

[00:00:00] <music>

Annie: Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun, a very special episode today. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm so happy to be here with you. I'm so happy to bring you today's guest.

Today we continue our special series called Build Your Board, a That Sounds Fun podcast series in which we want to help you find the voices you need to live the life you want.

We've created that Build Your Board guidebook for this series. Our hope is that by the end of this series, when you've completed the guidebook, listened to all the episodes, you'll be able to answer the question, Who is the next voice I need to help me build the life that I want? Just go to anniefdowns.com/buildyourboard to download your copy of the guidebook today.

Before we dive into today's conversation, I want to tell you about one of our incredible sponsors, [Athletic Greens](#). I brought my AG1 from Athletic Greens with me to New York. I for sure did because it truly is such an easy way to incorporate all the vitamins and minerals I need for the day with just one scoop.

AG1 was designed to make your life simpler, and they are doing it. I love that I can just drink one thing instead of taking multiple supplements. And here's how I like my AG1. All you do is put one scoop of powder in cold water once a day. I like to shake mine with a couple of cubes of frozen lemon juice for a little something extra.

Every scoop is filled with 75 vitamins, minerals and whole foods source quality ingredients that provide all of these major benefits. Okay, get this. AG1 supports your gut and mood, boosts your energy, helps your immune system, supports healthier-looking skin, hair, and nails.

Plus, their single-serving travel packs are so helpful when you're on the go. Just throw a pack in your bag or carry-on. And they make it so easy to bring along with you. You don't have to set a reminder to order it or worry about running out because AG1 is delivered like clockwork every month.

If you're looking for an easier way to take supplements, AG1 is giving you a free one-year supply of vitamin D and five free travel packs with your first purchase. Just go to athleticgreens.com/soundsfun. That's athleticgreens.com/soundsfun. Y'all check it out.

Intro: Today on the show, as we continue our Build Your Board series, we're talking to my mentor, Nancy. Y'all have heard me talk about her plenty of times. Today she is finally making our podcast debut. I get asked often how to find a mentor. So we're going to talk about how to do that, and you know, not be super awkward about it.

We're gonna talk about setting clear expectations around mentorship and discipleship, so you're not asking someone to mentor you and expect that they'll be available to you 24/7. You're gonna get a glimpse of the wisdom I am honored to receive all the time from this spiritual mother of mine. It's like your own mentoring session with Nancy.

And remember you don't have to have the Build Your Board guidebook to be a part of this series, of course. But if you do, you're going to be taking notes for this on page eight. So here's my Build Your Board conversation with my mentor, Nancy.

[00:02:41] <Music>

Annie: All right, Nancy, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

Nancy: Thanks for having me, Annie.

Annie: Well, thank you for doing this. I know this is not exactly your normal communication.

Nancy: Here's what I like. I like to support the people I love that use microphones.

Annie: How often have you been put on a microphone?

Nancy: More than I'd like.

Annie: I know.

Nancy: Every time it's more than I like.

Annie: I know.

Nancy: But I love the Lord, and so we do what we do for Him, right?

Annie: Has Jennie put you on the stage at IF? Yes.

Nancy: Mm-hmm.

Annie: Yeah. Multiple times?

Nancy: Yeah. Not for big things, but it still feels big, you know?

Annie: Yeah. Oh, certainly. It's a large room.

Nancy: It's a large room. I'm blessed. Thank you for having me.

Annie: Well, I'm thrilled. You know, this whole month is helping people find the voices to help them build the life that they want. So I just kind of want us to talk about what we are. People hear me talk about you behind your back all the time. But-

Nancy: You've been doing it more lately, by the way.

Annie: I know.

Nancy: I noticed that.

Annie: I know. It's just very... I mean, it's because we're talking... I mean, I know. There's just a lot you teach me.

Nancy: Well-

Annie: So that's what happens.

Nancy: There you go.

Annie: Okay, back me up a little bit. When you were raising kids—your kids are all my age or younger—when you were raising kids, were you also spending time with other women like this? Were you investing in other women like this?

Nancy: I was. There were different seasons that were more so than others that lend themselves more so than others. But what I always wanted even early on in my parenting is to have someone older than me kind of share life. And I had a really good friend who had a mentor, approached her and said, "I'd like to mentor you." So I kind of stood out on the front lawn waiting for mine to come along. And she didn't. But that's okay.

So as I developed as a mom and worked a few jobs, I also taught Sunday school and I taught seniors in high school, juniors, and seniors in high school. And so a lot of times, they would just come over and we'd go to the grocery store or whatever. So it just kind of started very easily, naturally versus, you know, let's do something very formal and have this relationship.

- Annie:** Right. The formality of it I think is what stresses people out. The “what do we call this? How do we do this? What's the commitment? What's the whatever?" is what stresses people out, I think on both sides, right?
- Nancy:** Right. I would think so.
- Annie:** Tell me, in your seat with people like me and some of the others because I'm not the only person you invest in to the degree you helped me which I cannot imagine how you handle all of us. But from your seat, defining the conversation, defining the relationship, DTR-ing, and like saying what we are, how does it help from your seat as the older woman in the story?
- Nancy:** Do we want to talk about how we started off?
- Annie:** Yeah, yeah, do that.
- Nancy:** Because I didn't know... we were just hanging out.
- Annie:** That's what you thought, yeah.
- Nancy:** We were just hanging out every so often, and I loved it. It was great. And then I'm listening to your podcast and hear that I'm actually your mentor. And I'm like-
- Annie:** Just so you know, this is how all my dating relationships go, Nancy.
- Nancy:** This is interesting. And honestly, you almost feel more of a pressure or responsibility with a title such as that. So even before this recording, I looked up, I googled 'mentor'. Because I thought, "I should know what I'm doing." Because I never felt like I had achieved—I'm using air quotes—achieved something that I then wanted to share with somebody else. You know what I'm saying?
- Annie:** Wow. Wow.
- Nancy:** It just feels like I love Jesus and I want to chase after Him. And I'm so proud of you and what you're doing. I'm happy to share anything I know.
- Annie:** Well, for starters, that's a great example of me poorly asking you to be my mentor or to be disciplined by you. We'll talk about the DTR in a second. But can you talk about the difference... Is there a difference between being mentored or being disciplined for a woman of faith?
- Nancy:** Well, I think what you and I do is we kind of cover all life. And discipling to me, and maybe I'm wrong, but discipling to me seems you take someone who's really

seeking the Lord and just wants to develop their spiritual side. So like we go through a Bible study together. Or there was one girl that I... it was a very, I'm going to do this for a year. She asked me. We met at the park once a week, and we just kind of went over scriptures and talked about the Lord. That was very specific. That was a discipling season versus just let's hang out and how should life go?

