happening in the lives of singles right now.

Annie: Oh, wow. Okay.

Jackie: There is. So be open to that as well. Be open to going to places that you've never been before. Like a different gym. Maybe a career change that you've been thinking about for years. Maybe a different grocery store. Maybe even uh, gasp, a different church. But wait a second, I've been here for 40 years. Maybe that's the problem. You need to visit some other places. Not that you can't go back there if you need to, but maybe it is time to move on to something else. So be open to change. Because people that are stuck in ruts are also stuck in ruts in their dating life.

Annie: Right. If you're going in the same place every day and you're not seeing a single person, the opposite sex, then take a left turn instead of a right tomorrow.

Jackie: And people tell me all the time, there's no single guys, there's no single girls at my church. I'm like, "Well, maybe you should be somewhere else for that purpose then because maybe in this season of your life-

Annie: Is that okay? Is it okay to prioritize that?

Jackie: It is okay to prioritize that because you're never going to get fully fed in every season of your life in one place. And I think that we believe that born here, die here thing when it comes to spiritual community. You have to have community, but a lot of people will stay far beyond their grace for something when it's not feeding the places of their life that they're in in this season. Like if you were a young family, would you be at a spiritual community that didn't have any resources for young families?

Annie: No.

Jackie: You wouldn't because it's not the right thing for you.

Annie: You're right. Wow.

Jackie: So be open to that. It's not wrong. You don't have to pick a fight with it and be like, it's terrible. In order to leave it. You don't have to pick a fight with anything you can bless what has fed you in certain seasons and move forward, obviously, in divine direction. Right?

Annie: Yeah. So let's talk about dating apps. Let's talk about that.

Jackie: Let's talk about them.

- Annie:** Christians have a lot of yes, no, I don't know, what do I do dating apps questions.
- Jackie:** Right.
- Annie:** So the first one... I mean, so many people ask this. Is there a way for Christians to do dating apps well?
- Jackie:** Of course. We can do everything well. First of all, dating apps are a tool just like money is a tool. You know, Christians used to believe that money was evil. No, the love of money or the misuse of money is evil. It's a tool. So dating apps, even though they are mostly secular-based, even though the Christian ones are as well, you're gonna have a lot of people on those apps. And people often say that those are the ones that have the worst cybersecurity, so they have the most trolls on them.
- Annie:** Wow, okay.
- Jackie:** Because whoever made the app, they also have to invest in continuing that cyber security situation. Otherwise, we have lots of scam accounts. Right?
- Annie:** Right.
- Jackie:** But you can meet someone anywhere, once again, if you have a healthy healed, and whole heart. Not to be fully healed, all right? We could talk about that in a second. But if you're bleeding out, truly, if you're bleeding out, dating apps are a dangerous place to be because blood attraction works and you will not meet prince charming; you will meet prince alarming if you are on the dating app.
- Annie:** Prince alarming, Jackie.
- Jackie:** You will. You will. You know the prince from Shrek?
- Annie:** Yes. Yes.
- Jackie:** You're not gonna meet the right person if you're there. And so-
- Annie:** Lord Farquaad is who you mean from Shrek.
- Jackie:** That's exactly right. I am. I do a poll for my premarital class. So when people are together, they're going forward into marriage, and still, to the tune of 50%, 60% are meeting on apps.
- Annie:** Wow.

- Jackie:** So people need to know that it is possible and it is there. But you got to be there with the right mindsets, and you got to know what you're doing.
- Annie:** One of the questions is, has online dating hurt our ability to meet people organically?
- Jackie:** I don't think that it's necessarily hurt our ability to meet people organically. I think people are lazy when it comes to meeting people. I do. I can't tell you how many people are like, All I think I ever wanted to be married. And then I go through their daily schedule and there's absolutely nothing on their schedule that tells me that.
- Annie:** Wow.
- Jackie:** They're going from work to home, they're getting in their jammies, they go to the same situations over and over again that don't work, whether that's community or the same places in community. And it's like, well, you might say you want this, but actually your actions are telling me you don't actually want it. So I think that our fear of people has hurt our ability to meet people.
- And then we get on apps and we take that same fear to the apps and then we wonder why we're not meeting people that are healthy. Because we're there with an unhealthy kind of view of people too, with a lot of stranger danger, or the opposite. Like, come on over, put your feet on my coffee table. I don't even know you.
- Annie:** A couple of our friends reached out and said, Okay, I'm in my 50s. What dating apps should I use? I'm in my 40s. I'm in my 20s. Is there more specific good ones for different ages?
- Jackie:** I mean, people like what they like and people can meet someone anywhere. I have success stories from Tinder, which is considered the breakup app.
- Annie:** Yeah. It's a surprise.
- Jackie:** We shouldn't get in our own way there. But at the same time, there are ones that are differentiated. So we have the Stir for single parents, the League for boss babes kind of people. The ones that people like that have a free kind of element to them are Bumble and Hinge. Those are the two favorites of people as far as the free level. But this is what I want to say. Invest in yourself and in your love story. A Match or an eHarmony might not necessarily work just because you're investing in it, but at the same time, why not? Why not invest in yourself? I mean, this is the most important decision you're gonna make. Isn't it?

- Annie:** Right. After Jesus, this is the next closest person you're gonna have in your life forever hopefully.
- Jackie:** Yeah, exactly. And you want to be in it to win it. And I think that that's another mentality that we have to look at. People are using the mindset of kind of disposable society, disposable relationships when they approach these things. I think that that's where the hard work really comes in. This is not a lease on a car. It's a situation where oh, if I don't like it, I'm just gonna trade it.
- Annie:** Sometimes apps make it feel like this is a game. Yes, yes, yes. No, no. Yes, yes. No, no. Right?
- Jackie:** Yeah.
- Annie:** So how do we de-gamify apps? Or is it okay if it's like, hey... One of the things you and I have talked about is like, if you walk into a bar, you're swiping left and right on every person you look at.
- Jackie:** It's true.
- Annie:** So you're actually only doing with your finger, what you're doing with your face in a public place to do. So is it a game? Or is it not a game? Or does it depend on the heart you bring to it?
- Jackie:** Yeah, it's definitely not a game. But I would encourage people to begin to do things that are counterintuitive. Because if something's not working out for you, then you have to do something different. Right?
- Annie:** Right.
- Jackie:** So if your type isn't working out for you... like a lot of people talk to me about attraction and type. And attraction is based on a lot of stuff. And that's what we have to understand. Like you just said, I walk in the bar, and I'm swiping left and right on people. We need to be consciously aware that we're doing that. We're sizing people up. We're assuming things about people that a lot of times are not true.
- Annie:** Yeah, that's exactly right.
- Jackie:** I mean, I've seen people that did not like each other at all the first time they met each other, like in community, they were in the same community, and they're married now. The vibe that they got from the person was like, Oh, this is not the kind of person that I want to be around. The problem is, is that what you're attracted

to, especially if it's not leading to quality relationships, and that includes friendships and romantic relationships that you have to take a second look at why. You're the common denominator there. What are my attractions rooted in? What are they rooted in?

Yeah, he might be over six foot tall... I had a guy last night on a coaching session. I was like, "How tall are you?" And he said, "I'm 6'11". And I thought he was just kidding.

