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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.

We're doing something fun this week as we continue our special series called Build Your Board. We're starting a whole week of coaching with daily shorter episodes with some specialized coaches who may be the next voice you need to live the life you want.

We're bringing in business coaches, a health coach, financial coach, life coach, and relationship coaches. Y'all, this is gonna be such a fun week. I would really encourage you, don't cherry pick, but listen to all five of them because there is some wisdom, lots of wisdom to glean from every episode. But I wonder if one of these is gonna be the coach that you need next.

Before we dive into today's conversation though, I'm gonna tell you about one of our incredible sponsors. This episode is sponsored by [BetterHelp](#). Do you ever feel like your mind is getting in its own way? Like you know what you should do, but you can't seem to do it? Therapy can help you figure out what is holding you back.

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Be a good friend to yourself and your mind with BetterHelp. Visit betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun today to get 10% off your first month. That's betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun.

So as I said today on the show, we continue our Build Your Board series with my business partner and manager, Kelli Haywood and our friend, and business coach,

Chris Weinberg. So many of you want to talk more about running a business and being an entrepreneur. And maybe it's the time to get a business coach.

Kelli is the owner of KCH Entertainment and we co-own and run the That Sounds Fun Network together.

Chris is the founder and CEO of Well Coached and is the go-to performance and business coach for creative forward-thinking companies here in Nashville and really nationwide. He is brilliant. Y'all are going to love this.

And listen, if you want to talk more about running a business, building a business, being an entrepreneur, tell us that. The more y'all tell us what you wanna hear, the more we're able to build the shows that you want.

And if you're following along with us in Your Build Your Board guidebook, you're gonna be taking notes for this one on page 11. So here's my Build Your Board conversation with my business partner Kelli and my coach, Chris.

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Annie: Kelli Haywood, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

Kelli: So glad to be here.

Annie: First time? Second time?

Kelli: I think I did a clip for you at one point. I think it was a special episode. But yeah, this is a rare moment.

Annie: It is a rare moment, my business partner, my manager.

Kelli: We talk a lot.

Annie: Yes.

Kelli: Just never on microphones.

Annie: Constantly as some would say.

Kelli: Probably best.

Annie: Thank you for starting companies with me. I'm very grateful.

Kelli: I'm honored to be here. I am honored to be here with you.

Annie: I am so thankful that you came out of retirement so we could do this together. Chris, we say a lot that we're not sure we should be doing this, but there's no one else you'd rather do it with.

Chris: That's true. That's fair.

Annie: Chris, will you kind of introduce yourself and explain what you do? Because we'd really love to talk about business coaching today and kind of help people... They watch what Kelli and I have built between AFD Inc and That Sounds Fun Network, they watch our touring, and people often go, "How do y'all do this?" And the answer is you're kind of the secret sauce behind how we do a lot of what we do. So will you introduce yourself?

Chris: Yeah. So I'm an executive business coach. I think I'm in my 23rd year of this now. I got really lucky early in life and found my nirvana. I grew up in the restaurant business.

Annie: Oh, I didn't know that.

Chris: Yeah. The non-Weinberg side of the family is Greek.

Annie: Oh.

Chris: So all the traditional Greeks in the restaurant business is part of my story. Anyway, I got lucky in that business early and got some really good mentors and was able to help take a very small company public that I was a partner in.

So I started learning what's gonna happen when in different parts of business. And it got very predictable for me. Along that trail we also started figuring out, well, what are tools I can use to help make this a more predictable deal?

Annie: For other people?

Chris: For other people? Because I always had this knack that... I always had this thing that I wanted to be a teacher, but at the same time, I wanted to make money. And those two things don't collide very easily. So I went the business route, which I also love.

So I got a lot of good training, a lot of good mentorship. And then in the late 90s, I went out on my own with a consulting and we focused primarily on emerging chain hospitality. That could be hotels, it could be restaurants. Anything in the hospitality sector because that was my background.

And I had seen, through companies I had been a part of, what was gonna happen when, it became very predictable for me. And that went great. And we grew to about 17 of us. We worked all over the country, the Caribbean, the whole nine yards. And it was amazing. Then about 14, 13 years ago, I had some changes in my life where I needed to get off the road and I moved to Nashville.

Annie: From where?

Chris: From Charlotte in North Carolina, and I started Well Coached consulting. And over the course of the first 10 years of the business, it started morphing out of hospitality because my backbone or my go-tos are Ken Blanchard, the guy that wrote The One Minute Manager and the DISC profile. And I collide those two things with my own experiences and then trying to meet folks where they are and putting all that together.

So coming here was terrifying for me. I didn't know a soul. I came here with my hair on fire and thank the Lord it just worked out and it was my place to be. My business really started morphing into creatives, which is what I love.