Annie: I know. I feel bad for you. Do we need to put an end? Do we need to put a timeline on us for your sake?

Nancy: I hope not.

Annie: I don't need that either. But I'll tell you, I got on the phone yesterday with the pastor at our church who's in charge of discipleship because of how I want to disciple the girls I meet with in 2024. And I said to him, "I think I want to say, Here's what you're signing up for 2024. And this is what we're going to do. And this is how long we're going to do it. And then we're going to talk again in December." Because as the Nancy to the Annie, I feel like it will help with my schedule and with my own investment emotionally and spiritually if I put some boundaries around it.

Nancy: Well, I think it helps too when there's a bigger gap, or there's a younger... I think it helps to have just a neat parameter around it. That doesn't say that you don't then go, Now for the next year, let's do this.

Annie: Well, I want you to know you can get out anytime you want. I just want to say that publicly.

Nancy: Thank you for the disclaimer, Annie.

Annie: You're welcome.

Nancy: At this point, I am not willing to call it quits.

Annie: Okay, great. I'm not. I mean, you've dealt with some stuff. And I appreciate that. I think the thing you're teaching us, though, is that discipleship can be looped into mentorship, and mentorship is not looped into discipleship.

Nancy: I think so.

Annie: Discipleship is the spiritual branch of mentoring. And there are times when you are only doing that just like there are times where you're only mentoring someone in their business life.

Nancy: Right.

Annie: So that's a coaching thing. But mentorship is kind of like let's put your whole life on the table and we will pick what floats the top today. Does that feel true?

Nancy: Yeah, I really do think so.

Annie: Because I don't think I mentor anyone. I think I only disciple is my... If that's your definition, I don't think any of the girls... I mean, my public life maybe I'm mentoring.

Nancy: Okay, thank you. Because you read my mind, Annie.

Annie: Yes, I saw your face where you're like, "Don't say that."

Nancy: I'm like, back up, Annie.

Annie: Yes, I do think my life models some things that people should and shouldn't do that they watch. I think in my life as a person who meets with a handful of women in Nashville, I'm discipling them versus mentoring them, even though we talk about some of their life. So you heard me say about you on a podcast.

Nancy: Yes, ma'am.

Annie: Is it-

Nancy: Good thing I was listening.

Annie: I know. Yeah. You'd be like, why'd you even call me to be on this show?

Nancy: I don't know. What is happening?

Annie: Why would it have been better for me to ask you personally?

Nancy: With you, Annie, I don't know that it would've... we joke about it because I do think it's fun. I think that's part of your quirky life. I mean, you have so much going on and I just don't know that it would have mattered if we had sat down at our favorite coffee shop and gone, "Okay, here's the deal. Would you like to?" And I would go, "Yes. Okay. It didn't-

Annie: I just felt like it would've been more respectful of me to say it to you. That's what I think. I wish I would've been more respectful of your time and your investment versus assuming.

Nancy: But we were hanging out, and I loved it.

Annie: Right.

Nancy: And you kept wanting it. So I'm okay with that. You Know? I don't really see it as any disrespect. I just saw it as, Oh, here we go. All right.

Annie: Well, I'm glad that's how you saw it and I'm sorry I didn't do it better.

Nancy: I love you.

Annie: I'll do it better from going forward. And I'm doing it better. Here is the whole thing. I'm doing it better with the ones I'm meeting with because of what I learned from meeting with you. Let me do it.

Nancy: That's what I'm here for.

Annie: That's what you do, right?

Nancy: Yeah.

Annie: When We are not together in this relationship, will you kind of talk about what does it look like to mentor someone when you're not seeing them? So what are you doing in your private time or when we're not together? Checking? Praying? Like kind of talk through... for those of us who are discipling or mentoring other people, what are you doing when we're not meeting at a coffee shop?

Nancy: Okay. So we already talked about I'm not the one that has it all together. I think I'm now ready to lend you all of my knowledge. But what I do every day, just in my every day, is I get in the word. So what I have been doing the last, I don't know-

Annie: Years.

Nancy: Years.

Annie: At least since before the pandemic-

Nancy: ...is sending you a Bible verse every day. Not because I'm all that, but because it meant something to me today in my reading. I'm just reading along. And right now we're in the Psalms. We've been in the Psalms for like a year because we're taking it really slowly. But it doesn't-

Annie: In the NLT, right?

Nancy: Right now we're in Amplified.

Annie: Amplified, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

Nancy: You know my favorite's The Message. But kinda like you read through the gospels. We switch around for a different thing. So the psalms are really bringing a lot of life to my life. So I just want to share that with you. That doesn't need a response. That doesn't need any kind of... I don't expect anything. I pray for you every day. Now what we did start doing more in the pandemic times was Marco Polo.

Annie: Yes. Which I'm so thankful for.

Nancy: And I still love because I can be on my walk and I can just go, "Hey, I just needed you to know I was thinking about, praying for this or whatever." But I also take into account that you have quite a busy schedule. So I don't want to inundate you with communication all the time.

Annie: I never feel that, by the way. I always love every single thing you say or do in my direction. So I never feel inundated. It is such a gift. So don't ever feel that.

Nancy: All right.