Annie: Oh, my gosh.

Jackie: I thought he's being facetious because women are like, How tall are you? And he's like, No, Jackie, seriously, I'm 6'11. And I was like, "Whoa." I was like, "Okay, no problem there. Check."

Annie: Is that a protector thing for women?

Jackie: Yeah. Women just want to feel feminine. They want to feel a little. They think that they need to feel that way to feel feminine. Like he's got to be so much bigger than me. A lot of men-

Annie: It feels really unfair.

Jackie: It is unfair because just geographically speaking in America, that's not the average height of men here. You want to go to Australia? Maybe that's the average height of men there. So yeah, it is unfair. And a lot of men will carry themselves in a very bigger way than they are. And I don't mean an arrogant way but just their presence is like... it's safer and you feel more secure. But every woman wants to feel like a woman.

Annie: Right. But it feels like we've put this expectation on men to be a certain height because culture has told women to be small.

Jackie: And culture has told us so many things. And that's based on the attractions I was talking about. There are so many things that our attractions are rooted in that are cultural, that are familial, they're from your family, they're from some dumb movie that you watched, or some book that you read. And you don't know it, but it's actually hardwired you to fail in this situation. And it's time for us to unpack that.

Annie: So when we're looking at someone on an app, or in a bar, or at a baseball game or at church, I mean, are we allowed to go, I'm attracted or not attracted and swipe mentally or are we supposed to dig deeper?

- Jackie:** It depends on how your attractions have been working out for you.
- Annie:** Right. We got to tell this one story. You and I, you had me-
- Jackie:** Together.
- Annie:** Yes. One thing you've had me do in our relationship is you've had me list out the last few men that I'd been in any kind of romantic relationship with. And we found-
- Jackie:** We found a pattern.
- Annie:** A pattern.
- Jackie:** And not a good one.
- Annie:** Yes, that was not getting me what I want in my life. But it still is what I'm most attracted to. And it's not even physical necessarily.
- Jackie:** No, it's not.
- Annie:** It's an experience.
- Jackie:** It's a whole vibe.
- Annie:** It's a vibe. I'm attracted to a certain vibe that so far is not working for me.
- Jackie:** Exactly.
- Annie:** So tell me, when I look at a man or when any of us are looking at the person we're attracted to, do we go, Okay, yes, no matter what, or if we're not attracted, no, no matter what, or do we need to go another level?
- Jackie:** I think it's important to try things that you haven't tried before. Like on the buffet. When you go to the buffet, like at Jason's Deli or wherever there's buffets nowadays after COVID? Where are they? Where are the buffet? It's on a cruise ship? You're always gonna gravitate towards the things you know and towards the things that you know you "like". So it's important to try something different.
- Annie:** And it feels safe.
- Jackie:** Yeah, that feels safe. That you know you're not allergic to. But maybe try something different because you might like it. So really when it comes to dating I think it's important for us to do counterintuitive things if our dating life isn't

working out for us. Go out with a guy that you wouldn't normally pick. Go out with a girl. Ask the girl... First of all, it's low stakes. Right.

Annie: Right. Lower the stakes.

Jackie: It doesn't have to be romantic first time out of the gate. Do something like... And I don't like the sit across from each other awkwardly and then overshare date. Because that's what happens. Because you start getting-

Annie: Especially with Christian.

Jackie: Yes. Oh, yeah. It's like, I have to find out if this is my spouse right now before we even have a second time.

Annie: All right.

Jackie: Can we disagree that Christians are weird in that way?

Annie: I mean, that messed up my 20 so hard.

Jackie: I see. I didn't grow up a Christian. I didn't meet Jesus till I was in my 20s. And I'm glad because it lets me have a different perspective a lot of times. But do something active where you can see this person's personality. So something that causes that to come out. You know, if it's summertime, go to a fair. Go to amusement park. You're going to spend all day with that person, but just go have fun. You know, just pay it forward. Have fun. Do something that sounds like fun. Do something that sounds like fun to you.

Annie: Online dating, how quick do we get off the app and in person?

Jackie: Very quickly. Very, very quick.

Annie: Do you give your phone number?

Jackie: No. People are doing all kinds of things with that. They're getting burner phones, so they can give out a phone number.

Annie: Like a Google number?

Jackie: Yeah, like a Google number or just a burner phone, like a dumb phone or a smartphone.

Annie: That's awesome.

Jackie: They're doing that. A lot of apps have video chat. So that's the most important thing. And I would suggest if you can, talk to this person before you meet up with them in person, that's great.

Annie: Like a phone call.

Jackie: Yeah. But can we talk about apps are great, but I love something called community-based matchmaking.

Annie: Let's talk about it.

Jackie: That's what we do, girl. So let's just talk. Let's take any community. So let's take Christians because we know them. So let's take them. They are the biggest family in the world. And if you believe in the six degrees of separation, also known as the six steps to Kevin Bacon. The Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon. And I think it's smaller now because there's more people. We should be helping each other in this way. Because that's the olden days. And the Ancient of Days has ancient ways. That's my favorite thing to say. So if it worked then, it can work now. And why don't we do it?

A lot of people I feel like when they're single they get real solitarily tunnel vision of me me me. I'm single, I'm hurting. I want to meet someone. But what if you helped make happen for others what you want God to make happen for you? And we're seeing that happen in our communities and it's incredible. Because when it happens, then you're like, Whoa, whoa, somebody somewhere know somebody who knows my spirit mate. So what if we started doing that? What if instead of swiping the apps just for ourselves, what if we were looking out for a friend or two friends or a half a dozen friends? What if we were doing that?

Annie: I cannot tell you how often my girlfriends that I will send... because now a lot of the apps have a "send this to one of your friends". Send this guy to one of your friends. We've seen guys back and forth all the time. I had a friend go on a date recently and she said on the date, "I think you're great but I think you're a better match for my friend."

Jackie: That's happening. It's happening so much.

Annie: I mean, it's crazy.

Jackie: And guys are setting up their girlfriends with people as well. That's happening as well.

Annie: So will you describe spirit mate a little bit? I think that's a really interesting thing for people to process of what we're actually looking for.

Jackie: So a lot of times your attractions will have you looking for a flesh mate. Like your most base level of who you are—what I'm attracted to. And by the way, visceral attraction with a stranger is usually a red flag.

Annie: Oh, interesting. We're getting ready to talk about flags.

Jackie: Okay, yes, for sure. So we're spirits that live in bodies that possess this master control area that we call the soul or the heart, right? And that's the area that usually has all the bad or the good information in it. Your type or your attractions would be contained in that soul part. So we want our spirit and our soul to sign off on an attraction before our body gets to participate.

Annie: Wow.

Jackie: So it's just kind of the highest level of attraction you can get to. Because the lesser attractions wear off it's called infatuation. And a lot of times it's infatuation for all the wrong reasons. So it's just important for us to have that higher level of connection. And you can't have it if you don't understand who you are. So it's based on identities and identity connection. So I help people do that identity work so that they're connecting at higher levels.

Annie: What I've learned from you about that has also been this idea of there's actually a bigger purpose if you're looking for someone who's running spiritually in the direction you want to go.