And that could be anybody using the creative side of their brain. YouTube would be certainly a part of that. But it could be musicians, it could be management companies, it could be architects, people that are doing things with. It could be chefs. People that are in art. Art is around in some kind of way. Because what's interesting to me is the highly creative people that I may not have all of that, that I'm jealous of, so I wanna learn about it. But combining that with good business practices is what really makes me tick.

Annie: Which we don't bring naturally as artists, yes.

Chris: You don't bring naturally, right?

Annie: Yes.

Chris: So I focus on four pillars. And those pillars are people, sales, profit, and self. Entrepreneurs generally are great at one of them. May be great at two of them. Never at four. So you're always outta balance, right? You're always outta balance.

That's my shtick of coming in and going, how do we get these things as close to balance as possible? I could talk about that ad nauseum all day.

Annie: Could you tell me what I'm the best at at those four?

Chris: The creative.

Annie: What am I the worst at at those four?

Chris: The profit part.

Annie: Yeah. That's so interesting is you know us. Well, you know us really well, but it's so interesting that of those four things you go, "Yeah, you're not good at all of them."

Chris: Yeah. It's impossible. And most creatives think about profit last. Not even interested. Not even interested in it.

Annie: Not interested. You're right.

Chris: And you fit that to the bill. Some folks lean into, no, we can't because we can't afford it. Where others leaning into, we'll figure out a way. Now both have pluses and minuses. But yours and most creatives are much more on the side of "Yes, we can figure out the rest of it."

Annie: Luckily I have Kelli.

Chris: Luckily you have Kelli, which is a great antidote for you, right?

Annie: Yes.

Chris: Like in your DISC profile, you have a lot of emotion-based thinking. You've also got some logic-based thinking in there. She's got all logic-based thinking with a little bit of emotion thinking. So you two have this interesting dichotomy, which really works, right?

Annie: Yeah.

Kelli: Yeah.

Chris: So you set that up naturally. If we were building your team, we would've gone after someone with that kind of disc profile to be riding beside you.

Annie: The Lord did.

Chris: Right? Meaning someone tough enough to stand up to you and be around you, but can also get it down into a logic place and let you run free.

Annie: Yeah. And our high trust helps with that too. Because I'm like, "Oh, if she's telling me something."

Chris: Trust is everything in a business. To that point, I'm always encouraging folks... I work with to ask three questions of a team member. Do I trust you? Do you trust me? And do you care? And if the answer to one of those is no, relationship's over.

Annie: Wow.

Chris: You gotta quit debating about it. You break it off, you move on from that because you're just not gonna restore it. In a personal life maybe you can. But in a business life, it takes so long to repair broken trust. You can probably do something, grass is gonna be greener somewhere else.

Annie: Kelli, how did you find Chris? Because I am getting to work with Chris because of your generosity and knowledge and meeting him in the first place. How did you find Chris?

Kelli: I have the benefit of having a group of people that I've known in business for a really long time. We were all in a magazine at the same time. So we-

Annie: What was the magazine, Kel?

Kelli: Billboard Magazine. What was the list, Kel?

Kelli: Good Lord. It was the top 30 under 30 executives.

Annie: Exec. In music.

Kelli: In Music, yes. So we were all-

Annie: Such a big deal.

Kelli: And everyone else is still in the music industry firmly but we are all in that group at some point. And we started gathering together. Usually, it was every three months or so, every quarter we get together. And really, it was just an opportunity to be in community with each other, to vent if we wanted to.

Annie: Sure.

Kelli: But also to lead on each other and go, "Hey, while you're pursuing this entrepreneurially, what are you seeing?" Where are your pit stops? You know, here's a great resource you should look into." And we still try to get together. It's far less often. We all have big families now.

Annie: Lots of kids.

Kelli: So it's more difficult, but the relationship is there. But at one of those get-togethers, one of the girls in our group, I think it was Virginia-

Annie: I was about to say Virginia feels like such a helpful-

Chris: I think it was Beth.

Kelli: It was Beth. Okay.

Annie: Oh, Beth.

Kelli: All right.

Annie: But Virginia is so helpful. I love-

Chris: And I work with Virginia.

Annie: Yes. You having another manager that when I do something that causes troubles you can call Virginia, I feel like Virginia's our "phone a friend".

Kelli: Yes.

Annie: Emotionally for me. And Virginia and I have been friends for long before even that. But Beth Laird who owns a publishing company in town, she's wonderful, but she brought Chris to our get-together.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Kelli: And before we got together, he sent us all a DISC profile analysis and we filled it out and showed up, and then he did a presentation to the group.

Annie: Oh, wow. Were they all so similar?

