

[00:00:00] <music>

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.

Okay, let's talk about candles for a minute. Do you know that almost 2 billion candles are sold globally each year and almost all of them are likely to end up in landfills for the next 1 million years? It's insane.

That's why I think it's really cool that [NOTES](#) candles exist. They're working to eliminate single-use candle vessels and give home fragrance lovers a more earth-friendly option. NOTES has created a refillable candle system that allows you to use your candle vessel over and over again. It is super easy.

The candles are made with fragranced wax beads. So all you do is place the wick in your reusable NOTES jar and fill it up with the wax beads and enjoy your fragrance for up to 36 hours. The Santel and Atlas Cedar scent is like this woody, calming smell. It's so nice. They have oat milk and balsam berry, vanilla and pepperwood, pistachio and rosewater, and a total of 13 really great options to choose from.

Be a responsible consumer while not giving up high-quality home fragrance by making the switch to NOTES. You can build your custom starter kit right now at notescandle.com/thatoundsfun. Right now NOTES is giving our friends 15% off and free shipping when you buy a NOTES starter kit using the code THATSOUNDSFUN. Just use that code, THATSOUNDSFUN, when you're placing your order. That's THATSOUNDSFUN at notescandle.com/thatoundsfun.

Intro: Today on the show I get to talk with one of my dearest friends, Emily P. Freeman. You may remember Emily from Episode 9, early adopter being on That Sounds Fun or Episode 131. She's a longtime friend of mine, as well as a Wall Street Journal bestselling author and host of the Next Right Thing podcast.

She's also a spiritual director, I call her America spiritual director, a workshop leader. Today we're talking about her brand new book, which releases tomorrow. Congrats, Emily. It's called *How to Walk into a Room: The Art of Knowing When to Stay and When to Walk Away*. This is an important concept and an important book. I think you're going to love it and enjoy this conversation.

So here it is me and my dear friend, Emily P. Freeman.

[00:02:41] <music>

Annie: Emily Pree Free-

Emily: Every time. Every one.

Annie: Why? It's not hard.

Emily: It is because everyone says Emily Pree Freeman.

Annie: But why? Why? Who? I don't know if I've ever done that in my life.

Emily: I think because P and free rhyme and it's hard. Ours are hard.

Annie: Welcome to That Sounds Fun.

Emily: I'm so glad to be here.

Annie: This is your 1, 2, 3, 4th time on That Sounds Fun.

Emily: What?

Annie: I know.

Emily: Are you kidding me?

Annie: When you get to 5, you join the Hall of Fun, so I hope that comes around.

Emily: Is that real?

Annie: Emily, there are... Do you need me to show you? Hold on. Don't go anywhere. The Hall of Fun is for any guest who has been on the show once they hit their 5th time. Here it is.

Emily: How many people get... How many... So there's 1, 2, 3, 4-

Annie: Four times three is 12... 13, 14.

Emily: Let me guess. Dave Barnes.

Annie: Dave Barnes.

Emily: Ginna Claire.

Annie: Oh, Ginna Claire, yes. Ginna Claire is on it. Yes, you're exactly right. She Reads Truth.

Emily: Of course.

Annie: Santa. Santa Claus. John Mark Comer. They're right next to each other on the list.

Emily: Wait, John Mark has been on five times?

Annie: He's actually been on six times. Yeah, he's crested over. I'm a big fan. You know this.

Emily: Wow.

Annie: Ellie Holcomb.

Emily: I was going to guess Ellie.

Annie: Our friend Bianca Olthoff.

Emily: Of course.

Annie: Eddie Kaufholz.

Emily: Of course. Of course.

Annie: I know.

Emily: That's amazing. I have seen that before, but I just don't think I put it all together of what it was.

Annie: You're so close. I'm just really excited. We'll just go ahead and get Lillian to order your plaque. So it's just available as soon as we're ready to stick it on.

Emily, it's the 10th year of That Sounds Fun podcast. So we have podcasting things to discuss, but because it's the 10th year we're starting the show with because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what is fun to you right now. I don't even know this. What's fun?

Emily: What's fun or what sounds like fun?

Annie: Okay, sure, sure, what sounds like fun? Maybe. If they are to you, they are to me.

Emily: Well, because what's fun right now is like watching *Sheldon* and, you know, like whatever, eating Thai food.

Annie: *Young Sheldon?*

Emily: Yeah.

Annie: You love it?

Emily: We just abbreviate it to *Sheldon*.

Annie: Okay.

Emily: Yes, I love it.

Annie: Why do you love it? Tell me why. I've never watched one second of it.

Emily: Fun fact, or not so fun, is that I did not know it was a prequel to *Big Bang Theory*.

Annie: Oh, you just thought it was a standalone?

Emily: I just thought, what a great show, *Young Sheldon*. It didn't occur to me, like, why are they calling him young? Like, where's the old Sheldon? Then we watched a whole series... or season, not the whole series. We watched one season, and then I think I told my parents about it and my dad was like, "Yeah..." My dad, who's over 70, by the way.

Annie: We love Gary. We love Gary.

Emily: ...said, "Oh yeah, that's a prequel to that other show. What's it called?" He's the one who told me that it was the prequel to *Big Bang*.

Annie: So now are y'all going to get into *Big Bang Theory*?

Emily: Of course, we are. I can't wait to see what happens to Sheldon.

Annie: Great. And Thai food.

Emily: And Thai food. My favorite Thai place closed down in Greensboro.

Annie: No.

Emily: So now I'm on the hunt.

Annie: That is hard to come by in Greensboro.

- Emily:** It is. I'm on the hunt for a new place. So John and I went to a place like a whole town over, which is a whole 15-minute drive to find a place. We're going to find something, but that's a fun little project for us is finding a new place. Nothing so far measures up to the old place, but we're going to try.
- Annie:** Tell me where you're recording your podcast right now with me. What room are you in?
- Emily:** It used to just be my office. This used to be my office. And now my office I moved to the sunroom because girl woke up to the reality that let's go where the light is. So that's where my desk is now, but it's not very sound-friendly out there.
- Annie:** Got it.
- Emily:** So I still record my podcast and then when I do interviews, I do them in here because it's a little smaller, so there's some sound-proofy things in front of me.
- Annie:** I've slept in there. I've slept in that exact room.
- Emily:** You have, because it used to be a guest room.
- Annie:** Yeah, that's right.
- Emily:** That was way back in your first visit when you were like, "Hey, I like you, can I come visit?"
- Annie:** And you said yes, and I did.
- Emily:** Yes.
- Annie:** And I fell in love with your children. I love you and John. It was so easy. It was like, duh, this was meant to be.
- Emily:** I wish everyone would be my friend that way, because it's like, come to me, all you who are weary, and I will give you rest in my guest room.
- Annie:** In your guest room, yeah. It was a great weekend. I loved it. It really set us up for a long, successful friendship, I think.
- Emily:** Indeed, it did.