Jackie: Absolutely. And then that's for everyone. Whether they understand those things or not, it's for everyone. Those are long term relationships. The rest of them are going to be for reasons and seasons and they're going to run out of gas on the side of the road eventually. You're going to. Okay?

[00:22:27] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation to share about one of our amazing partners, [Sundays For Dogs](#). It seems like a lot of my friends begin to dog lately, so I'm seeing all the cute pics, hearing all the stories about their antics, and getting in a few puppy cuddles here and there.

And here's what I want all of my dog-loving friends to know about Sundays For Dogs. Sundays For Dogs is healthy dog food that's actually easy to store and serve for your pups so they get a meal that both tastes good to them and is good for them.

Sundays is air-dried dog food containing 90% meat, 10% vegetables, and zero synthetic nutrients. Besides USDA beef and all-natural chicken, it has digestive aids like pumpkin and ginger plus disease-fighting antioxidants. It was co-founded by Dr. Tory, a practicing veterinarian.

Dog parents report noticeable health improvements in their pups. Plus every order ships right to your door so you'll never worry about running out of dog food again. Unlike other fresh dog food, Sundays is zero prep, zero mess, and zero stress. Sunday is shelf stable which makes it easy to feed your pup top-quality food. Every order shipped right to your door so you'll never worry about running out of dog food again. And it's 40% less than other healthy dog food brands.

We've got a special deal for our dog-loving friends. Get 35% off your first order of Sundays. Go to Sundaysfordogs.com/thatsoundsfun or use the code thatsoundsfun at checkout. That's Sundaysfordogs.com/thatsoundsfun. Upgrade your pup to Sundays and feel good about the food you feed your dog.

Annie: And hey, did you know there are thousands of us reading through the Gospels together every single month this year? It has been one of the best parts of being on tour in June was y'all coming up to me and telling me how much this rhythm, not only one month but over and over has mattered to you? It is all happening over on the Let's Read the Gospels Podcasts.

We're about to start the month of July on Saturday and we're going to read the CSB. That is the Christian Standard Bible version. We got to do this version in May and loved it but this time we'll read through the four Gospels in a totally different order.

Whether you've joined us before or want to jump in for the first time, July just might be your opportunity to start your day with 15 minutes of the Gospels. It's like we say often around here you don't have to be in the gospels every day to be changed, but every day you're in the gospels will change you. So come on and join us, friends. Subscribe to Let's Read the Gospels wherever you're listening to this podcast right now.

Okay, now back to our Summer Lovin' conversation with Jackie Dorman.

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Annie: Okay, Jackie, so knowing all that, red, yellow green flags, I had never thought about yellow flags until you taught me that. So what are green flags? What are yellow flags? What are red flags? How do we define them? Just jump in with me. Just go.

Jackie: Okay. So first of all, everyone has yellow flags.

Annie: Everyone has yellow flags.

Jackie: Everyone. Everyone.

Annie: I have yellow flags. Everyone does.

Jackie: And all different seasons they are going to be different. But we all have yellow flags. And all that is is a place that we just want to have it together yet. We're still working on it. But what turns those yellow flags green is that we're aware and we're willing to be made aware. So we have a teachable heart, right? And that's what's important there.

And then of course, that yellow flag is going to turn red if someone's like, Well, you know, if you don't love me at my worst, then you don't deserve me at my best kind of thing. Those kinds of attitudes are, okay, this is going to... it might not be red now, but it's going to be red.

Annie: That's right.

Jackie: So I'm going to steer clear of that. Then obviously, red flags are anything that is unhealthy, patterns that we've been in in the past. We need to watch out for our red flags because our red flags usually attract other red flags

Annie: Oh, interesting.

Jackie: Unhealthy people attract unhealthy people. And counterfeit attracts counterfeit. So we need to make sure that we're doing our own work, that we're doing that identity work. Because once you see it, you can't unsee it. And that's what's important.

For me green flags, like if we're talking to women, green flags in a man for me would be, is he masculine? And when I say masculine, I don't mean what culture shows us for masculinity. Is he kind? Does he serve others? Is he protective? Not in an anxious attached kind of way. Is he protective? Is he mature? So kind of the three M's. Masculine: is he mature? Is he spiritually mature? Does he have mentors in his life? There's another M word. Those are all green flags. You want someone who's surrounding themselves with community. And finally, is he commitment or marriage minded?

Annie: Yes. Is he marriage-minded?

Jackie: Because if you're over 30 years, your girlfriend era is over? It is. So dating is for mating? And if it can't go to there and that person's not interested in meeting someone that they can spend their life with, then that is not... that immediately takes any yellow flags and makes them red.

Annie: So how do you determine if someone is marriage-minded?

Jackie: What are they doing with their life? Marriage-minded or commitment-minded looks like something. It looks like I have some long-term goals. I've been working on myself. I've been doing the work. I'm working on my finances. I'm working on my health. And once again, people can have yellow flags in those areas. They don't have to have every box checked. But they are thinking past a short-term part of their life. They're not just renting, they're looking to own. You know what I'm saying?

Annie: That's right. That's right. Some examples I have experienced in that is if I haven't watched a man date anyone, and we've been in community for a long time and then I go, "Well, I think he's really interesting," like, "Well, he hasn't dated anybody. He's not trying to get married because he's not dating. He's not pursuing dating people so he's not marriage minded."

What are some other examples of how to...? Because you can't walk up to a dude and go, "Hey, I already think you're cute. I'm gonna give this a go. Are you marriage-minded? It's not like you can do it like that.

Jackie: No, no, no, you can't. But you can look at other areas. For instance, if you get to certain decades of your life and you see someone who is not pursuing relationship romantically, they're not dating anyone, they're kind of an enigma within the community, now, you could say, oh, well, they haven't met the right person yet, or you can say, well, this is a pattern. I call it the Peter Pan syndrome. There is something like that happening, where people are not moving towards any kind of committed relationship.

And if you have commitment on your mind, and that's the season that you're in, that's what you want, you're not in your girlfriend era, you're in your wifey era, then you obviously don't want to... of course there's exceptions but you don't want to spend time with people... I don't wanna say waste time, but you don't wanna spend time with people that that is not also their end goal. You just don't want to.

Annie: It's actually what I think is one of the good things about apps is you've got... where it may be a red flag in their life, them being on an app says, I want to do something in relationship.

Jackie: Something but what?

Annie: But what? We don't know.

Jackie: That's the question.

Annie: That's why it's not green. That's why it's yellow. But I do feel like, okay, those men are at least saying I have an interest in being in relationship. Versus if you meet someone at a baseball game and you don't know that he and his girlfriend of four years just broke up and he's like living his wildest days. You just thought he was cute and followed him on Instagram and started DMing him. Right? Whatever.

Jackie: Okay. Okay. Right. Like, okay, wait, this sounds like a whole thing.

Annie: It's not. It's not. But you know what I mean?

Jackie: Yeah.

Annie: I feel like apps are a way that you can kind of know he's trying.

Jackie: In some ways. Because there's lots of people on the apps that shouldn't be there because they are in a relationship. I mean there's all kinds of accounts on Facebook where it's like, "Girl run. Are we dating the same guy?"