Kelli: Oh gosh.

Chris: There's a very common thing.

Kelli: Oh my gosh.

Annie: And it was all women executives?

Kelli: No, no, no. No, no.

Annie: Oh, there's some men too.

Kelli: Men and women.

Chris: There's men too.

Annie: Oh, I thought it was all girls. No, men and women.

Kelli: Men and women. We all have the same DISC profile except for one of us.

Annie: Wow.

Kelli: Basically. I mean, it's not the exact same, but we lead with the same.

Chris: Yeah, the family tree there does not fork.

Annie: I was about to say, but I bet they run so fast.

Chris: They're fast runners.

Annie: Oh man.

Chris: Which is beautiful and messy.

Annie: Certainly.

Chris: It's so beautiful and messy. I mean-

Annie: Yeah. When you bulldoze you leave something behind you.

Chris: That's right. And that's what I love. I love that. I love the messiness of all of it and going, how do we allow you to stay, keep being messy but clean it up so that everyone's still surviving behind you and building something? That's what really jazzes me. But her group, man, that family tree did not fork.

Kelli: But yeah-

Chris: So there's a common theme there.

Kelli: I really felt like this is a key that I can use to unlock something. We talked back and forth.

Annie: It was before you and I started though?

Kelli: Yes, way before. We chatted back and forth, but I also then took that time off whenever I had my second kid. But when we started the network, I knew that I was going to be at a point, you know, running two companies that I needed someone sitting next to me that I could look at not as a peer and feel very confident that they were gonna be not just looking at the best interest for the company, but for me too.

Annie: Wow. That's important.

Kelli: So, you know, we spend some time together and then we've been working together since.

Annie: And for people to know you don't just run two companies. You run KCH Entertainment, which is your management company. You have multiple clients, not just me. You run the That Sounds Fun Network in a different capacity than I do in a much more day-to-day capacity and you run my career. You're my manager. So technically you probably run three companies. Though I run AFD Inc., you're a big voice in how we run our company.

Kelli: Right.

Annie: So we need a Chris when you have three of those things.

Kelli: A hundred percent. And then the other thing too is you are my business partner for the network, and so I have that other person to... you know, we yin and yang on that. We go back and forth sometimes in these other businesses. I need another you. So Chris kind of serves as that, you know, helping me have these conversations that... you're not in the KCH side.

Annie: I'm not in the KCH with you. That's exactly right. Chris, how many clients do you have at a time? Like how many people are you coaching right now?

Chris: 25.

Annie: Is that like your number?

Chris: That's my number. I've been doing it long enough to know when not to get over my skis. And 25 is the number.

Annie: Wow. I mean, but what if 2020 happens, the music industry shifts in a day, all those tours cancel on a weekend, you're getting 25 phone calls on Monday?

Chris: Yeah.

Annie: Wow.

Chris: Mm-hmm.

Annie: 25 seems like such a big number to manage.

Chris: Well, you know, I've got my shtick down pretty good. So most people, once we get... the way, I'll generally enter into a client... Well, not generally. Sometimes folks are on fire.

Annie: Some of us. Yeah.

Chris: So when you come in, I come in hot. I know what it's gonna be. I know my-

Annie: The employees are upset, there's a problem.

Chris: Whatever.

Annie: There is something.

Chris: Whatever it is. Whatever it is. Anywhere inside of that, people, sales, profit, self. Could be anything. But hopefully strategically and tactically we get out of fire pretty quick. In business coaching, there's a mix between tactical and strategic. The front side of the relationship is always tactical because something... there's whack-a-mole, something's wrong, right? So we go fix that.

But once it gets into that strategic part, there's always gonna be some tactical, always some fires, but they're usually not that big. And that's where we are. Right now we're talking about what's next year, what's the next five years look like, you know, that kind of stuff. Still fine-tuning.

Annie: I mean, we got some fires.

Chris: We got some fires.

Annie: I don't want burned over here, so we got some fires.

Chris: Yeah. But the house isn't burning down today. Right?

Annie: That's right.

Chris: You know, we're not gonna go over a cliff.

Annie: That's right.

Chris: You know, that kind of thing. And that frankly, at least to another, there's a difference between consulting and coaching.

Annie: Oh, will you please explain that?

Chris: Yeah. You know, my name is Well Coached consulting, right?

Annie: Yeah.

Chris: So there's a mix. But the lanes are very different. And most people don't pay any attention to that. Consulting is when there is a fire that needs to be put out that you don't have the expertise to do, and it needs to get right now. Right? I'm on fire, gimme some water.

So a consultant is to come in, really not teach you their expertise, but to give you their expertise to solve a problem now.

Annie: Got it.