Annie: I loved it. And I follow your kids on Instagram, so I get to keep up with everybody and see how they're doing and see how college is. Okay, podcasting. Your podcast, The Next Right Thing, is a hit in everyone's lives. Are you still enjoying podcasting?

2023 was wonky for podcasting in general. It was challenging. Was it for you? Do you still love it? Do you love it? And it was challenging. What's podcasting? What's the state of podcasting for Emily P. Freeman?

Emily: Every year I ask myself that question and think like, do I still like this? Is this still working? And so far the answer has been yes. You know, when I started the podcast in 2017, I thought maybe I have 10 episodes in me, like I can probably talk about decision-making for 10, 15-minute episodes. Here I am over 300 episodes later still doing it and still not tired of talking about decision making, discernment, chronic hesitation, decision fatigue. Because there's always a new way to look at it.

I'm always making decisions. Everybody always is. We can't graduate from it, retire from it, delegate it, unfortunately. So yeah, I would say podcasting, the medium has changed. That's been sometimes fun and sometimes discouraging, because you look at the patterns of how people listen and do things is changing. But I think the core people who it's been helpful for, I think it continues to be helpful for them.

Annie: I agree. I'm on my fourth Next Right Thing journal that I spiral bind myself. Well, not in my own house, but I do go to a store and get it spiral-bound. Emily, I'm doing something different this year. I'm starting my Next Right Thing journal in March.

Emily: Is that right? Now, tell me why the change.

Annie: Because my friend Jen Colquitt, who is on the Hall of Fun because we've talked about Hallmark so many times, Jen taught me... I always had a problem with doing the seasons that you have us do in here by doing January, February, March, because that didn't feel like a season to me. Then April, May, June. June's really summer. July, August, September. Ugh, September's not summer, it's fall. So I had a lot of troubles, if you will.

Emily: Yeah, sure.

Annie: So she said, Well, I actually start mine in December, and I do December, January, February for winter and so on.

Emily: Yeah, that's what I do.

Annie: So when I decided to do that, I thought, I'm not going to try to start in December because I'm never great at starting things in December. I'm going to wait and start in the spring and start in March. So this will do March, April, May. My first season in this year's Next Right Thing guided journal will be spring.

Emily: I love that idea. I might have to adopt that next year. I like that.

Annie: I'm enjoying it so far. Do you have a guess of how many people have done the Next Right Thing Guided Journal?

Emily: I mean, I could go by... I don't even know how many we've sold. I was gonna say I could go by how many it's sold, but I don't know.

Annie: Here's what I hope is true for me. I hope you never take this out of print because I would like to do this every year for the rest of my life. It is the most helpful collection of questions and arrows and instructions. It is very helpful. So I hope I get to do it forever.

Emily: Me too.

Annie: Will you just not take it out of print, please?

Emily: If I can help it. Talk to the publisher.

Annie: So tomorrow your next book comes out, How to Walk into a Room. Emily, I mean, when's the last time a trade book released from you?

Emily: Five years ago.

Annie: How does it feel different and how does it feel the same?

Emily: It feels the same in that... you know, I think Lysa TerKeurst said one time that even though she's written many books, she's never written this book before. So it always feels new. There's always some nerves, you know, walking out into the room because it's like, "Here I am with my..." It feels like the first time book because it's the first time we've written this one. So that feels the same.

But it feels different because I feel different. I mean, 2019 was a different world in many ways, not just in our personal lives, but globally and culturally and all the things. It was a different time. So, yeah, I think it's different in that way.

I hope I've learned a lot about not just life, but also about sharing books with people and about writing. I hope I've become a better writer in that way. But I don't know. We'll see. So there's so much.

Annie: I mean, you made me laugh out loud twice.

Emily: Oh, really?

Annie: One time when a tear dripped into your bra. You could have knocked me on the floor, I got so tickled about that, that you decided to include that detail. I was dead on the floor. I was dead on the floor. I was like, that is the funniest thing.

Emily: But you know that's happened to you, hasn't it?

Annie: Yes, oh my gosh. then I thought, that is the funniest thing, even into my bra. I was like, oh my gosh, Emily, this is everything I want it to be. It's a beautiful book. I want to ask you some questions about it, but what I actually... I didn't prep you for this.

You are America's spiritual director. We have made a big decision of a room to walk out of as a company, and I would love for you to walk me through the process of walking out of a room so I can process out loud to everyone why we're walking out of the room we're walking out of and how we made that decision. Does that feel possible?

Emily: Okay, yeah, let's do it.

Annie: Are you scared?

Emily: Maybe.

Annie: I mean, two-thirds of the book is about walking out of a room-

Emily: It is.

Annie: ...and what you're not doing anymore. So we have decided April is our last month of reading Let's Read the Gospels, and then in May we are reading Acts and then we're stopping. When you're starting to consider whether you're in the right room or not anymore, what are the questions we should have asked ourselves when we start...? Kind of talk through the prey idea and then we can kind of banter around how we got to where we got on walking out of this room.

Emily: Well, what you're describing is a particular type of ending. There are all types of endings, right, in life? We all know that. But in the book specifically the three types of endings that I'm most interested in are, number one, anticipated endings. We all know this, right? This is like, I'm going to graduate in May or we're going to get married, which is a beginning and an ending, or the baby's coming. You know, a lot of those are celebratory, not always. But those are anticipated. Everyone agrees that it's time or that the time has come, even if they don't love it. But usually this is when readiness and timeliness align.

Annie: That part of the book, Emily, that we usually only get readiness or timeliness, I was like, every decision, you can see how that's true.

Emily: You can see how it's true, which is why there's tension. So basically, there's those decisions, there's those things in life that happen, those endings that come, because, hey, I'm ready and it's time. And that's what, for example, you would see at a retirement party, right? That's when we toast, right? That's when we throw parties. That's when we gather. And there's no question about like, what's happening here. That's one type of ending: anticipated.

Another type of ending is a forced ending. When maybe you wanted to stay where you are, but through circumstances beyond your control, whether they be acts of God, or you're fired from a place, or you showed up and told the truth and got yourself kicked out of a place, who knows what it is. But you were forced out, whether that was something you saw coming or whether it was a complete surprise.