Annie: Are we dating the same guy? My counselor told me that. No.

Jackie: Because I'm a matchmaker, I'm actually in all those groups cause I check out all my guys and make sure that they're not on the... I make sure they're not being profile on the wrong place. But when you're talking to someone on an app, and first of all, it's not a texting app, it's not a pen pal app, it's a dating app. So if they're not pursuing forward to go on face-to-face of some sort, then they're either not that into you or they're not that into dating. They're not that into meeting anyone.

Because people complain about that all the time: I can't get past the conversation part of this. And a lot of times it has to do with that person just isn't that invested and they're also not that intrigued by you. And that hurts people's feelings but that's okay. I know men and if they're intrigued by you, they're going to make sure that they see you in person pretty quickly.

A guy will drive across town in rush hour just to bring you a coffee if he likes you because you're working late. That's what men do in the courtship phase of things. And if they don't do that, then something's off. It could be a busy season... I feel

like women make a lot of excuses. Oh well, this is happening and that's happening. Well, you know, work's been busy. No.

When you hear someone say the word busy to you, that is code for "I'm just not that into making time for this." And it's okay because you get to cut your losses instead of having a relationship for two or three months that's not a real relationship. Like, you fantasize it in your mind, you made it something that it's not, and then at the end of three months be like, oh, well, this person was never that serious about me to begin with. But all the signs were there, you just didn't want to see them. Right?

Annie: Right. Right.

Jackie: So, right, let's see them.

Annie: So in those where you go, okay, that feels like some yellow flags. He hasn't texted me in two days, or he hasn't blah, blah, or this is a yellow flag, we only matched yesterday and he wants to go get coffee this week. Some things that feel like yellow flags to us are actually just us being uncomfortable-

Jackie: It's true.

Annie: ...and insecure and-

Jackie: And unhealed trauma.

Annie: Yeah, unhealed trauma and inexperience.

Jackie: Right.

Annie: How do we identify when we're just uncomfortable in a situation and it's worth... It's not scary if he wants to see you the week you match. How do you move past that fear? And how do you identify when, no, this is a yellow or a red flag, you should really pay attention to it.

Jackie: Being in healthy community. Look, we shouldn't be doing anything outside of community. We've been created for community. And not unhealthy community. Because if you get with your girlfriends that all have big T traumas and they're unhealthy and you say, Oh, he's doing this, oh girl, you better run. Okay, no. You want to be talking to people that have healthy hearts. You have to have people in your life that have healthy marriages, that have healthy relationships, and run it by them. "Hey, what do you think about this?"

That's why I love the relationship communities that I've built because that's what we do for each other. Because we talk about being God-defended. And part of being God-defended is having healthy people around you that can check you before you wreck you. Because we don't all have the same filters and blind spots. And that's why it's important.

Like, if you've ever been driving with someone and they're in the passenger seat and you think you can turn, but you can't, and they're sitting in the passenger seat so they can see your blind spot, they're like, Oh, hey, don't go. Or hey, yeah, you can go. You've been sitting here for 20 minutes with your blinker on, it's okay, go. So you have to have those people in your life. And that is how you will know whether or not you're escalating yellow flags to red.

Annie: Right.

Jackie: That's how you'll know.

Annie: How many yellow flags are too many?

Jackie: Oh, that's a great question. It depends on whether they're really yellow or they're just yellow to you.

Annie: Okay.

Jackie: Because once again, we don't like what we don't like. So it's important to make that list of, hey, what triggers me? I need to know what triggers me and I need to know if it's a real trigger or if it's just my trigger. Because I'll always say, Hey, people get outta your box or get outta the box. It's really get out of your box. It's not get out of the box. It's your box. So romantic relationship has a box too.

Annie: That's one of the questions is so many people, men and women, have said to us, are my standards too high? Do I care too much about this and this and this? So are our standards too high?

Jackie: I don't think a true standard could ever be too high, but I think people's walls are too high. And I think that they think their walls and their standards are the same thing.

Annie: And expectations.

Jackie: And here's what people don't realize. If you have walls, you are actually going to attract thieves.

Annie: Oh wow.

Jackie: If you build a wall, it actually attracts thieves, you know? But if you let down the drawbridge, then you can actually screen the people that are coming. You don't see who's climbing up the sides of the walls. Everyone who is not doing what I call the heart work, they're the ones that report the most toxic interactions with the opposite sex. And I'm like, Oh, hey, wait a second. There's a link here. It's like the more I try to protect myself, the more I'm actually attracting people that I need to protect myself from.

Annie: Right.

Jackie: Do you see that?

Annie: That's really interesting.

Jackie: Isn't it interesting?

Annie: Yeah, that's problematic.

Jackie: Well, it is because once again, the community is the protection. Right?

Annie: Yeah.

Jackie: It's the inner healing that's the protection. Then you can see it a mile away and you're like, All right.

Annie: I haven't even gotten to tell you this yet, but yesterday when I was with my counselor, I said, One of the things I've got to pay attention to is no one in my life says this is a good idea. And I said-

Jackie: No one.

Annie: No one.

Jackie: Not even the nervous nellies. No one.

Annie: No one.

Jackie: Everyone's like, Nope. And I said to her, I keep not paying attention to that and I keep thinking I know best. And if my community is lying to me about this, somehow they've all figured out how to lie about the same thing.

Jackie: Right.

Annie: So in dating, that plays out too.

Jackie: And they know you.

Annie: And they know me. And they're watching my life. So because those are the walls around me or the people that are helping me be God-defended, then is my choice-

Jackie: It is.

Annie: ...whether I believe them or not,-

Jackie: It is.

Annie: ...whether I think I'm smarter and I know what they don't know or whether everyone is right. And what's the science everyone's right?

Jackie: And when we want to go against that, when we want to drive our car a million miles an hour down a dead-end road, pass more red flags than a Soviet parade, when we want to do that, that's when we are like, okay, let me dig a little deeper into why this is important to me when I obviously know that it's not good for me. Why?

Annie: Why? Why do we do it?

Jackie: Why?

Annie: We cannot answer that today. But why do we do it is the question. So what do you do if you feel stuck, if you feel stuck in the cycle of dating the same guy or girl, if you feel stuck and there's no one, or you're stuck in apps and you can't find a guy or girl that you really love dating? What do you do if you're stuck?

Jackie: I will tell you that most people that say they're stuck also have a really strong pattern. So the very first thing that people need to realize is that if you know you're stuck, that's actually a good thing because you know that what I've been doing is not working for me. So the very next thing you have to do is be willing to do something completely counterintuitive. Totally different. Be willing to get way out of your comfort zone. Be willing to stretch yourself. Be willing to... why not give your app to a friend that you trust, let them swipe. Let them pick some people out for you.

Annie: A married girl swiped for me two nights ago.

Jackie: Oh good. Good.

Annie: This was going and she was like, "What do you think about him?" I was like, "I don't want to vote."

Jackie: No, no.

Annie: "I want you to do it and we'll see what happens."

Jackie: You don't need a vote right now. You don't need a vote. Because first of all, it's not like married at first sight. You're not getting married.

Annie: Not at all. No, no, no. I mean, I am-

Jackie: You are.