Chris: Coaching-

Annie: We've got a thing we gotta do right now. Either we're building something positive, or we're on fire. Can you come in and fix it and then go away?

Chris: That's right. Coaching becomes much more nuanced. It is a much more nuanced deal of meeting the person or persons where they are and wrapping around them the right way. It becomes like situational leadership, Ken Blanchard. But you think about... I like to use analogies that people can hang on to. You think about Michael Jordan. Phil Jackson did a beautiful job with him, but he didn't teach him how to play basketball. He empowered him in different ways. Bill Belichick would be another. Sports analogies are really good in the coaching business.

So coaching is more about saddling up with the person to what she said. That old saying it's lonely at the top is a true thing. So when entrepreneurs start seeking advice, who do you go to? You go to friends, you go to family, you go to Uncle Ed or whoever, which is all fine because those are people in your trust circle and you care about them.

The problem with that is you may be getting unintended consequences or unintended opinions that are even subconscious sometimes. Like, if I'm your Uncle Ed and you're asking me advice and I see that you're just killing it, there might be a small part of me there that really not that happy for you. Or I may give you advice that I know nothing about.

Annie: Right.

Chris: Right. But I'm your Uncle Ed so you're gonna listen to me and you're... what a good coach should be is a disinterested party that has nothing on their mind but you. That's it. So all I'm ever thinking about for her is, I don't announce this to her all the time, but I'm always thinking, what's the worst-case scenario? Right? If we make a decision, I'm always trying to... I'm an optimist.

Annie: We just left an hour-long meeting, and there are times you're sitting in there but not saying it to us-

Chris: I'm always thinking what the worst-case scenario.

Annie: ... the worst case scenario is how much money this will cost them, or what'll happen to the business or whatever.

Chris: That's right. Because my primary objective with a client is survival of the enterprise. The enterprise has gotta survive. But you've gotta survive in it. So if that's what we work on, I'm paying a lot of attention to the worst-case scenario. What's the worst thing that can happen here?

Annie: Wow.

[00:17:44] <music>

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That link in pretty much every other link you could ever hope for are in the show notes. Or we send them every Friday in the AFD Week in Review email. So you can sign up for that in the show notes below as well.

Now back to finish up our conversation with Kelli and Chris.

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Annie: So I'm thinking about our friends who are listening who have an Etsy store, they make something. When do they know that they need a business coach? How do you know when it's time to be coached?

Chris: Well, I think most people don't know that. But I will tell you that the ones who typically do are the ones who have enough self-awareness, then now we're starting to get into EQ kind of stuff. But enough self-awareness to go, "Something's off. I

need a little bit of boost. I need to get my ego outta the way, and I need someone to saddle up with me and go."

That tends to come with a little bit of maturity and it tends to come with businesses that are already up and lifted and maybe have hit some turbulence. And what I did yesterday is not working today. So often-

Annie: Because for a while we can listen to podcasts and read books.

Chris: That's right. You can get to a certain... you can get lift off, you can get lift off in groups. You can get all that kind of stuff, all of which are super valuable. But at some point, you need to pinpoint something in your ear to maximize. I mean, even Michael Jordan had a coach until his last game, right?

Annie: Yes. Yes.

Chris: Brady had a coach until his last game.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. So those folks are always on a quest of how do I do it better?

Annie: Yeah. Kelli, how have you seen Chris being involved...? Let's particularly use the network as an example since our friends listening know the That Sounds Fun Network. How is Chris being involved...? I mean, because we didn't start meeting the three of us till the last year. And then network is three years old. So for two years we were not directly coached on the network. How has Chris being involved helped the network?

Kelli: Well, I mean, I think that the biggest way is that whenever you start to run into challenges, so he's talking about turbulence, which every company will enter into, is that you need someone, like he's saying, that's not directly in it to be able to look at it from a different perspective so that when we start throwing out ideas... I mean, Annie, the last three meetings we've had, we've talked through how we get to this next step, but we never landed on exactly what it was supposed to be.

Annie: Right.

Kelli: And He's coaching us through the whole thing.

Annie: Right. And you probably know Chris the whole time, this is gonna take multiple meetings, and Kelli and I keep thinking we're gonna knock it out.

Chris: Right.

Annie: Great. Great, Great, great, great, great. Every time we leave and haven't decided, I'm like, "Oh my gosh." And you're like, We moved to-

Kelli: We've made progress. That's right.

Annie: We moved to third base.

Chris: That's right.

Annie: You know that all.

Chris: I know it's going right to plan. Some things that make that predictable-

Annie: That's hilarious.