Annie: I mean, the scripture thing's beautiful. Have you heard me tell the story about when I sent verses? So you do that for me every day. So maybe six weeks ago, eight weeks ago, I found one verse... and I told the story about me and Angie getting off the plane the same time, and you had sent us both the same verse.

Nancy: You had the same verse. And I was like, Oh-

Annie: It was so great.

Nancy: I mean, sorry. If it's good, why not share with all?

Annie: That's exactly right. And what I did is I did that. Six or eight weeks ago I sent all the girls I meet with the same verse. I said, "Hey, I read this this morning and it made me think of you." It did. Every one of them had a different response to why that verse mattered to them that day. And I was like, "Man, that is the Lord." Nancy, that is directly because you do that for me, that I did that for them.

Nancy: Well, here's the thing, is that I love your words. I love that you can do podcast after podcast and have so many great things to say. And I, in just true humility, do not think I've got that many great things to say. I know who does. And I am assured

that if I send you a verse, so say this one out of one Corinthians 14, go after a life of love as if your life depended on it, because it does. Give yourselves to the gifts God gives you, most of all, try to proclaim His truth. Who doesn't want to hear that?

Annie: Right.

Nancy: Like I said, it's not something I have in my mind that, Oh my gosh, I need to tell Annie, this is a brilliant thought that I came up with. No, I'm gonna give you God's word that literally will transform lives. It really will. That's right. It's alive and active.

So what you see in the girls that you sent that to, it's alive and active in each one of them in a different way because that's what God's ministering to. If I sit and think, "I'm not gonna text them that I'm praying for them," I'm missing what God has, not only for me, but for them.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Nancy: Because-

Annie: If I let my insecurity that says, "I don't want to be too much. I don't know if they want to hear from me today," then what might they have missed from the Lord?

Nancy: Right. Right.

Annie: He was inviting me to be the conduit.

Nancy: Yeah. So I've seen that so many times where I just I'm praying for you today or whatever, and somebody just goes, "Oh my gosh, you have no idea." No, I don't. But He did. And that's the beauty of it, is that He gets to be in charge of this.

Annie: How many women are you discipling, mentoring, investing in like this?

Nancy: I'd say there's a handful right now but not as actively in person.

Annie: You're like, "Annie, no one who bothers me quite as much as you do."

Nancy: I did not say that.

Annie: "No one tells me every time Oreos come into their house except you."

Nancy: I did not say that. I'm very proud of you. Can I just say something here?

Annie: Yeah.

Nancy: To those of you listening, this girl across the table from me is the truest, most authentic runner after Christ that I have seen.

Annie: Nancy.

Nancy: And I am so for you and so behind you and cheering you on because you literally are just... I picture you running with your arms out wide just going, I'm yours, Jesus, you know?

Annie: Thank you.

Nancy: And I love being a part of that not because I have anything. I often tell you I'm proud of you, but I didn't have anything to do with it. All I'm saying is, look, what God's doing in you is beautiful, and I want to cheer you on as you continue to run with Him and towards Him.

Annie: Thank you. And thank you for letting me tell you when I bring Oreos in my house. I know that's gotta be such a weird text to get, but it is such a... you protect me. Having you in place in my life protects me from big yeses I don't want to say because I know that I have said to you, I will tell you the little yeses.

I mean, I literally said to someone yesterday, "When Nancy comes in tomorrow, I have to tell her that..." I don't have to tell her. "I'm going to tell her that I got invited..." I haven't told you this yet.

Nancy: I was gonna say, "I need you to tell me."

Annie: I know. I'm going to. I got an invitation to a small yes sin. And when the invitation was being extended to me to like, "Hey, come on." Like, we're teenagers, right? I thought if I say yes to this, it's not that big of a deal. But there are three more yeses that are coming and then I've blown the whole thing up, meaning my life. And I thought, "This does not matter, but I am telling Nancy. I'm telling Nancy that I got this one peer-pressure invitation to be a part of something I don't want to be a part of that is not a big deal. And the other reality, Nancy, is a ton of people, it would not be a big deal. But for each of us, there are things-

Nancy: But when we know.

Annie: ...Oreos aren't a thing for most people. Oreos are a gateway drug literally for me. And this thing was also a gateway drug for me that I thought, "Man, I have seen too

much to let this door stay open and no one know, because it's a text message on my phone and nobody has to know.

Nancy: Well, and I think because you do live alone and I do not, that is something that you get to have the security of. You get to tell somebody that you trust this is going on and I just need you to know. And then I rally my troops around, meaning my spiritual armor, and I just go to town praying for you. Because it means something that you continue to keep your integrity intact, even if it's not that big a deal, really.

Annie: Right. But I also tell you when I have messed up and when I have like... between you and my counselor and a couple of my friends, I'm like, "Somebody knows everything. Everybody doesn't know everything, but somebody knows everything."

Nancy: The beautiful thing is, it stops here. So you're safe.

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Nancy: And I think for people in ministry and in the front lines doing the hard work that you do, it may seem glamorous all the time. But it's not. It is a lot of hard work and a lot of blood, sweat, and tears behind the scenes. You need to know you have a safe place, you have a place where you just get to be all Annie, which you are. You're authentic. I've already said that. You are the real deal but you just get to do the hard things too and talk about them.

Annie: And I will say to everyone listening, that is scared... I'm not scared to tell you the little yes invitation. I don't love it. Like it never gets to where I'm like, well, that's fine. I'll just call Nancy. It's always like, "Oh man, I gotta tell Nancy that." So it never gets easier to live confessionally. But it's certainly easier than blowing up my whole ministry life, career because I hid things for a year and a half or whatever.

Nancy: Right.

[00:20:40] <Music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation to share about one of our amazing partners, [Thrive Market](#). Yes, I 100% placed my Thrive Market order and shipped it to New York so I had all my favorite things ready to go when I got here.

Grocery shopping is not my favorite, as you know. So it takes a little more logistical work in Nashville anyway. So that's why I love Thrive Market. It's my go-to for all my grocery and household essentials, and I can get all of it delivered right to my doorstep, which is a huge time saver.