Annie: But not...

Jackie: But I mean, it's not like the show where it's like, well, you're letting someone actually pick your husband and you're gonna marry him.

Annie: Exactly. Yeah.

Jackie: They used to do that in the olden days. Yeah. And guess what? It actually worked more than it didn't work. Isn't that strange?

Annie: Well, it's because they didn't think they had to have all the butterflies and TV movie kind of love. They just went, okay, we're partners and we will fall in love and we will pursue the same thing and here we go.

Jackie: And the thing is, is that people think that most of the feelings for someone have to come before the I dos instead of after. I mean, I can tell you I've been married for 16 years. I'm more infatuated in a good way and crazy about and think that he's amazing, my husband, more now than I did before I married him. Because he has shown me how amazing he is.

My mom used to always say, "I'm from Missouri. The show me say. Don't tell me, show me." So it's like, great, they can tell you and they can show you their best foot forward but you only really see them as you grow in relationships. So give them a chance to show you who they really are.

Annie: So someone goes to counseling for the first time or gets in one of your groups, does the heart work and the first guy or girl that they start dating falls apart, the whole thing falls apart. And they go, Well, I tried. I tried and I thought I was healthier, but I'm not. What's the hope of... should the first one work? I mean, one of our people on staff, the first real girlfriend he had, he is married to her. We love her. So there are those stories

Jackie: And I think those stories mess people up. Because guess what?

Annie: And they are great too.

Jackie: Guess what? It's not the majority. It's not the majority. So those stories mess people up, especially Christian people. They're like, it's supposed to be easy. No, it's supposed to be worth it. It's not supposed to be easy. I have a front-row seat to hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of love stories and very few of them are like, Oh, I knew from the very moment or the very first time out of the gate, this is what happened for me. So you have to be in it to win it. You have to be willing to grow.

So I love that the first time out the gate, it doesn't work because what it does is it helps you to actually test out your heart work in real-time. You get to see your triggers. You get to see your patterns. You get to see your types, you get to see your attractions. You get to see that stuff. So what I like to say is, hurt in relationship, healed in relationship; hurt in family, healed in family; hurt in community, healed in community.

We think that, Oh, you know, the next relationship that I have, if everything doesn't go perfectly, then they must not be the person for me. No. It's not gonna go perfectly. It isn't. The road to true love does not normally run smooth. And you know, maybe those people, no offense to them, that it did run smooth or it seemingly did. There's gonna be bumps. There's gonna be potholes and off-road adventures-

Annie: Of course.

Jackie: ...in the future. Right?

Annie: Yes.

Jackie: So we have to stop thinking that that's what it looks like because that's one of the lies that really holds people back right there. Oh, well, if it was God, then-

Annie: It'd be easier.

Jackie: Yes, it would. We would've known from the very first moment. What? Who says that? Mm-mm.

Annie: It's not what the Bible says. That's not true. The Bible does not tell us that.

Jackie: No story. Not even one.

Annie: No.

Jackie: Not even one story.

Annie: No.

Jackie: No.

[00:40:32] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation one more time to share about another amazing partner, [Caraway](#). Okay, I know we talk all about what we put in our bodies pretty often, but have you ever considered what you're cooking with? As in, have you ever thought about the toxins that could be in your cookware? I know. Me neither. But now that I've tried Caraway, I get it.

Caraway cookware is non-toxic and chemical-free, so you can fill your summer with your favorite recipes without worry. Their products are designed to make your life easier and healthier. And y'all, their line of pots and pans are so cute. Like they have the most fun color options. I ordered the sage green. I love it. Every time I open my cabinet, I'm so happy. Their ceramic-coated cookware has a naturally slick surface too, which means you don't need much oil or butter to get those eggs to slide right off the pan. And it is always easy cleaning.

Don't miss Caraway's Summer Refresh event from June 20th to July 15th. For a limited time, you get 10% off sitewide on the internet's favorite kitchenware. It is the perfect time to take care of all your summer gifting, all those graduates, the newlyweds with cookware, bakeware, food storage, and tea kettles to choose from. Tea kettles. There is something for everyone.

So visit carawayhome.com/tsf to get 10% off during their summer refresh event. Certain exclusions apply. That's carawayhome.com/tsf or use the code TSF at checkout. Caraway, non-toxic cookware made modern.

Annie: Also, did y'all know that we always have a little something free for you on my website each month? Right now it is a discussion guide that goes along with my New York Times bestselling book, *That Sounds Fun*. If you haven't read that one yet, it is a perfect summer read to help set you up for a great summer and the kind of rhythms you want to have going in into a new school year.

To get that discussion guide, because you and your friend should be reading the book together, just download the free copy of the discussion guide and grab a copy of the book wherever you love to buy books. And then you can go through both this summer with your friends or a small group. Just head to anniefdowns.com and drop your email into that pop-up you see right there to get the free discussion guide.

And now back to finish up our Summer Lovin' conversation with Jackie Dorman.

[00:42:55] <music>

Annie: Okay, Jackie, let's get deep for a minute.

Jackie: Okay.

Annie: What's going on in the spiritual right now for single people and what do you see happening? Because there's something really prophetic going on, which honestly, it is one of the reasons we're doing this series is because I think it is time for a lot of our friends to find their mate and to run after Jesus.

Jackie: Absolutely.

Annie: What are you seeing in the spiritual?

Jackie: So one of the reasons why I started doing what I do and during Covid is because God said to me, I want my sons and daughters married. So I believe that marriage and family is God's maturity plan for mankind. And we've had so many things to hide behind, including the gift of singleness. All those ideas of, oh, well if it was gonna happen for me, it would've already happened. If God wanted this for me, then it would've already happened.

But I believe that we are in an era right now where truly our girlfriend and boyfriend season is over and truly God is matching people for assignments and He's drawing them out and I believe He's calling them, get this, as missionaries to marriage.

I've been to lots of open-air kind of crusades where they always call people to foreign fields. "Hey, put your shoes in the air." You know, who will go? Send me?

I'm like, Well, if everyone's going, doesn't someone have to stay? One day I was thinking that and I began to look at the statistics and marriage is dying. It is dying. So the age group that we think about when we think about marriage, 25 to 50, that age group. So right now, kind of the millennials with a little bit of Z and a little bit of Gen X, right?

Annie: Yeah.

Jackie: That marriage group. And don't hear what I'm not saying. We've seen so many people get married over 50. So many people.

Annie: And under 25.

Jackie: But just statistically speaking, let's focus on that for a second. In 1980, only 9% of that age group was unmarried. 9%.

Annie: Gosh.

Jackie: It's jumped up to 35% now. And in the next 39 years between now and 2062, it's supposed to be 70%.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Jackie: People are not marri-

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Jackie: And here's the thing. This is not just some random statistic. The actual people that invest in this world, that make things happen, they are investing... they're putting their money where their mouth is. They're investing in organizations and in products that serve single people because they believe that this is the trend and that it's going to continue.

Annie: Wow.

Jackie: So that is shocking, right?

Annie: Yeah.