Chris: ...are your DISC profiles. Because sometimes now... think if it's just a logic-based kind of doubtful thinker profile. They make business decisions very fast, but they also may not make them very informed to where you've got some emotion-based thinking. The dollar is not the end all to be all. So that becomes a more complicated decision. It's a different path. So you gotta have a little bit more patience, a little bit more perspective on it. But at least for my practice, being armed with who are you internally helps me a ton. And for me, that's DISC. Right?

Annie: Yeah. Okay, keep going. How else you've seen it?

Kelli: Yeah. I just think I sometimes just need, and this is super elementary, I sometimes just need permission to move forward. I sometimes get stuck in, Hey, this is the decision that I think is right but here are all of the potential problems with it. But I know that this is right because we've done the work, we've gone through the what ifs, we've gone through and said this is how it could happen.

So sometimes, at the end of the day, after he's let us go through all of the different scenarios, I also then just need him to give me permission to go "This is it. Go." And that is super important to me, for me personally as a business coach, is to go, you have now practiced everything that you should. It's game time. Go get in the game, girl. And that's for me-

Annie: And if something goes sideways, we'll fix it.

Chris: We'll fix it.

Annie: Chris, two of my very favorite things about you are you tell us to go and we'll fix it and you just say the true thing. I never feel like I'm assessing whether you're telling me what you're really thinking. Like, a couple of meetings ago I said, "Am I being a dinosaur about this?" And you said, "You're being a dinosaur." Okay, great. I mean, it was just like I respect that so... And part of that is my DISC and part of that is my speed. And part of that is why are we wasting time not saying what we really think in a business meeting? So it is just so helpful to me when you go, "You're being a dinosaur, move on from this. It's not worth it."

Chris: Well, you need clarity, right?

Annie: Yeah.

Chris: And it also doesn't mean I'm always right, by the way. That's permission in the relationship. I'm not gonna hit a hundred percent average. But I'm not gonna strike out that much. And even on the strikeouts, we're never going over a cliff. That's my thing is we will not go over a cliff. You know? That's that.

Speaking one back to her where she said, "Sometimes I just need permission," what we call that is putting enough confidence in you to match your competence. Right?

Annie: Wow.

Chris: Kelli is highly competent. Highly competent. Even eagles need to push. That's title of a book. I wish it was mine. But even eagles need to push some time. And that's a thing.

Annie: Wow. It is interesting that both Kelli and I are highly competent and very confident about the other one.

Chris: That's right.

Annie: Like we both recognize our own competence I think 90% of the way.

Kelli: Yeah, sure.

Annie: And each other's a hundred percent. And my confidence in Kelli is like, what can't she do? And I think she thinks that about me to a degree.

Kelli: Of course I do.

Annie: And yet in our own you have to push us.

Chris: Well, you get certain amount of people that say, "Oh, I don't need praise," or "I don't need a pat on the back." That's baloney. Everybody needs praise. Everybody needs a pat on the back. Everybody needs encouragement. That's malarkey.

So now I do believe in patting yourself on the back big time. But when you're at the top of an organization, you need somebody who's in your corner. Even if they're saying you're wrong on this, they're still in your corner.

Kelli: That's Right.

Chris: So that's-

Annie: This is embar... I haven't told either of y'all this. It's not embarrassing. It's just vulnerable. We do a thing where we celebrate everyone's workiversary. And when we do that, whoever's workiversary it is, they get to pick what we have for lunch.

Chris: Awesome.

Annie: We are all at the table, all 19 of us, and at some point we say, tell everybody why you love working with this person. And people pop popcorn around and then we pray for them. And I had to say to my COO, "Hey, I don't ever get a workiversary because I have always been here, and I'm the only one. Everybody else... And I don't need it but I'm feeling this like I would like that too. So I think I don't need anything-

Chris: Yes, you do.

Annie: ...until I suddenly realized like, Oh, I know I've always been here but April 1st... I started the company on April 1st. So can we?" But it took coaching to get me to say something that I needed from my company, even though I am the top of the company.

Chris: Right. Well, the cobbler has no shoes. Right?

Annie: Yeah.

Chris: I mean, you're generally the entrepreneur, the owner, the founder, whoever looks after themselves last. That doesn't work. I mean, it doesn't work. You hear all these things where "I'm the boss, so I'm the one that sweeps the floor every day." Sweeping the floor is important.

But as you ascend in an organization, you have to pick your spots. You've gotta be in your highest productivity zone. We mentioned that earlier today. Like, I'm also trying to think where's your highest productivity zone? And while that floor may need to be swept, or while you may say, I don't need my work anniversary party, yes, you do.

Everything's gotta be handled, but handled in the right place on the org chart, at the right time and all of that stuff. Yeah, the inclusiveness of you being celebrated. Because without you as the founder, nobody else is celebrating.

Annie: That's right.

Kelli: There's no workiversaries without you.