And as a Thrive Market member, I can also save money on every single order. On average, I save over 30% each time. And on top of that, Thrive Market has a deals page that changes daily. It gives me cash back on so many brands. And they have a price match guarantee. I am quite the fan.

They've got some of my favorite items and they have the clean cleaning supplies that I like so that I'm using products that don't introduce unnecessary chemicals into the situation. I love that on their website and their app are these filters—they have over 70—so you can curate your own shopping experience with the click of a button.

Plus, when you join Thrive Market, you also help a family in need through Thrive's one-for-one membership matching program. You join, they give, which I love.

Join in on the savings with Thrive Market today and get 30% off your first order, plus a free \$60 gift. Go to thrivemarket.com/thatsoundsfun for 30% off your first order, plus a free \$60 gift. That's awesome. That's thrivemarket.com/thatsoundsfun.

Sponsor: And one more amazing partner to tell you about, [Hatch](https://hatch.co). Okay, y'all know, you know how I feel about Hatch. But does it ever take y'all a minute to adjust sleeping somewhere new? Hello, that is my life right now. Maybe you're in a hotel or a rented condo somewhere for fall break.

When I got to New York, I immediately unpacked my Hatch alarm because I needed all my personalized settings to help me fall asleep easily each night. Seriously, the Hatch Restore 2 helps me have more peaceful bedtime routine every time. Think of it as your bedside sleep guide, your ally, and rest.

It's a sophisticated sound machine, light, and alarm clock, beautifully designed for your bedside table. Good rest allows you to be the best version of yourself, which is why the Hatch Restore was engineered to help you form healthy sleep habits for life. Your Hatch teaches your body when it's time to sleep and when it's time to rise with light and sound cues.

It coaches you through meditations and mindfulness exercises that transform the time before and after sleep into restful rituals. Great sleep cannot be forced, but it can be learned. And the Hatch Restore 2 is here to help.

Right now Hatch is offering our friends \$20 off your purchase of a Hatch Restore 2 and free shipping at hatch.co/thatsoundsfun. Sleep deeply and wake gently with the Restore 2. So go to hatch.co/thatsoundsfun to get \$20 off and free shipping. That's hatch.co/thatsoundsfun.

And now back to our conversation with Nancy.

[00:23:35] <Music>

Annie: What happens when me or any of the other women you meet with bring you a topic that you do not like or do not want to talk about or seems really extreme? Like, what do you do when you disagree? What happens from your seat when the person's telling you something you really disagree with or really don't like?

Nancy: I just tell them. That's really hard. It's really hard. But you know, you just got... "I see it differently. I love you, but this is how I see it." I mean, honestly, I can't think of a lot of examples of something that quite that dramatic. It's normally just a-

Annie: I mean, politically, if someone needed to have a real political conversation and you really disagree with their politics, that hasn't happened to me in mentorship or discipleship before. But I think that's gonna happen to somebody.

Nancy: I would just encourage you to go back to what the word says and to unite under the love of Jesus. You do a fine job of this on the podcast as well because you teach us to look at all the sides and respect them even if we don't agree. I mean, I'm not saying tolerate everything because there are some really crazy things going on that I can't get behind. But I also don't have a really close relationship with someone who is going down that road right now.

Annie: I mean, one of the interesting things is you are married with multiple kids. I am not. So I'm dating, you are not. I mean, you and your husband are dating in the married way that y'all date.

Nancy: Yes. Thank you.

Annie: But I'm dating new men and breaking up and all the things, and you are not. And the girls I'm discipling, over half of them are married and most of them have children. Will we talk a little bit about discipling and mentoring people who are not in the same life place? Can single women speak into married women's lives? Can married women speak to single women's lives?

Nancy: Well, I think we're an example.

Annie: Yes.

Nancy: Do you feel like I've missed something that I haven't-

Annie: No.

Nancy: ...been able to... I think it would be helpful if I knew what it was like to go on a date in 2023. But-

Annie: But you're not gonna know. It's not worth it.

Nancy: I've not had a date not married since the 70s. I think surely. Because we're not about just replicating what we see. We're about going after Jesus in a way that can shine his light to others. That's what matters to you. That's what matters to me.

And so if we can do that, all the other stuff... I mean, I look at you sometimes and go, I don't know how you do it. I'm so sorry. It's hard in this area, if we're talking about dating or any kind of relationship like that. I can't relate but I can pray for you. I can go before you and ask the Lord for so many things in that area.

And likewise, you remind me of how many ways you can steward your life for Christ that I haven't had the opportunity to. Because I was busy cooking mass amounts of food when the kids were home.

Annie: For your three sons and daughter. Yeah. A lot of people eating a lot of food.

Nancy: So that was a lot different than what you have lived. And I think it helps you to hear from me that that is a gift. And today that's a gift. We'd like another gift, another day of marriage. But today we'll take the gift of your singleness and steward it as well as you can for Christ.

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Nancy: I think it helps you to know that, you know, I have a wonderful marriage. I love my husband. We've been married 44 years. We're great. Today we were great. We have arguments. We make messes. I mean, there are some downsides. Not bad. There're just some other sides that we don't consider when we're going, I would really like to be married. So...

Annie: I think a funny thing is, a lot of people assume married women can't disciple single women because single women wish they were married, is the assumption. But single women disciplining married women, well, they don't know anything.

Nancy: They know everything.

Annie: Right. And your description throws away both of those arguments. Because every single woman doesn't want to get married, and every single woman that wants to get married don't want to get married today. You know. And every single woman

who is discipling married women can have a lot of wisdom into their lives just by being a person and doing relationship with anybody.

But your reminder of we're not trying to replicate ourselves, we're trying to run after Jesus kind of trashes all the excuses we make for who we can and cannot disciple.

Nancy: Well, I think it's easy to come up with an excuse not to enter into a mentorship or discipleship or relationship with somebody else just because it is vulnerable, it does take time, it is seeking someone else as their importance over your own. And it's... Hmm, How do I say it? It's not a selfish thing. It's a giving thing.