Those endings need to be processed. They do. But it wasn't your choice and so it doesn't need to be discerned. Now, those are things that I like to talk about and I like to process through and I think are important to mark.

But there's a third type of ending that you're talking about now. And that is the chosen or discerned ending. That's where you have a thing, you could do it or not, you could say yes or no, you could choose this or that, now or later. And you have to go through a process, whatever it is for you, and figure out, like, is now the time? Is then the time?

This is where we want some clarity. This is where some people will rush to a decision or some people will procrastinate that decision because it forces you to live in this in-between space between now and not yet where you are having to hold the tension of an unmade decision.

And maybe for you in this decision about Let's Read the Gospels, maybe for you it felt like your readiness was coming to the surface and maybe there was some tension about, but is it time? Or maybe the team felt like... I mean, I'm curious to

hear from you, like what brought you to that decision? Did it feel like more of a natural ending, like, it's time and we're ready? Or was there some tension there about like, well, how do we know if it's time or if we're ready?

Annie: I think it's interesting because even when you list... I wrote that down about the three types of endings. They all kind of have a little bit of that "If I'm going to say this thing, it may cause a forced ending. So I need to decide back here if I'm going to say the thing." If we get married, it's going to force an ending. I need to decide back here if I'm going to... you know?

So, for us, Emily, it was... I mean, if I'm just telling you the whole truth, the tax on the team of having a 365-day show or 360-day show was unbelievable.

Emily: Absolutely.

Annie: It's an unbelievable amount. And it takes me about 30 minutes per episode. That's a lot of my work week as well to produce and to read.

Emily: It sounds like you were already starting to ask yourself some of these 10 questions. Like, for example, is this something I chose or did it choose me? Well, you chose it. It's something you created and started. Then another question is, well, what corners or sections of this room, let's just say this project, have I been avoiding? And perhaps the thing that kept you going in it was you kind of had to avoid and ignore how taxing it was on your team for a while.

Annie: Totally.

Emily: You're like, this is hard, but we're doing it and it's successful. So you sort of have to turn a blind eye to you-

Annie: It matters to people. It matters to us.

Emily: People love it. It's doing well. But when you start to assess and you bring to the surface, which is really the first movement in the PRAY acronym, which is Point & call. This comes from the Japanese railway system, which is the best in the world, that they have implemented a safety system called pointing and calling, where they point at a part of the train, a function of the train when the train comes into the station, and they'll say, "Point at the signal that's green," and they'll say, "Signal is green." And it's embodied, and it's out loud. And it's just a way of bringing to the surface an awareness of what's happening.

James Clear talks about this in his book, *Atomic Habits*, about building and forming habits. We can do the same thing for our inner life and for the rooms of our life. It's just a way of paying attention. Like, what's happening here?

So it sounds like that's what you and your team were doing was you started to take an assessment and turn the lights up maybe from the dimmer, like just turn them up slowly and see what's actually happening around here. Without judgment. You know, just saying like, okay, we do this show every day, 365 days a year. How tired are we? And you weigh that against the good parts too. Because there's good and beautiful parts about it, and then there's hard parts about it.

Annie: That is exactly what happens. As we're working through the PRAY acronym, which I love what you said... I'm going to quote you to you. But you said, "Throughout our time together," meaning in this book, "I'll share these four simple movements in the form of an acronym that embodies the posture with which I approach discernment PRAY."

I mean, this whole book is about do I stay where I am, do I leave where I am, how do I go to the next place? And what are the hallways in between that is such a... I mean, the whole picture of it is so beautiful, Emily. But you're right.

At the end of last summer, we raised the lights a little bit and said, how is everybody and what is this requiring of us? And it is a podcast that I did not believe should have advertising on it. So it was a lot of work that was not also helping us be able to do other things or pay the people for their work directly. Though we are salaried, so it's fine. But you know what I mean?

The cost analysis was not coming back as well as it did at the beginning when we started to rise the tax on the people. It's one of those things, Emily, y'all. I'm sure you and John dealt with this in ministry of like, how hard do you push your people on behalf of all the people?

So that is one of the big point-and-call moments I had to have is like, yeah, I know millions of people need this and love this. I also have 12 people, 13 people, 19 people in this office that what they need matters to me too.

Emily: That's right. That's right. And the longevity, the things that they can't do because they're doing this, which may be less taxing on them, and even more beneficial for the million people who aren't going to be getting this anymore. You have to consider all the things. The thing about discernment that's so maddening is there's usually not a right or wrong. It's not a clear like-

Annie: That is maddening.

Emily: Well, here's the wrong decision, Annie, so just make the right one. No, that's not how this works. Ever.

Annie: Almost. Just about everything.

[00:20:30] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation real quick to tell you about one of our amazing partners, [MOSH bars](#). I love when I find a snack that has protein in it and is easy to keep with me on the go, and that is MOSH bars. But get this. They also exist to support brain health.

MOSH is a company founded by Maria Shriver and her son, Patrick Schwarzenegger, with a simple mission to create conversation about brain health through food, education, and research. They have six delicious flavors. Each MOSH bar has 12 grams of protein, and it's made with ingredients that support brain health.

Plus, MOSH donates a portion of all proceeds from your order to fund gender-based brain health research through the Women's Alzheimer's Movement. If you want to find a way to give back to others and fuel your body and your brain, MOSH bars are the perfect choice.

Head to moshlife.com/TSF to save 20% off plus free shipping on either the best sellers trial pack or the new plant-based trial pack. That's 20% off plus free shipping on either the best sellers or plant-based Trial pack at moshlife.com/TSF. Thank you, MOSH, for sponsoring this episode.

Sponsor: Another partner you know I love talking about, [Thrive Causemetics](#). By this point, surely you know my obsession with Thrive Causemetics and their Liquid Lash Extensions mascara. I said this on InstaStory just last week, but if they ever quit being an ad partner, I would still be a fan. I just love their mascara and makeup so much, and I love their mission too.

Thrive Causemetics is certified 100% vegan and cruelty-free, and their products are made with clean, skin-loving ingredients. With thousands of five-star reviews, it is no wonder the turquoise tubes of makeup you see all over Instagram, including online, are trending everywhere.

Have you tried it yet? If you like a really simple, natural look, or you're all about the full glam, Thrive Causemetics has you covered either way. And that Liquid Lash Extensions mascara, y'all, it is a must-have. Y'all are always asking about my

mascara, but it truly makes my lashes look longer and it doesn't smudge all over the place. Plus, it's really easy to get off at the end of the day, so when you're past ready to go to bed at night and need to take off your makeup quickly, you just take warm water and a washcloth and it slides right off. No soap required.