Chris: Plus, you're the one setting the standard that that's important.

Annie: Right.

Chris: You're the cus-

Annie: Oh, interesting. And you're setting the standard but not drinking your own juice.

Chris: That's right. The leader sets the pace for the pack.

Annie: Interesting.

Chris: The leader sets the pace for the pack on everything. And generally no team members ever gonna outrun the leader. You might have one or two breakout stars, they're gonna go off and their own business one day. But generally, every single time you open your mouth or have an action or anything like that, it's being watched and monitored, whether you know it or not.

Annie: Oh yeah. Ashley always says when Kelli and I whisper, everybody else hears a yell.

Chris: That's exactly right. That's exactly right.

Kelli: Oh my gosh. I've never heard that.

Chris: So when we don't celebrate your work anniversary, what that really is saying is these aren't that important.

Annie: Right. Right. And my balance to Ashley was she was like, "Well, we'll do it next week." And I was like, "No, it's April 1st." Just next time we get to April 1st, I'd like to have my workiversary.

Chris: Okay. Fair. Fair.

Annie: It'll be 12 years. We'll get there in '24.

Chris: That is something to celebrate.

Annie: What do you do, Chris, when you're coaching someone...? Because I'm thinking if our friends listen who need a coach, but actually what's gonna happen is the coach is gonna tell them to close the company. What do you do when you have to do the hard part of "This actually isn't working"?

Kelli: And do you do that?

Chris: Yeah.

Kelli: Okay.

Chris: Yeah.

Kelli: It's good to know.

Annie: Yeah, good to know for us.

Kelli: I'm just waiting to know if you're gonna say that.

Chris: No, listen, not every problem is solvable. You'll hear some people say, "Every problem's solvable." No, no. They're not. Some things aren't solvable. Like, if we started a typewriter company today, we probably wouldn't make it. That's not a solvable problem. Nobody needs typewriters. But I will give that information as pretty fast as I see it.

Annie: Oh, really?

Chris: Now I seek to understand, for sure. I love financials, I love numbers, all that kind of stuff. And I love the map of how do we make this work? Can we make it work? But at the same time, if that person was talented and vigorous enough to start his or her own company and this one's just not working, they're probably talented enough to

go do the next thing. And I'll tell you that most entrepreneurs, and you've heard this is a cliché too, every entrepreneur that's made it has taken lumps.

Annie: Yeah. Chris Rock says you always lose your first money.

Chris: That's exactly right.

Annie: And that has served me. To hear Chris Rock say, that has served me.

Chris: That is right. You are gonna take lumps. I've taken lumps. I mean, everybody's gonna take them. So people don't fall on top of mountains. You climb and climb and climb and you fall back down and you get back up and all that.

So generally, sometimes when I tell people... and this doesn't happen often, but when we do say, "This dog's not gonna hunt anymore. We need to put her down and go do something else," it's a relief that you got permission to go do something else.

Annie: Because we needed someone else. My guess is most entrepreneurs... if I'm built like an entrepreneur, most of us will keep at the thing.

Chris: You won't give up.

Kelli: No quitting.

Annie: No.

Chris: No quitting.

Kelli: That's right.

Annie: I don't know how someone could convince me to quit this. I'm available to the Lord doing that, but this is it. So it would have to take an outside coach saying-

Chris: Generally it's a pivot conversation.

Annie: Oh, right.

Chris: It's not a "pack up your toys and go" home. It's a "what are we gonna do next?"

Annie: Let's look at the other things.

Chris: What are we gonna do next? Let's cut our horses here.

Annie: How do small businesses find the money to have a coach?

Chris: That's a fair question. That's a fair question.

Annie: It's the same with an assistant. People need an assistant before they have money for it.

Chris: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I think you just gotta make the commitment that you're gonna invest in yourself, which is a big leap. It's a big leap. In the coaching industry is like, client-wise, those who know know. Well, how do you know, generalist? Because a friend introduced you or met you or somewhere like that.

Finding the money for it just has to become a leap of faith and a value proposition of "is this providing me enough value?" You can't look at a co... this is self-serving, but you can't look at a coach as an expense. You gotta look at it as-

Kelli: Investment.

Chris: ...Is this an asset? Like I'm an asset in your team. And do I multiply you faster? Lots of people are gonna be successful in life without having a coach. Okay. What a coach should be able to do is get you there quicker and maybe get you there a little bit bigger.

Annie: Wow. That's it.

Kelli: And I look at it completely as an investment in my business. This is something that is going to have dividends in the future. So you just have, like you said, you just gotta believe in yourself enough to go, it's worth the investment because we're gonna see the dividends on the other side.