And I love giving so much. I love to serve. I love to help others. But there just comes a time when I gotta do stuff at home or there are just some responsibilities there, so it holds me back. I see in your life being able to say yeses to a lot of things that I may not be able to just because of constrictions, or whatever. All good. I think it's all good. I just love that your life right now is the gift God has given you.

Annie: That's exactly right.

Nancy: And the life God has given me is the life He gave me. I'm grateful for that. Because He just gave it. It's just so powerful what He does in both our lives. It's not a one is better than the other. It's that both are great. And both the end goal is the same.

Annie: The end goal is, can I spend my whole life and leverage everything I've got for Jesus? And today, God said the best way you can do that, Nancy, is married with kids and working and all the things. And the best way Annie can do that is not married yet. Okay. That feels more okay today than it does some days. But it feels okay today. I'm like, Fine, let's run. I can run a lot faster. If you want to go faster, go alone. All right. Let's go. If you want to go farther, go together.

Nancy: Exactly.

Annie: Okay. So you talked a few minutes ago about how you wished for this when you were me.

Nancy: I did. Yeah.

Annie: And you never got it.

Nancy: Not in the traditional way. So I did get it in a relationship with a Bible teacher I had. So it's a little different because she wasn't that much older than me. Like two months. That's not really much. But I had people speak into my life. We just didn't

sit down across from each other and make it a thing. It just you learn life from other people, how they're living with Jesus and serving Him.

Annie: Do you think we need to make it a thing? Do you think everyone needs to pursue?

Nancy: I do think it's helpful.

Annie: Okay. I do too.

Nancy: I really do think it's helpful for a lot of reasons, some of which we've already talked about. Just the accountability. Especially if you're in ministry, if you're, as I say, on the front lines, doing God's work. We already know the enemy's coming after you. I don't want to be on the front lines without somebody guarding me.

So I love that picture of me not necessarily being at all the adventure out or being at every podcast, doing all the book releases with you. But I am because I'm gonna fight everything to keep the enemy back and to pray you into what God has for you in this season. So I'd want that for others.

Annie: We're actually doing a whole episode on a prayer team coming up in this series because this year, that team that I owe an email to, I mean, that team that's prayed for me this year I think has made some significant changes for me as far as protection and as far as open doors. I mean, this is my first year really strategically asking people to pray. And I think it has made a difference.

Nancy: I love how you lead in that way because what you do in times like that where you do gather a team of your people and say, Okay, we're just gonna pray about this, that teaches me. So this mentor thing, I think sometimes comes back to me and helps me. And likewise, I'm sure you learn from the girls that you are with. I think that's what the Lord would be so glad about.

Annie: I mean, I need someone to make me a disciple. My friend pastor Chris Nichols always says you don't float up, you float down, you know?

Nancy: Mm-hmm.

Annie: Or if you don't naturally grow, you naturally shr... you know, given the outside forces, you are going to decline not increase, you know? That's really true in my life. That may not be true for everybody, but it's true in my life that without some outside forces, I'm not as inclined to be who I want to be. So having you constantly available, I mean, not every 24 hours a day, but knowing... I mean, I can always Marco Polo you.

Nancy: But you can.

Annie: I mean, you are one of the people that is making me a disciple. And I want those around me. I mean, if you could go back to 40-year-old Nancy, or 30-year-old Nancy, would you tell her to do something different to find someone to mentor her, disciple her?

Nancy: I have thought about that. I mean, I think about the women that were in church with me. You know, I could have gone up and asked one of them. I probably wish I had because I think it would have been helpful. I think my friends and that had a little aerobics class in the church and we had the little senior ladies come, we had a great time with them, but we didn't share as much life as I think we could have. I think I would've loved that.

But I also am more of an introvert and more shy at times like that. So it was kind of hard for me to go put myself out there and go, Hey, would you do that? So yeah, probably I wish I could have. But I didn't. So what I wanted to do is to be that for somebody else.

Annie: That's really generous.

Nancy: Even though I didn't know we were doing it exactly.

Annie: I know. I'm gonna text all the other girls that I know you meet with and be like, "Have y'all DTR'd? Because Nancy doesn't know if she doesn't know."

Because I think so many people when they ask me about you, people want to know how do I find someone? So for me, you and I shared a world. I was friends with your daughter-in-law and your son before you even lived in Nashville.

Nancy: Right.

Annie: And you really pursued friendship with me. You early on said, "I just want you to know I pray for you all the time." And I was like, "Well that is really nice that Mark's mom prays for me all the time." I mean, that's what I remember thinking is like, "That is so nice." We went to... I'm trying to think... We went to coffee in 2013.

Nancy: When was your blog? Do you remember that day?

Annie: Yes. Yeah.

Nancy: It was a big-

Annie: Yes, the blog about Kim Kardashian.

Nancy: We kept looking and going, "Oh my gosh. It's going crazy."

Annie: And I was staying at my friend Connor's parents' house. They talk about that too. They were like, that was the craziest day. Because you came down and we're like, "Something's going wild on my internet."

Nancy: "Something's happening." And so, yeah, I left my job and came and met you for coffee. And you said, "This is kind of crazy what's going on?" I go, "Okay, well, let's talk about it. What's happening?"

Annie: And I was just in Houston for a work event, I think. So 10 years ago, Nancy, that we became friends. So will you give some advice to our friends listening? What are some ways you can find Nancys in your life?

Nancy: Well, That's certainly one way. I mean, my son goes, "Hey, my friend's in town. Will you meet her for coffee?" "Sure." So that's great. And of course I knew of you. I knew your books at that time and knew your blog.

Annie: Good old days of Annie blogs.

Nancy: I'm so happy to do that. So people can obviously bring people together. But you're at church and so look around you.

Annie: Look around. If she's older, ask her.

Nancy: It doesn't even have to be older, I don't think.