The ingredients in it are really nourishing, so they support longer, stronger, and healthier-looking lashes over time. Their flake-free tubing formula dramatically lengthens and defines your lashes from root to tip.

Here's what's really cool too. For every product purchased, Thrive Causemetics donates products and funds to help communities thrive. Thrive Causemetics is luxury beauty that gives back. Right now you can get an exclusive 20% off your first order at thrivecausemetics.com/TSF. That's thrivecausemetics.com/TSF for 20% off your first order.

Sponsor: All right, we all know the way our hair or skin look and sway our mood and impact our day. If one of them feels off, it just feels like the day is starting off on the wrong foot. I've never found beauty products that really fit my personal hair goals. But ever since I switched to a custom hair and skin routine with [Prose](#), I've noticed so many benefits: healthier, shinier hair and healthier skin too.

With Prose, personalization is rooted in everything they do, from their in-depth consultation to their made-to-order model. For example, my custom shampoo and conditioner, which I love, they formulate to make my hair more manageable, shiny, hydrated. It's amazing, y'all. They truly deliver.

Prose is better for the planet, too. They're a certified B Corp, cruelty-free, and the first and only carbon-neutral custom beauty brand. They even have a 'review and refine' tool, which learns from my feedback, adjusts my formula to keep up with the seasons and changes in my life, the city that I'm living in. It is amazing, you guys.

Prose is so confident that they'll bring out your best hair and skin that they're offering an exclusive trial offer of 50% off your first subscription order. You guys, five-zero, 50% off your first subscription order at prose.com/thatsoundsfun. So you get your free consultation and then you get 50% off at prose.com/thatsoundsfun. This is the season to try Prose if you have not tried them before. That's prose.com/thatsoundsfun.

Now back to our conversation with Emily.

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Annie: So after we do the point and call where we're starting to pay attention to details... and you dive into this in the book. So if people feel like we're moving fast, get the book. What's the second thing that we do after we point and call?

Emily: Remember your path. This is a practice of which you've already... you do this well now because you've got your four Next Right Thing journals into it.

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Emily: ...is having a regular practice of reflection. I think in a decision like the one we're talking about now, like a business work decision with a team, this is an excellent practice and is part of this framework. When we have a decision to make or when we're looking for our next right thing, if you will, I think a lot of us imagine there's a path forward and our job is to figure out the right one. Like, which path do I take?

What I have discovered, and I think probably if we really think about it, a lot of us would agree with this, is that rather than there being a path in front of us, the path is behind us. It's the road we've already walked. Several poets have spoken to this over the years.

I think in having a regular practice of reflection and looking back, okay, with this project, what's been deeply life-giving about this project? Naming it. What has been really life draining with this? And let's be honest about it. It's another form of pointing and calling, but it's specific to looking back about, you know, what's got us here.

And so, so much of our future decision-making is informed by our past decision-making. The reality is we're making the path as we go. That idea of remembering your path, I think, is something that we often skip over because we go, "Okay, point and call, here's what's true. Now what's my decision?"

Annie: Now making decision. Right.

Emily: Right. But this can help slow us down a little bit, which is another part of discernment that's maddening is you can't rush it.

Annie: I know. I mean, truly, that's why we've been talking about it since summer of '23. It's having to go like, Okay, we need to have a long path to... we knew we were going till the end of the year. And then it was like, well, now we have the Let's Read the Gospels journal, the guided journal, and we want people to do that. So we need to have a version that matches that order.

Because that was the other thing, Emily. When we were doing our Remember Your Path, we were going, Oh, there are 13 versions of the Gospels available for people now. So we have made the thing over and over again. So that helped us too to go, okay, and to...

I mean, all the notes we get and the comments people... I mean, I just was at a conference and everyone talked to me about Single Purpose League and Let's Read the Gospels. Those are two things everybody talked to me about that came up and spoke to me.

We know it matters, so that's kept us going is we feel like we're doing what God's invited us to do, and we feel like it matters to people, and so we can keep the lights dimmed. But then when you look back on your path and you go, Okay, look what we have made. Okay, the resource isn't stopping. It's always available. We're just not gonna do a new one for the foreseeable future.

Talk about acknowledging presence because this was a harder part for me of this decision-making.

Emily: Oh, I'm curious as to why this. Well, I'll say it and then I'll make you answer that question like a good spiritual director.

Annie: That's right

Emily: I'll make you. I'm going to make you answer. Well, you sort of just spoke to a little bit, Annie, as you mentioned that the people who have been moved and touched by your decision to create this in the first place. And they are part of the presence you acknowledge, is these are the people who've been touched by this really good thing.

And even if it doesn't continue in the future in the same way, or at all, the reality is those people's lives have still been touched. And as you move into whatever your next thing is, or into the hallway of discernment, right, that we're considering whether or not to do it, there are people who go with you. You don't walk into this hallway alone.

Even if you are ultimately the boss or the one in charge, the reality is you have a team around you. You have people you can depend on. You have your friend Jesus who goes with you. And hopefully, you have trusted mentors that you can talk to and consider when it comes to decisions like this.

I think sometimes, especially if a decision feels overwhelming or stressful, there can be a sense that like, "This is all up to me. I'm on my own here." I don't know, I think there are some decisions where, yes, we're going to be the final say, but the

encouragement that I would offer in this discernment process is to always acknowledge there is presence with you, and begin to name who or what that presence is.

Annie: So it was hard because I wanted to make Jesus happy. I wanted the presence. When I think about that too, yes, the team, I could... I think I could say, you guys, I really think we should do this for another five years, and the team would do it.

I mean, they are just incredible. They would go, "Okay, we'll figure out a way. We'll figure out a way to do it and how we do it well." But if I'm paying attention to their presence, and if I'm paying attention to my own... I mean, the hallway is so helpful, because one of the things it does is it opens up so much time for me in the back half of the year. Like, what does God have for those hours that our team... what could be the next room we walk into as a team?

But I felt so much self-inflicted God pressure of, "If we stop doing this, will people not hear the gospel? If we stop doing this, am I being disobedient? What did God actually invite me to do in the first place?" Because it has been an offering from the start. It has been a passion project from the start. So I felt a lot of that.

Like when I was reading through that last night, I thought, "Oh, this was it. This is my problem is I feel this like, is God telling me to leave the room, or am I telling us to leave the room?"

Emily: Now listen, that is the question that people hold. Is this my idea or is this God's idea?

Annie: Is it?

Emily: I knew you were going to ask me that.