Annie: I also think it is a burnout protection on two ways. One, I think you're gonna tell us, Chris, when y'all are doing too much, y'all are running too fast, y'all have got to... I mean, that's a conversation we're having of like, "Okay, let's set some boundaries for y'all as executives. Also, what keeps me from burnout is someone that I can run as fast as I wanna run with even if it's just in conversation.

Chris: That's right.

Annie: Which you let us do. We go, okay, so for the next 12 years, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. That lights me up as much as actually doing it is getting to talk

about it. So having a place to talk about it. So I feel like coaching is an investment for me and a protection of quitting.

Chris: For sure. You just said a bunch there. I mean in terms of protecting you and your well-being, that comes into the self part. People, sales, profit, self. So as we wrap around... Like Kelli, I know she coaches her teams to soccer. I know there's things in the "self" department that are good. Now we don't ever sit down with a checklist and be going, are you looking after self?

Annie: Are you working out? Are you eating? Are you with your family?

Chris: But I know because I'm working in the conversation. So often what entrepreneurs will do, especially when they're in the grind of the build, they'll fall in love with the business more than they fall in love with their family. This happens all the time. Okay.

Annie: Wow.

Chris: So this is where the self thing comes around of making sure... there's some folks that we literally say "Schedule a date with your spouse." "I can't go on vacation." "Yes, you can. Put it on the books, or I'm gonna quit coaching you." My shtick is at least every three months you're going away somewhere, even if it's just for one night downtown because you can't afford anything else. But you need some alone time with that significant other or the kids or whatever.

Annie: I mean, a man literally texted me this week after I told him what I was doing. He said, how do you have time for a life?

Chris: People, sales, profit, self.

Annie: I was like, "Oh Shoot, I don't want you thinking that because you're a man in my life."

Chris: That's right.

Annie: Holy cow.

Chris: Balance is a weird thing to say. Because nobody's ever-

Annie: We're never balanced.

Chris: ...is perfectly homo...

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

Chris: But you gotta put effort into it. The thing with entrepreneurs is sometimes, especially, back to DISC, folks with high DISC profiles can absolutely fall in love with the business as much as they do anything else. So here's the problem with that. Business grows, the rest of your life starts falling apart, the business will then fall apart.

Annie: Oh, okay.

Chris: Or it won't maximize.

Annie: The times I've felt that I've gone, Well, at least work. And when God's involved, Chris, it's a whole other thing because you're like, well, at least I'm doing what God asked me to do-

Chris: That's exactly right.

Annie: ...and my business is growing because I work for God when I've actually prioritized my business over my personal life.

Chris: That's right.

Annie: And then eventually the business suffers, as we've experienced with me, the business suffers because my life is suffering. So we have to re-center my life.

Chris: That's right. And that's something I even still struggle with. I love what I do. I love it. So I'm very drawn to this.

Annie: But you don't eat lunch. You won't let us get you barbecue today, even though we're about to eat Barbecue. So we gotta talk about yourself, Chris.

Kelli: I literally have never seen him eat.

Annie: In years.

Kelli: In the years that I've Known him.

Annie: Chris.

Kelli: So I just pray he does.

Chris: That's just circumstantial. I mean, I have plenty of evidence to show that I eat.

Annie: Okay. Keep going though.

Chris: But team from burnout is, a) I have to let you talk about things that are fun for you. So when you said you just let us go, that's purposeful, right?

Annie: Yeah.

Chris: Like, you don't know it with me, but you're on the clock, right? I think of it as you're a fish, you've caught the line and now you're running out in the ocean. I'm just letting you run because I know sooner or later you'd be exhausted and I'm just gonna roll you back in. But that's healthy. That's healthy, especially for creatives. Y'all have to stay crazy.

If I were ever to try to put you in a box, no way would that work. That's one difference of how I coach. There are plenty of coaching programs out there and a lot of them are great, but most of them are kinda like, here's the 12-step program. I don't have any of that. It's strictly around people, sales, profit, self. I'm gonna wrap around you as tight as I can, wherever you are. And then we'll figure out the rest.

Annie: Last question. How does our friend listening find a business coach?

Chris: Google it. Or ask or ask a friend. But then you Google business coach, there will be a zillion.

Annie: Does it need to be in person like we get to do?

Chris: It doesn't need to be. I'll tell you that I love the tactile feel of being in person.

Annie: I like the energy.

Chris: I like it better. Now, that's self-limiting for me. I could scale much faster by doing everybody. I can't stand it. But no, people will do Zoom all the time. Do that.

Annie: So just Google. I mean, when people are asking for literary agents, I say, Open the back of the book of the authors that you love, who did they thank? And go find that person.