Annie: Oh, yes. How come?

Nancy: I don't know. But I just think we don't have to always assume you have to be older in order to give something to my life.

Annie: So what are you looking for then if you're not looking for gray hair at church? I mean, that's who I look at Cross Point. I'm like, man, if I ever needed a conversation here, I'm going to the women who look like they've done this longer than me.

Nancy: I do think there is wisdom that comes with decades. I know enough at this age to be able to look at you and say, this season isn't gonna last forever. Just hang in there. It's gonna get better. So I do think there's value in that. I'm just saying, you know, if

you're drawn to somebody, if you go, "Gosh, I really like the way I see them relate to people. They're just so kind or whatever," it's okay to say, Hey, can we get coffee? Can we go get brunch together? Or whatever. And just see if that resonates.

Again, this is coming from the person who didn't do that for my own mentor. So I'm just saying, you know, that's a possibility. I think some churches... Certainly, I remember this a while back. They were trying to do mentor groups where they match you and do a formal type thing. I don't know how that went because I don't know if that happened or not.

Annie: If your church does that, give it a go.

Nancy: Yeah. Or any women's group or bible study, anything you can get into. And then you just have a natural affinity for this person. You go, "Well, let's hang out. This is fun." I think part of it is, and we've joked about our DTR, but I think the thing is that I just loved getting together with you. It was... is. It's not in the past. It's still occurring.

Annie: That last one went very fun. I was very in my feel.

Nancy: I mean, I keep looking at this sign 'That Sounds Fun with Annie Downs'. It is fun with you.

Annie: Thank you.

Nancy: But it's not always fun for you.

Annie: Yeah, that's true.

Nancy: So any kind of mentoring relationship can be a safe place where it doesn't have to always be fun or pretty or together. You just go, So what do you do? And then, you know, we can just talk about what we do when things are not working the way we wish they were.

Annie: Yes, yes.

Nancy: Which is really everybody has that.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. And I'm thinking about like BSF, Bible Study Fellowship. If your church for some reason has no female that you would like to get to know, there's things like Bible Study Fellowship. There's things like... I mean, I would imagine in your neighborhood... I'm trying to think of other places besides church.

Nancy: Well, even at my work. We have lovely women that serve Jesus because they love him. So we have really close connections with each other because we are running the race towards Jesus together. We do it at different paces and we do it in different styles because we all have different personalities. But I learn from them and hopefully they learn something from me, that it's just a beautiful thing. Again, you don't always have to be in an official relationship to learn from other women.

Annie: Right.

Nancy: But I think the obvious way is just to ask the Lord. Like, shine your light on someone or let me be that to someone else. I think that's what really turned around for me is I was a little sad I didn't have one, but who can I do that for?

So I had these girls that I just said, "Let's go to the store. Let's fold the laundry together." I mean, I had a lot of work to do as raising kids and we would just do it together." And it was-

Annie: I Learned that from you. When I had those college girls that I was leading when I led a small group from 2011 to 2015 when they finished college, I mean, so often I'd be like, "Get in my car. You can absolutely go with me to the speaking event. I gotta go run some errands. I gotta get my oil changed," because I was driving to so many speaking events in that season. And I would just say, "Come with me. Come with me." If they were, you know, college sophomores, you're like, "Yeah, okay, I'll get back at 12:30 in the morning on a Friday night. You know?"

Nancy: Sure.

Annie: But you taught me that. That if a sit down across the table doesn't fit, what does fit?

Nancy: What does fit?

Annie: Bring them along. Bring them along. I remember there's a woman in my hometown named Cindy. And Cindy did the same. She'd be like, "Come over and eat dinner with our family and we'll put the kids down, then we can chat." And it just was like, I was just in their rhythm that night.

Nancy: I can't tell you how many ball games I sat with young girls.

Annie: Oh, brilliant. You would just say, Come to Mark's baseball game and sit with me.

Nancy: Well, he didn't like baseball. Basketball.

Annie: Basketball. That's exactly right.

Nancy: Basketball.

Annie: That's exactly right.

Nancy: But yeah, I mean, I sat at games. Let's use that time. So it's just being creative and thinking of what are you doing in your life and who can come along with you.

[00:41:48] <Music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation one more time to share about one of our amazing partners, [Beekeepers Natural](#). Okay, it is the season when all the germs are flying around and absolutely no one is interested in getting sick. But there's an easy, proactive way to support your family's immune systems and stay ahead of the game with Beekeepers Natural Propolis Throat Spray and their new kids Propolis Throat Soothing Lollipops.

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This is so important when you're already short on bandwidth, which is when you're hiring. They're the experts at helping us find the best fit for the roles we want to build on our teams.

If you're hiring, you need Indeed. They can help you attract, interview, and hire all in one place so you don't have to spend your valuable hours digging through multiple jobs sites looking for candidates with the right skills. Instead, you can do it all and fast with Indeed.

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Start hiring now with a \$75 sponsored job credit to upgrade your job post at indeed.com/soundsfun. Offer good for a limited time. Claim your \$75 credit now at indeed.com/soundsfun. Terms and conditions apply. If you need to hire, you need Indeed.

That link and pretty much every other link you could ever hope for are in the show notes or in Friday's AFD Week in Review that you want to get tomorrow because it is our first AFD Week in Review for me in New York. So be sure to check those out.

Okay, now back to finish up our Build Your Board conversation with Nancy.

[00:44:57] <Music>

Annie: What do you say if you try... You get together with Katie three times. We'll use Katie because she's in our office.

Nancy: Okay, yes.

Annie: You and Katie gets together three times, and it is not easy. It's just like not vibing. And you're the Nancy in the story and you're like, "Man, this isn't a good fit. How do you say that?"

Nancy: Oh, that sounds awkward.

Annie: It does, doesn't it?

Nancy: Sorry, Katie. I mean, keep trying.

Annie: You think so.