Annie: How do we know, Emily? How do we know?

Emily: Well, I would say a few things come to mind. One is the words of Pádraig Ó Tuama, who is an Irish poet and theologian, who said, "We might know more than we know we know." I think this kind of takes us into a room of asking ourselves, do I really believe that I can trust myself?

Now, you and I, as friends of Jesus, grew up in the church, that might raise the hairs on the back of your neck pretty quickly and you feel a little bit defensive. And maybe someone listening might be like, I'm turning her off because I can't trust her. I would encourage you to hold the tension a little bit longer and consider what is it about the idea of trusting myself that makes me so afraid.

Because here's the real deal is that Jesus could have left behind a fully formed formula, encyclopedia-worthy book with an answer to every question we've ever had. He could have given us a very clear instruction about what to do and what to say. And you might say, "well, we have the Bible. Okay, well, do you know how many years it took to write that and how many people it took to write it?"

Annie: And how many things it doesn't directly address, like whether to keep doing a podcast?

Emily: And how many questions are asked? Yes, right. And whether or not to do less of Let's Read the Gospels. Instead, what Jesus did, and I wouldn't have done it this way, was He formed a community-

Annie: That's good.

Emily: He left behind a community of people who, by the way, weren't that great. They weren't like the smartest ones, I mean, really, and He trusted them and ultimately us. He trusted us to trust Him, knowing that we might get it wrong. So I think that if you're looking for scriptural evidence that God trusts us in a certain way, I think it's there.

Annie: It's really good.

Emily: But I also think that if what I believe about Jesus is true and about my life in Christ is that I have made my home in God, but God has made His home in me, which means that I bring the life of Christ with me wherever I go. That's something that can be trusted.

The other part of that is that I really believe that God is less interested in me doing the exact right thing at the exact right time than God is interested in the person who I am becoming. Because the person who I am becoming is going to influence a lot more than this one decision, if I get it right or wrong. I think sometimes God is like, "You know what? Do whatever you please as you're walking with Me and I'm going to go with you."

Annie: We talked to Dr. Nijay Gupta last week about his new book. He's talking about the Roman Empire and how weird Christians were in that. And he said, None of the Roman gods cared about your personal development. He was like, That was not part of their religion. It is one of the things that sets Jesus apart is that He actually cares about who we're becoming as people.

And that is really... clearly, I'm repeating it to you. It's really stuck with me of like, oh yeah, part of all of this, part of us making this decision as a team is, Jesus cares about who I'm becoming as a gospel person, as a person who loves the Bible, but also as a leader of this company, and also as a woman of faith, and also as... I mean, all of this is wrapped up in "you are going to make this decision, whichever way you go, and it is going to be part of you becoming."

Emily: Yes. And no matter which way you go, Yay, let's toast. I think you spoke earlier a really strong narrative that you have about what comes to your mind when you think about God, which is what you said was, I want to make Jesus happy. So that reveals... not to get too personal, but you said it, so...

Annie: I know, I said it first.

Emily: But it does reveal a narrative that you have, and listen, we all have them, about what you imagine God to be like. And I think that will always impact our decisions, especially the big ones, right? I mean, it's like the bigger the decision, the more our God narratives come into play.

Annie: Right, right. I remember when I was moving—and you live this with me—but I remember when I was moving to Nashville, I had a friend of mine say... I said to him, "What if this doesn't work?" And he said, "Then you come home." And it was like this revelation to me in the moment of like, "Oh, my car goes both ways. It goes South and North. I can't believe, you know?"

Gary saying that to me in 2007 has really been a gift that I carry. Because even in this decision of Let's Read the Gospels, I'm like, Well, we're not deleting the feed. We haven't made some decision that we will never read the Bible out loud ever again.

I'll tell you the big decision we made. I don't want anybody on my team working over our summer Sabbath. I don't want anybody working over Christmas break. So I can tell you we won't do it again this year, because I want everyone to have a year off from having a thing they have to schedule or pay attention to over our holidays, because I've done that to them two years in a row with the projects I've created.

So that to me was part of my point and call of like, everyone's working over Christmas again. They worked over Christmas because of Advent. Now they're working over Christmas because of Let's Read the Gospels. We will not do that in 2024.

Emily: And that's so important to be able to name what you do know. Like, I know this. And sometimes just pointing and calling at what you know for sure already, your

answer reveals itself without you really having to do much more. And that's such a gift.

The other thing you just pointed out was a principle that I have discovered by informally polling my Next Right Thing audience, people who listen to The Next Right Thing, who self-identify as decisive people. Because I ask, like, how many of you consider yourself decisive? Now, consider the audience, only like 35% consider themselves decisive because they don't need me if they're decisive. But there they are raising their hand.

So my follow-up question was, what would you say is the biggest contributor to your ability to be a decisive person? And one of the things is something that you said, which was most decisions are not final. So I just know that you cut bangs, okay, they're gonna grow back. You don't have to persevere over it.

And a lot of them, the second thing they would say is, I just so dislike the feeling of not having made the decision that I would rather make it and have to change my mind later than to wait and put it off and live with that discomfort.

Annie: When I tell you we bought two flights today for me for the same event, because I was like, I don't know which one I'm going to want to take, but we need to buy the flights. I want you to just buy them both and we will... Because one of them, Southwest, and you can cancel up till eight minutes before it takes off and it's just going to be a credit in there. So great. It literally is... in girl math, that is a free flight. That is a free flight, so let's just book it.

Emily, if I remember correctly, please correct me if I'm wrong, when we took that survey as listeners, because I did check out as a decisive person, wasn't one of them like, I'm impatient, like I don't want to wait? Yeah. That's what I remember being like-

Emily: Totally.

Annie: ...if I can make the decision now, why would we not make it now? That works some of the time. That's really helpful some of the time. And it is how God made me for sure. It's why I'm a good leader in a lot of ways. Also, there are times where it helps that I am surrounding myself with people who are thoughtful about their decision-making, and it slows us all down a little bit.

Emily: Yeah. Because the 65% of us are like, why not make it now? Because you might make a mistake. That's why.

Annie: And I'm like, fire, ready, aim. And then I'm like, everybody duck. I don't know how this is going to go. We're going to do our best. Yeah, it is such a mixed bag. When you were writing this and when you were studying this and living this, are there correlations between personality type, Enneagram, Myers-Briggs, all that, and people who walk in and out of rooms quickly?

Emily: Oh, absolutely. Now listen, anecdotally I say absolutely. Have I done the study? I have not.

Annie: You didn't hire Barna yet?