Jackie: It's shocking. So we need people to volunteer as tribute—it's not the Hunger Games, it is the marriage games—to go into marriage and family. And what does that mean? That means that it's not just about you. There's a bigger cause. There is a cause. There's lineages and legacies at stake. There's so many things. There's a lot

of people that sacrificed their 20s to missionary work. Like, they literally did go to other lands and other places and I'm seeing so many of them get married right now. They've come back to their homelands, wherever that is and they're like, "Oh, man, I missed out on this."

Annie: Oh, yeah, we have so many people who reached out and said, "I live in a foreign country..."

Jackie: Yeah. They're coming home and they think that they missed out on all this. And they're like, oh, all my friends, they're, they're married, they're having kids. And I see these are the people that are kind of first in line for this. These are the people that are getting married. They're popping like little popcorn kernels. It's just so incredibly encouraging to see that happening.

So if anyone feels like they have given up anything for the sake of the Lord and not been able to do these things, I believe that this is a time for them and others as well. But those people I especially want to encourage.

Annie: Wow. Ben Stuart said this in our first episode. That one of the main things the Romans saw that led them to Christianity was healthy marriages in the Christians.

Jackie: Well, we need to understand that this is what this life is all about. It's all about family. I mean, it's kind of about that, or sometimes it's about that. It's all about relationship and it's all about family. All God ever wanted was a family. That's it. Yeah. The whole thing starts with the marriage and it ends with the wedding. It ends with the marriage. So hello, this is important.

And I think that we've taken a page from culture to tell us, it's not really that important. You can live this entire life without having it. And, you know, maybe it won't happen for some people because they don't and they're not really that invested and they could care less either way. But I believe that if you want it, you've been hardwired to want it-

Annie: You need to talk about that because that is the thing that is hard when people say, if you still desire it, you're gonna get it.

Jackie: And listen, we've had people as old as in their 80s get married in our community.

Annie: Let's go.

Jackie: Okay. So I believe if you want it, if it's a burning desire of your heart, then it's been put there divinely. So what are you willing though to sacrifice for it? Because I have all kinds of burning desires of my heart as well now that the marriage one's

been fulfilled and I know that God has his part to play, but I also have my part to play. And a lot of people want to put in the least amount of effort because they think this, Annie. They think this is one of those things that sits in the category of "if God wants it for me, then He'll do it". And it's just not true. It just isn't true.

You have a significant part to play. You can go sit in the waiting room and it may still happen for you, but at the same time, you know, you gotta put shoe leather on this promise. And it's imperfect action because you're not gonna know where they are. People are like, where, where, where, where. It's not about where, it's more about who. Who has called you to this? So if you believe that that's why that's there, then let's start taking imperfect action and see where we go.

Annie: How important is it what you say to yourself and what you believe?

Jackie: Oh, it's so important. It's probably one of the most important things.

Annie: Really?

Jackie: But here's the thing. Just positive mental attitude and confessions and declarations, those are great. But there's a scripture in the Bible that says what you believe, truly believe, not here, here, so the 18-inch journey from head to heart, what you believe you become and what you become, you attract.

Annie: Oh wow.

Jackie: So a lot of people think I'm undateable, I'm unmarriageable, I'm not the kind of man or woman that men or women want. I'm the person that's been left out, left behind. I'm the last person. No one picks me for their team. They believe those things and it's really unconscious that they believe that. So that's why it's important to do that hard work and start to see what we're believing unconsciously that's leading to the same type of outward patterns.

Annie: Wow.

Jackie: Right?

Annie: Wow. Yeah. Yes.

Jackie: Because the law of attraction's really very real.

Annie: Yes!

Jackie: It is.

Annie: It is bizarre.

Jackie: It's biblical.

Annie: Just because you don't want to believe it. But it is.

Jackie: It's biblical.

Annie: I know.

Jackie: Right. How do you end up with the same friends all the time? The same kind of friends. How do you end up in the same situations over and over? Lather, rinse, repeat. That's how.

Annie: What's the first move? Someone's going, okay, I've listened to the series. I'm in. Summer Lovin', I want it.

Jackie: I'm in.

Annie: Here we go. July and August. What's the next move? What's the first thing we do? Is it a conversation with God? Is it a conversation with our community? Is it signing up for Bumble? What is it?

Jackie: I personally think, and you know that I believe this, the very first thing you do is you ask God to be your... You surrender the pen. You've been writing some crazy stories and... You're a writer. I'm a writer. You're an amazing writer. And you know that God is also a writer. And He does not write sad, boring stories. He doesn't. So if your life is not this epic adventure, not even just in this area, but in every area, then you've probably been writing it or you've allowed some past trauma to write it. Because trauma doesn't just hurt us.; it creates different versions of us. So surrender the pen.

And that's why the beginning of everything that I do I make people actually sign a permission slip. So I believe that that's the beginning. You can attest, and so many people can attest that one, they do that, supernatural stuff starts happening, crazy stuff starts happening. And then I believe that not only will we be divinely led, but we have to be willing... Like right now I'm in a health journey. And so my prayer is I don't know what to do, lead me to the people that do.

Annie: Wow.

Jackie: So you have to be coachable. I know that this is an area of people's lives where they think that it should be organic and I shouldn't need a coach. I shouldn't need instruction-

Annie: It's one of the lies the enemy says is you're a late bloomer. You don't know what you're doing. And everyone else did this without any help.

Jackie: Right. And they didn't.

Annie: And that's not true.

Jackie: They didn't. They had help. They had help from God and they had help from others.

Annie: And they may have had different parents than you, different church upbringing than you, different friends that had older siblings than you. I mean, there's so many factors we don't know.

Jackie: There's so many things. And you know, God is source for sure. And a lot of people are like, well, once again, God, it just has to be God. God's gonna have to do it. But He's the source. But He's the head of the human resource department.

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Jackie: So He will send human resources to you. So it's important for people to be open, to be teachable, have a teachable heart. That's the best advice that I've ever been given. Have a teachable heart. Yes. And so if you have a teachable heart, the teachers will come in this area too.

Annie: Will you talk about how much it matters that you tell people in your life that you want to be married?

Jackie: Only the healthy people.

Annie: Yeah, only tell the healthy people in your life. Sure. Yeah. Yeah.

Jackie: So the people that have their life a little bit together. But a lot of people are ashamed of this. They're ashamed. When they get to a certain age, they're ashamed that they're still single, they're ashamed that this easy thing isn't easy for them. First of all, it's not easy. Relationships are the hardest thing you're gonna do in your life. They don't have to be easy. They have to be worth it.

And they're hard on purpose because they're refining us. It's constantly refining us. I think that marriage, honestly, is a crucible of sorts. It's not gonna be all just

rainbows and butterflies and giggles and braiding each other's hair. Hopefully not. But it's going to be refining. You're gonna have to decrease so that the relationship can increase. Less of "me" and more of "we". And I see people get married without that mindset. And right now they're loving that they're married, but they're seeing how much space they didn't create before they met the person. They have a lot of like, this is my life, this is my life. You're an accessory to my life. So you have to do that work, that prep work.

It can be as simple as making room in a closet. It can be as simple as realizing, "Hey, you know what, I'm not gonna be able to stay in this efficiency apartment. I might not need to move, but I need to be open to moving because there's no room here for another person. Start thinking as a "we" instead of as just a "me".