Nancy: I don't know. I mean, if it's not vibing, because of me, I want to say, "Maybe you need to find somebody else." But if it's not vibing, because it's hard, or because she doesn't really want to submit to the Lord or change from some sinful practices that really aren't helping her, then I think just politely exiting.

Annie: I like you said 'sinful practices that aren't helping her'. We always forget that sin is not helping us. We think it's so helpful, and it's giving us what we want. And it is like, this is not the path. This is not the path.

Nancy: Mm-hmm.

Annie: There's been a couple of times in my career as a person where I've had to say, Hey, I don't think this is the best fit. And it is awkward. It is so awkward.

Nancy: It kind of makes my stomach hurt a bit.

Annie: But also I can't be getting ready to have coffee with someone in two hours and be dreading it because it isn't a fit. But I mean, it can be hard. That's different than it not being a good fit.

Annie: Right. So what happens if you're the Annie and it doesn't fit? I guess I have to tell... Or if you're the Katie and it doesn't fit? I guess you have to tell the Nancy, "Thank you so much for your time. I've really enjoyed this."

Nancy: "Okay, Katie, do you still want Bible verses?" I just need-

Annie: Oh my gosh. Yeah. "But Katie, do you need to block my number?" Yeah. Yeah. I just think that's got... I mean, that's awkward.

Nancy: I mean, that's making me think. I don't know, Annie.

Annie: I just don't want anyone listening to feel like, Okay, well I'm the Nancy in the story and this isn't a good fit, but I'm stuck because this girl needed a mentor. Or, I'm the Annie and I don't think things fit with my Nancy anymore. They do.

Nancy: Thank you for clarifying.

Annie: I don't want anyone to feel trapped. I want them to feel committed.

Nancy: Of course. Some things with Jesus are really hard, but things don't necessarily have to be hard in relationships where we're running towards Him together or side by side.

Annie: That's good.

Nancy: So I'd wonder, is it hard because it's just not working between the two of you, like it's just not a good relationship or is it hard because you're not running towards the same person?

Annie: And I'll tell you. I mean, after my girls graduated from their college, my small group, I needed three or four years to not disciple on a weekly basis because of my career. I needed to turn my energy towards my career. So I'm imagining there are people who've had to do that on both sides of going like, Hey, I need six months, or I need my baby to be in preschool and then... Or you know, seasonally it's okay too, right?

Nancy: Seasonally. It changes all the time. I mean it really does. And it's, I think, really helpful to be flexible and to realize... Now, let's clarify. You and I don't meet every week.

Annie: No, no. We do not. Once a month is my goal. And we probably hit every other. Because of me.

Nancy: But we understand that fluid. And we have plenty of conversations about when can you meet, these are my opportunities, and so forth.

Annie: We don't have a standing-

Nancy: There's a lot of give and take in that.

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Nancy: So I just didn't want somebody to hear that and go, "They meet once a week?"

Annie: Now, the funny thing is with the girls, for... which all my girls who are gonna listen to this before I've communicated this with them is hilarious. But as I'm processing how I'm going to disciple in 2024, I am processing, are there gonna be certain windows of time?

So something I found really helpful... I haven't told you this, Nancy, but something that's been really helpful for me is because we're at church for the 9 and the 11 and

most of the girls I'm meeting with are on staff at our church. So in between those two services we go and get coffee.

Nancy: That's genius.

Annie: So we are all already at church. We've already done our nine o'clock commitment of being wherever we need to be for that service. Now we have 45 minutes to an hour. We go and get coffee or get breakfast, and then we come back midway through the 11 o'clock service so that for the end of the service they can serve where they serve and I can be where I need to be.

Nancy: That's amazing.

Annie: And it is within the window of time that I'm already serving our church. And it has been so helpful for my calendar.

Nancy: That's so amazing.

Annie: So I'm considering for 2024 with them having more of like, this meal or this meal are gonna be... so let's sign up. But I also appreciate the flexibility of you and I going, Okay, once you get your work schedule, once I know my travel schedule, let's find the sliver that matches for both of us. But you're right. I mean, texting and Marco Polo are constant.

Nancy: Constant. And it's a safety place for me. If I feel like I haven't connected with you and I go, Oh my gosh. I mean, let's get on the Marco Polo and make sure she knows that you are still praying, you are still very much mentally with her. And we'll get together... I mean like when you're in New York.

Annie: I know. It's gonna be a different season for two months.

Nancy: It'll be a very different season.

Annie: It'll be back to Covid times where you and I were on Marco Polo every day.

Nancy: We just Marco Polo.

Annie: It is one of my strongest memories of being out on my porch before it was my new porch and just being like, "I'm telling Nancy all the real stuff," and all my neighbors are on their porch too. I remember it so clearly. That'll be what we do again.

Nancy: But I think that time really kind of secured our relationship too.

Annie: Me too. I think so too. I love that one of the things before we started, you were like, I want everyone to know they don't have to know everything.

Nancy: Absolutely. Because I'm the head of not knowing everything.

Annie: Me too.

Nancy: I mean, I'm-

Annie: If you're the king, I'm the queen of not knowing everything.

Nancy: I'm waiting till you reach a point where you really feel like you've, okay, now figured it out-

Annie: That is so helpful.

Nancy: Oh, I'm so not there.

Annie: Me neither.

Nancy: You know, even coming here right before I left my house, you know, I'm on my knees in my closet going, "Just remind me, Lord, that I need you more than anything else. Just remind the people listening that they have you. If they don't have another human being to come alongside right this minute, they have you."

That to me has meant everything to have the Lord faithful and true, powerful, and with every wisdom and knowledge of everything. That we don't have to know everything. We're gonna live with a lot of mystery in our life, but we have him. So that absolutely changes my perspective of confidence or whatever. I don't have the confidence to come and mentor you in any way. My gosh, you have like five companies or something?

Annie: Not yet.

Nancy: I mean, you really have such a brilliant, beautiful life.

Annie: Thank you.

Nancy: So anything I can bring is got to be from the Lord. Yeah. So I have confidence in Him.