Emily: I didn't. But I would say not yet. But I would say even when I did that little informal survey, a lot of people just self-identified as the assertive types, you know, the aggressive or leaning forward types of being more decisive. I think that probably just comes with it.

And thank the Lord for them, because we need all types. We need all of the whole body to be able to make this ship move forward. So I'm grateful for it. But I do think there's a lot of correlation.

Annie: I feel like we've covered why we're leaving that room of Let's Read the Gospels. Do you have any other questions about how we made that decision? Is there anything I left out?

Emily: I think the only thing is the Y, the yield to the arrows. Which is Y stands for yield to the arrows, which really is just another way of saying, okay, so what's your next right thing? And it sounds like you have clearly come to the decision that your next right thing was to stop at least for now.

I think that's something to remember is... you know, I talk about something that's helpful for me is two word mantras in a time when you're just trying to get a handle on like right now happening, two-word mantras. And by mantra I just mean two words that-

Annie: For people watching on YouTube, they got to see that. For our podcast listeners, somehow you just gave us balloons on here. Did you do the peace sign?

Emily: Is that what does it? Is that what got us balloons?

Emily: I don't know. It was.

Annie: That's for you. Wow. Thank you.

Emily: Wow, I feel powerful.

Annie: Your two-word mantra just shot balloons up through your screen.

Emily: My two-word mantras. Wow, that was special.

Annie: Congrats, everybody watching on YouTube. If you've never checked us out on YouTube, this is your day because Emily gave us balloons twice. This is your day.

Emily: We've had a lot of action here today.

Annie: Yeah, yeah. Okay, two-word mantra.

Emily: But this idea of rather than saying, like, "Gosh, my kids are really struggling," I'm learning it to be helpful to say, "My kids are really struggling for now," or "We're going to take a break from this volunteer position at our church for now." It can sometimes buy you a little bit of time.

So that can be like an arrow. Rather than thinking like this is final, this is our final destination, you can think, well, we're just following the arrows to our next right thing. For you, it sounds like that you arrived at this decision and that feels good for now. But like you said, you're not deleting the feed. We don't know what might be for later.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. The arrow I know is I want everyone to not think about work over Christmas break. That is the arrow I know. So even if it means I have to say no to things I want to make for this year, I am going to say no to things I want to make because I want to honor that everybody should get a Christmas break at this particular company that we work at together.

I think that the arrows have been really helpful in the Next Right Thing guided journal as well because often you will say in that journal... it just brings me peace. Because I think you know this, I do my journal on my Sabbath morning for that week. So I usually am grieving something because I tend to pile up my grief until my Sabbath and not try to deal with it during the week. So I'm usually grieving something. I'm usually processing something pretty intense because I feel everything to that level.

But then your arrows go, well, if you don't have the final, what's a suggestion life has given you about this thing? What's a turning you've done toward or away from this thing that you may not have noticed? And I would be like, he texted me less this week. That's interesting. Or I found myself not wanting to pay for that thing this week, and I've wanted to pay for it before. I'm noticing gray hairs. Do I want to

dye my hair? Like, I just find myself asking... the arrows lead to questions. Is that true?

Emily: That's right. Absolutely, the arrows lead to questions. I think the questions can lead to arrows. I mean, sometimes every month in the guided journal you mentioned, I'm writing down questions I have. And they might be big questions or they might be small questions. But paying attention to the questions I'm holding, hopefully by the end of that month or within a reasonable amount of time, once I've named what the question is, I might have just one next right thing I can do in the direction of the question that that has raised.

I would say if you can't put your decision in a sentence, then it's probably not time to make the decision yet. I think the questions help you to do that. They help you put your decision into a sentence.

[00:43:25] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation one more time to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [Liquid IV](#). Y'all know when I get on a plane I try to drink a whole bottle of water during the flight. I'm trying not to come out of the air feeling all dehydrated. You know, you get it. But these days I'm also packing liquid IV with me and putting it in my water bottle too, so I'm getting extra hydrated.

Liquid IV has three times the electrolytes of the leading sports drink plus eight vitamins and nutrients for everyday wellness. And it's all in one single sugar-free stick, so it's easy to throw in my bag and take it with me. What is your reason for wanting to be more hydrated? Are you just trying to stay hydrated during the day or is it during your workouts or while you're outdoors?

See, Liquid IV can help you with all your hydration goals. Plus, it tastes really good. There are these three sugar-free flavors that you are going to love, lemon-lime, green grape, and white peach. Everyone in our office has tried them, and we all have different favorites. I genuinely like them all.

Lillian makes my water bottle for me in the morning. I know it's bougie, but she does, and I don't even care which one she picks. I like all three of them. There's no artificial sweeteners in it. It's non-GMO. It's free from gluten, dairy, and soy. You can use it every day like I do or before a workout or when you feel run down or after a long night or on long flights.

However you hydrate, grab your liquid IV hydration multiplier, sugar-free in bulk nationwide at Costco, or get 20% off your first order when you go to [liquidiv.com](https://www.liquidiv.com) and use the code, thatsoundsfun, at checkout. That's 20% off your first order when

you shop better hydration today using the promo code, thatsoundsfun, at liquidiv.com.

Sponsor: I have another amazing partner to tell you about, [Shopify](#). When we decided we wanted to start selling some of our own merch, like the green That Sounds Fun long-sleeve t-shirts or the work robes — y'all know you love the, if you don't have one yet, you need to get one — we needed a way to make it all happen. Shopify was our answer. And shopannieffdowns.com exists because they were the perfect platform for us.

Shopify is the global commerce platform that helps you sell at every stage of your business, from the "we want to sell a few t-shirts" to the "let's take this merch on the road," all the way to "did we just get a thousand orders?" stage.

Shopify will help you grow whether you're selling jewelry or prints or candles. Shopify helps you sell literally everywhere. From their all-in-one e-commerce platform to their in-person POS system, they have got you covered.

They power 10% of all e-commerce in the U.S. you guys. Shopify is the global force behind Allbirds and Rothy's and Brooklinen and millions of other entrepreneurs of every size around 175 countries.

Sign up for a \$1 per month trial period at shopify.com/soundsfun, all lowercase. Go to shopify.com/soundsfun now to grow your business no matter what stage you're in. [Shopify.com/soundsfun](https://shopify.com/soundsfun).

And now back to finish up our conversation with Emily.

[00:46:17] <music>

Annie: In the book, you spent some time talking about the different pathways of our faith and how we connect with God, and why that matters when it comes to decision-making. Will you talk about that for a second? Because the pathways are really interesting. I found myself going like, that explains why when I get home from a walk... it explains, Emily, why in New York City, every single day I have more peace because I'm walking more and I'm thinking more. And I'm recognizing I connect with God through that in ways that I didn't know before I lived in a pedestrian city.