Annie: Oh, wow. That is like a prophetic move that feels very weird as I hear you say it. Start operating like you're planning for a relationship that you're not in yet.

Jackie: Well, you would plan for anything else.

Annie: Yeah, that's fair. You're right.

Jackie: Anything else. Wouldn't you?

Annie: That's right.

Jackie: Look, there's a famous quote by Nelson Mandela. It's one of my favorites. It just says you will not prepare for what you don't really believe is gonna happen.

Annie: Wow.

Jackie: You won't. You're not going to do it. So look at your life and ask yourself, do I really believe this is gonna happen? And where's the evidence of that? Because belief looks like something. Doesn't it?

Annie: You know what's funny is when you and I would talk about this, my schedule is busy. And my schedule is full, and I love my life.

Jackie: And just stay there for a second. You're allowed to be single and love your life. In fact, you need to love your life in every season. And you do.

Annie: I love my life.

Jackie: You do.

- Annie:** I would love to be married and I love my life. Both are true. So when anybody, you or anybody else says, well, if you want to be married, you need to make space. I was like, "I am not sitting home three nights a week making space for dates that aren't happening." But the thing that you've taught me that I've learned is kind of been like, it's not about your calendar, it's about your heart.
- Jackie:** Yes, it's about capacity management.
- Annie:** Yes!
- Jackie:** Right?
- Annie:** Yes. So will you talk a little bit about that? You're not telling people, don't have a life and stay at home and wait
- Jackie:** No, not at all. In fact, I want everyone out of the waiting room. I want people out there moving. You know who lives in your house—you.
- Annie:** [inaudible 00:54:50] guy or the mailman are your options.
- Jackie:** So I want you to be out. I want you to be meeting people and doing things. But fill up your calendar with things that give you an opportunity to meet other people. If you're gonna be busy, be busy about what your heart wants. Right?
- Annie:** Yeah. When I read Dr. Cloud's book, oh, I'm gonna not get the title right. But it's like, how to find a date worth keeping.
- Jackie:** I haven't read it.
- Annie:** It's so interesting. He's kind of like get your numbers up, meet more people. If you meet one person in 2023, the Lord can do anything. But if you meet 50, even if... He had this, you have to do this thing for a week, maybe where you have to go and introduce yourself to three people a day. What you deem as available members of the opposite sex a day. And I'm telling you, it feels terrible. And also it is wildly successful as far... I was at a sandwich place and I was like, Oh, I am not. And the guy... we're both waiting and I'm like... And the rules and the book are, you have to introduce yourself and they have to have a way to get to you later. Like, they have to be able to find you if they choose to.
- Jackie:** Well, if they need to. There's someone that should find you.
- Annie:** Totally. Totally.

Jackie: I love that.

Annie: So you don't give your phone number. But I had said something like... at the time, I worked somewhere else, and so I said, "Oh, my name's Annie. I work at da, da da." After we've been like, Oh, this sandwich has taken forever, dah, dah. I'm like, "I only have an hour. My name's Annie. I work at dah dah" and we only get, and I was like, "Check done. I did it. I'm getting out of the sandwich place."

Jackie: You're leaving little breadcrumbs. Right?

Annie: Yeah, that's it.

Jackie: Little things. Like, oh, hey, if you're hungry, you can come find me.

Annie: That's right.

Jackie: No, I haven't read the book, but I do something similar with women. It's smile at men challenge. So they're smiling at men. They're making eye contact with men. Women don't realize how much they are head down, eyes to the floor, not paying attention. Paying attention. Taking the earbuds out. Talking to strangers. Talk to strangers. Do it.

Annie: You'll be all right.

Jackie: You're gonna be all right.

Annie: Don't get in their van.

Jackie: I promise You.

Annie: You don't have to get in their van.

Jackie: No, No. Don't get in their van.

Annie: Okay, Jackie, I have to tell you the most profound way that this impacted me when you said this to me. You said, "Let men help you."

Jackie: Yes, let them help.

Annie: Let them help you. And I'm at an airport and I'm reading someone's book. Have I told you the story?

Jackie: No, I don't think so.

- Annie:** I'm reading someone's book, it's a friend of mine's book and it is not bound. It's just printed off a printer. And I set it on a chair, slides back, and pages go everywhere.
- Jackie:** I love it.
- Annie:** And I jump up to get it. And then I hear a man say, "Can I get that for you?" Normal Annie would've said, "I've got it. Listen, you're fine. I've got it." Because I can do it.
- Jackie:** Of course, you can.
- Annie:** And I thought, "Let him help." He's probably 60. And I said, "That'd be so kind. Thank you." So I stood there like a dodo bird while he picked up all the pieces of paper. And I was like, "I could have done this. I could have done this. But Jackie tells me to let men help me. So I'm letting him help me." And he stands up, he hands me the whole stack. And then he has on a jacket on his shirt. He pulls his jacket aside and says, I'm a fireman. This is what we do.
- Jackie:** Oh, wow.
- Annie:** And I was like, "Oh my gosh, my allowing someone to help me raised up his masculine self. We weren't attracted to each other. It was purely I gave a man an opportunity-
- Jackie:** To be a man.
- Annie:** ...to help me.
- Jackie:** Yeah, you did.
- Annie:** And He showed me he was a fireman and all he did was pick up paper.
- Jackie:** And that's the divine masculine.
- Annie:** It was wow, Jackie.
- Jackie:** That's it.
- Annie:** I was like, man, I need to say... And so I have been so much more...
- Jackie:** I love that.

- Annie:** Last night at the dinner we were outside and a husband was like, "Do you want me to get you a blanket?" And I was like, "Yeah." No, I can get up and get my own blanket. I'm fine. And I was like-
- Jackie:** Women need to get used to saying yes.
- Annie:** And then he came and put it... he's one of my best friend's husbands. He's dear to me. Came and put it around and said, you're like a queen. All this stuff. And I was like, "This is wild." All I'm doing is letting men help me.
- Jackie:** And when women are single for a really long time, they're so used to doing it for themselves.
- Annie:** Yeah, because you have to.
- Jackie:** Because if you don't, then who else is gonna do it? You have to get into the mindset. That's another counterintuitive thing. Let people always say yes. Say yes. Say yes. Say yes. Can I? Yes, you can.
- Annie:** Yes. Yes. Can I put your luggage up? I practice it the most in the airport. Because it's just they're always there.
- Jackie:** And the thing is, is that even if someone doesn't... I fly a lot, you fly a lot, you know. Instead of lifting it up to yourself, why not ask the man right there, "Hey, could you help me with this." That is even more stretching.
- Annie:** I haven't done that yet.
- Jackie:** I'm not asking a man to help me.
- Annie:** I'll do it. I'll do it next week.
- Jackie:** They'll Love it. They will love it. We're like, oh, men don't wanna do that. Yes, they do.
- Annie:** Okay, I'll let you know. That's hysterical.
- Jackie:** They want to.
- Annie:** Okay. So for our last little segment, we don't do segments, but we have some dating coach questions.
- Jackie:** Okay.