Chris: Well, you could do the very same like in your peer group, what she did, you know? I mean, those kind of things. It's a simple Google, there's gonna be a bazillion out

there. The key is to really shop around. Because they're all different. Just like there's good doctors, bad doctors, or in any profession, there's good or bad. And business coaching I think is a little bit nuanced and specialized.

Like, I don't know how to make anything. If somebody ever said, come help us make a widget, I'm not the coach for them. I don't know how to do that. Like what really drives me is the complexity of human personalities crashing it against business. That's my shtick.

Annie: You're amazing at it, Chris.

Chris: Well, I'm honored. I'm so honored that I get to work with the people I get to work with. And I get the best people because they're all friends of each other. It's the birds of a feather flock together.

Annie: That's kind of how we feel about our staff.

Kelli: Yeah.

Annie: I mean, you have helped us hire a few people and the majority of them we have a connection with because... birds of a feather. So we-

Chris: And well, enjoying the people you work with means a lot. Being friends is a benefit, not a requirement. But it is a benefit. If you can be friendly with people, that's good. And then people who feel good about themselves generally produce much better results. So if you're in a place you enjoy the company, not a requirement but you're gonna maximize better probably.

Annie: All right, Kelli, anything we didn't say about finding a coach, particularly a business coach that you think somebody who's sitting in your shoes 15 years ago needs to hear?

Kelli: You know, I do think that there will be a point in your journey where you will know, I need someone to be sitting in the seat next to me.

Annie: That's right.

Kelli: I didn't always need Chris because I was building it. I didn't know exactly what I was building. I wouldn't have even known what I needed coaching on.

Annie: That's tight.

- Kelli:** So I think that you will know when you reach that point. And then hopefully when you're in that point, there are people around you that have connections to a coach. Because you're in that same, you know, stage of life. It's not always that way, but I do think that there's gonna be a moment where you go, I need somebody who feels like a partner in this.
- Annie:** I solved all the problems I could solve as long as I could solve them. I mean that is-
- Chris:** And that's right. Especially early-stage entrepreneurs are usually people full of grit and tenacity. So they get to a certain level because of that grit and tenacity, but then the skillset changes. So if you don't have that skill set, you-
- Annie:** That's the problem is there's a point where it stops being the thing that we are able to build because of the growth or because of problems we didn't know.
- Chris:** You are exhibit A.
- Annie:** Yeah, right. You're exhibit A.
- Kelli:** And also just recognizing too that there are things that you are gifted at that you are not gifted in other areas. So turn to somebody else who is gifted in the complimentary areas to help you continue to scale your business in the way that you want it to be, whatever it may be.
- Chris:** I'll tell you this. And I know we're trying to wrap, but when I started this business 22, 23 years ago, companies would make me sign an NDA.
- Annie:** Will you explain what that is in case someone doesn't know?
- Chris:** Non-disclosure agreement that we're not in a coaching relationship.
- Annie:** Oh.
- Chris:** Completely reversed now. Now people are like, that's my coach. That's my coach. That's my coach. Because yeah, I'm a shot... Whether it's true or not, I like to think of myself as her shotgun. Like I'm riding shotgun with her.
- Annie:** That's right.
- Chris:** Now really people brag about that now which is so good for me. But in the beginning, it was still taboo. But even having a counselor or a therapist used to be taboo. Now the coaching world is the very same as that where that's my person.

Annie: So much of what you're saying of like consulting is going to Onsite and counseling is like I'm a coach.

Chris: Right, right.

Annie: You're like, "I gotta go. We have a fire..."

Chris: Well, it's because as entrepreneur, as the CEO we have to keep you fine-tuned nonstop. The whole shtick is keeping you fine-tuned. Highest productivity zone, watching out for the booby traps, avoiding cliffs, you know, that kind of stuff. I love it. I love what I get to do every day.

Annie: Man, I hope we're still doing this in like a decade or two.

Chris: We will. And just imagine the things we'll be talking about.

Annie: I know.

Chris: The things you're talking about now, they'll be so long gone. It'll be the next set. It'll be the next big blue ocean to go get into.

Annie: That's right. We're living in that Wild West. Thanks for driving the buggy.

Chris: Well, thanks for letting me be a part of it.

Annie: Appreciate you

[00:40:11] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, aren't they just brilliant? Ah, Kelli and Chris, two of the most brilliant people I know. I feel so lucky to work with them.

Hey, if you want to know more, if you want a full list of all the resources from our Build Your Board series and how to find the guidebook, go to anniefdowns.com/buildyourboard.

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

And I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you. I will do the same. Y'all have a great day. I'll see you back here tomorrow as we continue our Build Your Board series, talking about how a health coach could help us with Amanda Tress. Y'all are going to love her. Okay, we'll see y'all back here tomorrow.