Emily: Gary Thomas wrote a book called *Sacred Pathways* and in it, he talks about the different sacred pathways that we can take... it's different ways that we love God. So it's different pathways of what it might look like.

So for example, one person may be really drawn to God through beautiful music or through worshipful expression, like outward bodily worshipful expression, someone else might connect with God out in nature, walking through the woods quietly. They look really different, but they're both pathways of knowing and loving God.

So Gary Thomas talks about nine of them. I would say that's a great start. I think there might be as many ways to love God as there are people, and that's an important thing to pay attention to.

But my friend and colleague, Dr. Keesler, talks about these same pathways, but he uses a little different language by calling them spiritual personalities. I like that a little bit better because it's intrinsic sort of to who we are. It's not just something outside of us that we're following. It's actually like, this is part of my personality. This is who I am and how I'm made and how I'm designed uniquely.

The reason why this is important is because a couple of things, but one reason is because if we're not aware of our own spiritual personality, the way we connect with God, then we might be trying to connect with God in a way that has been modeled for us, in a script that has been given to us.

I would say we can't be spiritually formed inside someone else's life. So it's really important for us to be able to name and know, how do I connect with God uniquely? I think the same is true for naming our core values when it comes to things that are deeply important to us, things that make us us. What are things that I can engage in on a daily, weekly, monthly, annual basis that put myself in the pathway of God in a way that were I not to do those things I just wouldn't feel like myself, I wouldn't feel like I'm connecting with God in the way that I may be uniquely designed to do.

I wouldn't say that it's like there's a wrong way and a right way for everyone. I just think that there's a way that feels like home to us. So those are some good things to name. But the reason why that's important when it comes to discernment and decision-making is because that's part of acknowledging presence. It's acknowledging my presence with God and how I connect with God and how I'm going to hear from God in my own life.

It's also acknowledging my own presence in the room and in this decision. Because I'm a voice at the table, and how I connect with God is going to shape that voice one way or another. So knowing and naming that I think is deeply important and transformative to our decision-making processes.

Annie: You even said at one point in the book that you're kind of two of them. So it's not like you're one. It is like, these are the couple that like I... so there's nine to start. There's as many as there are humans, probably. You're right. And the combination of like, seasonally, you know, seasonally, I'm different.

In the winter I'm not an outside person. I know Joe Saxton says, it's not about the weather, it's about the clothing you wear. I hear her. That has yet to be my experience in 43 years. So we will see if I get into that in my 50s or something. But I just thought, Man, that is really... in the decision that... we have brought as the example of the Gospels. It has helped me a lot to, when I was in New York, to walk and think about what will it feel like when I don't do this anymore? Okay, God, what do you say about this?

I mean, I did at times say to God, do you have a vote here? Is there, do you have a care? Or is what my team is expressing and what I'm feeling and what my team needs how God is talking to me through this?

Emily: And that's when you wrote about... I mean, listener, if y'all haven't watched Annie's and listened to Annie's episode where you were talking about New York and your body, I have not stopped talking about it or thinking about it since you released that. Here I did it again, the balloons, you guys. I'm going to sit on my hands.

But that was such a beautiful example to me of how Holy Spirit moves and works in our own lives. Because that's the thing. It's like sweet tea. You can't separate the sugar from the tea. It's just sweet tea now. And that's what you are in Christ, is that you're just walking around New York City living your life and paying attention.

You're pointing and calling to where you feel alive, where you feel drawn and invited into being Annie. You felt like Annie there and doing these particular things and living this particular way. I see God all over that. So it's not like God has a vote over on the side and it's different from the way you're experiencing life. You just can't separate it out like that.

Annie: That is work you've already done that I have yet to do. I can tell that I... you know me. I'm not as quick to pay attention to myself in a way that helps me grow out of what I've learned forever, particularly when it comes to my spiritual life. And I'm sometimes a little afraid of what I think when it does not match what I've been taught.

Emily: That's fair.

Annie: So you have gotten more practice and more... you've chosen more practice and chosen more investment in doing that wrestle than I have so far.

- Emily:** Well, and that's naming a room that you've been in too. So maybe the lights are starting to come on in that room a little bit for you, which I think is beautiful.
- Annie:** Yeah, that's right. I mean, it is really funny because as we're even talking about that AFD in NYC episode, New York is a decision, is a room. You know, Nashville's a room.
- Emily:** That's right.
- Annie:** And currently they're adjoining. Currently, there is a door in between and neither side are locked. And will it stay like that? Will a hallway grow? Will they both stay open forever or not? I don't know, Emily. That is where I can't say it in one sentence. So if I can't say it in one sentence, I don't know.
- Emily:** It's not time yet. And meanwhile, all the while, Annie is becoming someone.
- Annie:** Yeah, right. Which that matters because we have a God that cares about our becoming.
- Emily:** Yes, we do.
- Annie:** Yes, yes. Why did you spend more time talking about leaving than entering, but it was titled about entering a room?
- Emily:** Well, the secret is that we really wrestled with the title of this book. There was a period of a few weeks where it was called How to Walk Out of a Room. The reason why, ultimately, how to walk in or out is because I like to write books about a place we're going. I like the idea of moving.
- Annie:** That would feel good.
- Emily:** I don't love just walking out. I don't know. Because here's the deal is that how we're formed informs how we walk into rooms. But we cannot ignore the last room we left because it's going to inform the next room we walk into.

So I wanted to have a place to explore the endings of our lives. Like start with some of the endings, so that as we approach our beginnings, we're acknowledging this is a story already happening. Every beginning... probably there was just an ending right behind it. And how we begin and beginning and healthy and wholehearted ways really, it really matters how we walked out of the last room.

So let's face that last room and let's sit down a little bit here and help people discern when it might be time to walk out. Because here's the thing, I think we're really good at beginnings and starting things. And especially when you're good at something, it's really hard to call it. I think we think that just because we're good at something, maybe this means I'm supposed to do it forever.

Annie: Yeah, right.

Emily: Because we prayed for this and we wanted this and we chose this. And then if I choose different, does that mean I chose wrong in the first place? Does that mean I've wasted my time and money? Does that...? There's a lot of sort of identity questions like that come to mind.