Annie: I'm really glad for people to remember that no matter which seat they're sitting in.

Nancy: No matter which seat.

Annie: Because the truth is we all want to be making disciples. So whether you're the Nancy in the story who didn't have a Nancy, or you're the Annie who has a Nancy, and who they'll hear on Thursday, Becca, you... it's just... we all want to make disciples and to feel inadequate is just the enemy trying to stop us.

Nancy: That's right.

Annie: I think. So it's such a good reminder. The reminder I would like everyone to remember is no matter how much Nancy loves you, it is still hard to say when you're confessing sin. It does not suddenly become like, you know, what's easy to do? Talk about what's hard and where I mess up. So I think sometimes people are hesitant to disciple or be disciplined because they think this still feels awkward and this still feels uncomfortable. Of course, it does. Of course, it does. And I'm sure this is true for you.

Nancy: That is okay.

Annie: This is true for me. There's stuff girls tell me that makes me feel awkward and uncomfortable and not sure what to do with.

Nancy: And it's okay for me to look at you and say, "I don't know how to help you in this right now. I don't know what to say right now.

Annie: And then you say, "But we'll pray."

Nancy: And we do.

Annie: That is what you say. You say, "But we'll pray." Okay, what did we not say about this that you want to make sure we say to people?

Nancy: I think, honestly for me, if I were listening to this a few decades back, I would want to be reassured that if I reached out to somebody for a relationship, either reaching up or reaching back to someone younger, I would just want to be assured that it was a safe thing to do. That it would be okay whether they have time for me or not. And not to hesitate.

Again, if you ask the Lord to show you someone, and He does, then go for it. And it may still not work out, but it's okay. It's safe to just ask for some comradery in the life that we have with Jesus.

Annie: I just had to say no to someone and someone has recently said no to me about a specific... Can we talk in the specific arena? And the beauty is, "Okay. Okay." A rejection is not on either side. A rejection is not a rejection of you as a person. It is a closed door because there is another open one. If I'm not the best person to disciple you, someone else is the best person to disciple you.

Nancy: Right.

Annie: And that is true on both sides. So I'm grateful for you reminding us of that. That it is safe to ask and that if someone can't do it, they can't do it.

Nancy: They can't do it.

Annie: It probably has very little to do with you.

Nancy: Right.

Annie: I had to say no purely out of my commitments on my calendar of who I am already discipling. It was not personal at all.

Nancy: I know.

Annie: And so it is, you know, God has someone else for her. So I'm sure people will send us in questions. So you'll probably have to come back. Oh, sorry.

Nancy: Annie! One and done.

Annie: One and done.

Nancy: One and done.

Annie: Okay. Fair. Fair. Sorry, everybody, this is all you got of Nancy. This is it. This is all of Nancy you get. Okay Nancy, because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

Nancy: Sounds fun to me. The top thing that sounds fun to me is having a house full of grandkids that we just are all together.

Annie: Do y'all do that once a year?

Nancy: We try. We try. We don't have anything on the calendar so far, but we're working on that.

Annie: How many grandkids total?

Nancy: Seven.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Nancy: From seven to almost two.

Annie: Is that all of them, you think? You think you know everybody you're gonna know?

Nancy: Guys, do y'all have anything to do? I'm gonna leave that question open-ended for the safety of my family. Intact.

Annie: Sure, sure, sure, sure.

Nancy: But yeah, I love being with them.

Annie: They're cute.

Nancy: They are just life-giving to me. So I'm grateful for the ones when I can't be with them in person, we can FaceTime or send pictures and I get soccer updates and all that. It is the life I thought it would be. Although I didn't expect that they wouldn't be in the same place I was. I think somehow I magically thought everybody would be in the same place.

Annie: One of your children lives near us and the others do not.

Nancy: Correct. But that's what sounds fun to me.

Annie: They're fun. Good answer.

Nancy: Little people are the best.

Annie: The best. They're absolutely the best. Thank you for making time for this and for doing this. I really appreciate it. I know it was stretching you beyond your normal use of your day.

Nancy: This is outside of my comfort zone. I appreciate you and your giftings, this is not in my everyday routine. However, for you, I love you and I'd do it.

Annie: Thank you.

Nancy: You're just doing a great job. I'm really so proud of you.

Annie: Well, thank you. I believe you.

Nancy: We appreciate you.

Annie: I love you. You have made my life so... I mean, when we say the sentence a lot in this series of find the voices that'll help you have the life you want to have and help you build the life you want, you have helped me build the life I want. And I just cannot thank you enough. I can't wait till we all get to heaven and we get to say to the Lord, like, "Show Nancy how much of what I get to do was because of what she did." Because I just feel like we get to pass all of it up.

Nancy: That's very generous.

Annie: We're all gonna lay it at the feet of Jesus anyway. But I'm gonna pass them all through your hands first.

Nancy: He gets all the glory, doesn't He?

Annie: Yeah, He does.

Nancy: He really does.

Annie: Where else would we go?

Nancy: Where else would we go?

Annie: I got nowhere else to go, so-

Nancy: He's amazing.

Annie: Love you.

Nancy: I love you too, so much.

Annie: Thank you.

[00:58:18] <Music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, isn't she the best? Listen, Nancy is the actual best. I get it. You're thinking she's the best and I'm like, I know. She is the best. Man, how helpful to have her on today and hilariously talk about our own DTR.

For a full list of our additional resources for the Build Your Board series, make sure you go to anniefdowns.com/buildyourboard. You can also get the guidebook there so you can take notes and work through the questions that we brought up today.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, or follow along on the That Sounds Fun Instagram @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 is I'm getting ready to head to Dallas for the weekend. I cannot wait to be at Chosen Con. If you haven't gotten your virtual tickets, go to chosencon.com. It is gonna be real fun, y'all.

Y'all have a great Thursday. Well, I actually see you back here tomorrow. Y'all know I love a Friday episode with one of my friends and new author, Micah E. Davis. Can't wait for y'all to hear him tomorrow.