- Annie:** So let's just like rapid fire through them, okay?
- Jackie:** Let's do it.
- Annie:** I always seem to find a problem on the third date. Is that too soon?
- Jackie:** First of all, that's pattern. So they need to look into that. That's a pattern. And no, it depends on what the problem is. If the problem is a blatant red flag and all of your friends in community say it is, then yes, that's fine. But that is a pattern so let's take a look at that.
- Annie:** Is it okay to settle for someone who is kind and loving but not a soulmate?
- Jackie:** First of all-
- Annie:** Is that even a thing, was her next question.
- Jackie:** Well, really the settle... First of all, the settling people, a lot of times think that they're settling, but you are gonna have to settle. You're not gonna get your whole list. Get rid of the list. You're not gonna get your whole list.
- Annie:** And I think settling is such a dumb-
- Jackie:** It's such a dumb word.
- Annie:** Situation.
- Jackie:** So what is it? A lawsuit? Are we settling? We're settling outta court? So kind and loving are great qualities but I would need to know more. What are the other qualities?
- Annie:** And how'd you know they're not a soulmate? What's he missing?
- Jackie:** They can be kind and loving but they're in prison. Like, I don't know.
- Annie:** Is dating more people better or should you go on dates with people you're sure of?
- Jackie:** No, dating more is better. Look, if the secular version of this is a body count, then we need to have one as well. We need to be going out with people because how are you gonna know what you like unless you've had some experience with a variety of things.

- Annie:** Yes. Yes. So if you can get the dates, take the dates. What if you love a guy's character, but not his personality?
- Jackie:** Character, but not his personality? Well, uh, character, but not personality. It depends on what the personality things are. I mean, if it's someone who can be aware of their personality quirks... Like say he talks too much, over talker and you say to him, "Hey, you know, cannot talk so much," and he's willing to work on that, then that's one thing. So it depends. It depends on if they're personality things that can be changed or they're super ingrained.
- Annie:** Thoughts on communication between dates, texting, phone calls, social media.
- Jackie:** I think that it should be appropriate as any new relationship. I think you should gauge your communication with how long you've known the person. If you just met someone, would you be, you know, text-bombing them all the time? Even if there was a platonic relationship, like another girl or another guy, no, you wouldn't be. So it's like let yourself get to know them. And I think that you should have quite a few in persons before you're talking every single day. I think two to three in persons before you're talking every day.
- Annie:** That's Great.
- Jackie:** What is the number one most overlooked things that catches couples off guard?
- Jackie:** Maybe family stuff. I think once you get to exclusivity, I think you really have to start talking about who else is involved in this love story.
- Annie:** I think you're 100% right.
- Jackie:** And family stuff, right?
- Annie:** Family stuff.
- Jackie:** It's like the in-laws and outlaws.
- Annie:** You're like, why do you do that? Oh, because your mom did that. Okay, now I get it. Yeah, yeah, for sure. So that is a great next question. How long do you date somebody?
- Jackie:** It depends on how old you are.
- Annie:** Okay.

Jackie: So if you truly are young, and this is your first time out of the gate, you're in your teens, early 20s, you're still in college, you're still working on finishing something like your degree or whatever in college, then I think that you can be in a girlfriend or boyfriend era. But if you're past that and you really know where you're going for the next five, ten years, you're headed that direction, I think that you shouldn't be dating anyone for any length of time. I think by three months you should know whether this should be... it's a marriage-minded relationship, whether it's gonna be a courtship.

Annie: That's great. We have a lot of physical attraction questions. How important is it? Can it develop over time? Does it have to be there on the first meetup? What if it's not there?

Jackie: I think that as long as repulsion isn't there on the first meetup. Like I said, visceral attraction is usually a reddish flag. Then we have to ask ourselves, what are our physical attractions attached to? So to answer this question, we first have to dig down into why am I attracted to what I'm attracted to. Has it been working out for me in the past? Did it lead to healthy relationship before? So if you're like a widow and it led to an amazing, healthy relationship and you know that your attractions are healthy, that's one thing. But if it's always led to being ghosted, to being broken up with, to being cheated on, lied on, you know, to that type of things, cheaters, beaters, liars, users, abusers, then your attractions are broken.

Annie: Even if he's cute.

Jackie: So if you are attracted to him, then we need to say no, right?

Annie: Right, right.

Jackie: So you have to know whether your attractions are healthy. And can attraction grow? A hundred percent.

Annie: A hundred percent.

Jackie: Especially for women.

Annie: Every time it does for me.

Jackie: Especially for women. It's like the more that you get to know them... Some people are sapiosexuals, meaning you have to get to know their personality, conversational and intellectual, and that's when you start to really like them. Men are kind of different in a different way. Like within community, someone can grow on them, but men usually try to make a decision of whether they're attracted within the first

two or three times that they've seen you. And sometimes within the first time, unfortunately.

Annie: Which if that's Him, then y'all aren't attracted to each other, that's great, he's not your guy. A closed door. God defended.

Jackie: And that's important. If it's not this person, then it's someone else. So it's a win-win.

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Jackie: Right.

Annie: Okay. So finish us here. Give us some hope. We're leaving this series, we're going out now and we're gonna do what we can do and trust God with the rest. What's the hope for dating for Christians?

Jackie: The hope is that you're not in this alone. First of all, there's lots of community in it with you. And if we'll all work together, we can help everyone get married—everyone that wants to. If we'll work together and get out of just the lens of me, me, me, and instead we, I think that we can do amazing things together. And that God is with us and he's for us. So that means dating is for us as well. Right?

Annie: Yeah.

Jackie: So this part of our lives is not against us, it's for us. And so if it hasn't happened yet, it just doesn't mean it's not gonna happen.

Annie: That's right. That's right. Okay, Jackie Dorman, because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you. I think it sounds fun to me to do more dating stuff with you and actually to go to Scotland and see the lighthouses together.

Annie: Yes, I know. I want to take you to Scotland. We need to do that.

Jackie: That sounds so fun.

Annie: Thank you for doing this.

Jackie: Thank you so much for having me.

Annie: I'm grateful for you.

Jackie: I'm so grateful for you.

Annie: I'm really glad to be your friend. Thank you.

Jackie: Yes, me too.

Annie: Okay, you guys, isn't she awesome? I know. Isn't she the perfect person to help us wrap up this series? Okay. Be sure you're following Jackie on Instagram. Tell her thank you for being here with us for this series. Check out her book, check out her courses. I just fully endorse her. I think she is so great. Everything I've experienced with her has been really, really helpful.

For a full list of all the resources and Instagram handles from our Summer Lovin' experts, go to anniefdowns.com/dating. And don't forget, go drop your questions in the link in the show notes for our follow-up Q&A episode in the fall. If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find all over social media, no longer on a tour bus. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. I am there if you need me at least until July 1st when our Summer Sabbath starts.

We will still have podcast episodes for you, but we are all gonna take a little bit of a break and I will be off socials for the month, but you will have a lot of amazing things going on around here that are still gonna get you through your July. 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 eating dinner with some of my very dearest friends and their kids. I haven't seen them in a couple of weeks because of tour, and I cannot wait to see 'em tonight. So y'all have a great weekend. We'll see you back here actually tomorrow for a Friday bonus conversation to lead us into a season of rest and Sabbath with author Allen Arnold. We'll see y'all tomorrow.