So all those things, it's like I couldn't choose walk in or out. Like they were all somewhat equally important. But ultimately, I sort of landed with titling walking into a room. But also spending some significant time with this decision of walking out, because I think it's something that we have strong narratives about, we have strong familial narratives and societal narratives about what it means to quit or what it means to stay. I wanted to begin to tease some of those out, and also how that impacts our idea of God and how God plays into all that.

So my hope is that we will not be so afraid to ask ourselves some questions, whether we end up going or staying in our spaces. That at least the process of asking questions, of looking around honestly, without judgment or shame, can really help us feel more confident and more sure in some ways or just more informed about the decisions we're making whether we decide to stay or go.

Annie: I want to finish by asking you three questions. I want you to talk to the fear in each of these people groups. Because there are people who are in the room and need to leave but they're afraid to leave. So what is your encouragement for the person who's afraid to leave the room that they know they need to leave? Whether that's a relationship, a job, a church, a... They love eating pizza and they need to leave gluten. I mean, there's a lot of things that you can be afraid of if you don't want to leave the room you're in. So what do you say to the man or woman who is afraid to leave the room they're in?

Emily: Well, I think fear is a powerful motivator. Perhaps I wouldn't give an answer, but maybe just an arrow of start to name the fears out loud. What are you deeply afraid of? And what is the worst thing that could happen if I stay here? And what's the best thing that can happen if I stay here? And then flip it. What's the worst thing that could happen if I leave or let this thing go? And what's the best thing that could happen if I let this thing go?

Again, not an answer, but it could be just a practice of pointing and calling. Sometimes once you say the fear out loud, it loses a little bit of its power. Sometimes it loses a lot of its power. That could be a place to start.

Annie: So the people that are in the hallway, they've left the room, they've left their job, they don't have the next one yet, they've left their church, like you write about, they don't have... I mean, at one point you called it, I was sitting in not my church and I was like.. that's the other one that made me laugh out loud when you called it not my church.

But, you know, there's people who have left a relationship and aren't in another one yet. What's your encouragement to the person in the hallway that is afraid, sad, that would not choose to be in the hallway?

Emily: I think for that person, I would say... this might not be a welcoming answer, but I would say the goal is not necessarily to leave every hallway of her life. The goal is not to find every right room and close and lock the door and paint the rooms and here we are settled forever.

Part of a healthy human rhythm of life is finding yourself in a hallway at any given time. I think naming that this is normal and this is expected, and it doesn't mean you're wrong or that you've done something wrong or that you're late or that you're early. Maybe you're right where you need to be. But rest assured you have a God who sees you and knows you and is in that hallway with you no matter how liminal of a space it might feel right now.

Annie: That's very good. That's good. People will be glad to hear that. You didn't say a thing that we won't be glad to hear. Because I do think at all times I'm in a room, I'm leaving a room, I'm in a hallway. At all times, in different places.

Okay, for our friends who've just gotten into a new room, a new relationship, their kids are in a new school, they move to a new city, they have a new job, they're in a new church that's not quite my church, but it's not quite my church. And they think, I do not know this place. I do not.

I mean, I remember when I first moved into my condo in Nashville, I invited my friend [Kula?] over and I said, Kula, will you... she teaches yoga. I said, "I just think I need to connect to my house. I do not feel connected. Can you just come to my house and do yoga with me in my house?" And we did, and it did help. It made me feel connected. So what do we do if we're in a new place and it doesn't feel like home?

Emily: I think first you have to let yourself be a beginner. One thing about beginning is it's only for a period of time. So allowing that to be true. I think also knowing that most things end and probably this new thing you just started eventually it might come to an end. So is there a way to practice your own presence in this space to let this room bring the gifts it's going to bring?

Also don't expect it not to have burdens because it will. I think the more we can go into our new spaces, our new jobs, our new relationships, knowing that there's going to be gifts and burdens all along the way, I think the more prepared we are to, when we see them, we're not so devastated by like, but this was supposed to be the answer. No, this was just another room and here we are being people together in it. And thanks be unto God that we're not alone.

Annie: Okay, my last question. You write about um SNL in your book. Do you think Tina Fey takes over for Lauren Michaels? He's been doing this for 48 years.

Emily: In my mind, he's gonna do it forever. That's why the question took me on board. I'm like well that that's never... he's gonna live forever.

Annie: Sorry, let me start by telling you something. Lauren Michaels is not eternal.

Emily: Okay, thank you.

Annie: So, therefore, my next question...

Emily: He's going to leave the room.

Annie: He is going to leave the actual capital R room, which is earth. He will leave. I thought I would love to hear Emily's hot take of who could take over at SNL after Lauren Michaels.

Emily: I love all these words. I mean, well, let's just right now put it into the universe that it ought to be Tina. I feel really good about that choice.

Annie: I know. I think she'd be really funny. I think Seth Meyers would be great, too.

Emily: That's a good one.

Annie: A thought I have, agree to disagree, is I would like to see Tina make some things in the 2020s that have modern-day jokes, because pretty much we're getting rewinds of Mean Girls currently, which is great. I enjoy Mean Girls. Seth Meyers has to make jokes every night in our culture right now.

Emily: What we are right now. That's right.

Annie: I also think Tina Fey is insanely funny and her book was beyond. Her book killed me. So where's Tina Fey's next book? Where's Amy Poehler's next book? Where's Mindy Kaling's next book?

Emily: That's what we want to know. That's really the question of the day.

Annie: That is one of our 10 questions. I mean, I have so many notes that we did not talk about in this book because it is just an extraordinary book that has helped me so much, but one of them was, SNL will Tina take over. So I did get to the important stuff.

Emily: You hit the important ones.

Annie: Emily, you are, as I tell you all the time, America's spiritual director. You're just helping us in such incredible ways. Is there anything we didn't say that you want to make sure we say about the book?

Emily: Maybe the only thing that I'll say in closing is just that in speaking of how to walk into a room, I think that I'm still... You know, in the book I share several rooms I've left. And there was a lot of loss in that, right? There was some grief, there was loss, there was some joy too, a lot that I've learned.

But I would say I hope that this can be a kind companion for people who are standing in the thresholds of their own lives. And they might feel a little lost to know, how do I even begin to make this decision? I hope that this book can be a beginning and that by the end of reading it, you might not have your answer, but I hope that you won't feel so alone and that you will at least maybe have a few arrows to follow.

Annie: I was about to say I felt equipped.

Emily: Yeah, good.

Annie: Will you talk for just a second about the blessings and benedictions for Hellos and Goodbyes?

Emily: Yeah. The Blessings for Hellos and Goodbyes is an audio collection that exists inside the Quiet Collection app, which is an app we created a couple of years ago. The app houses prayers, Psalm readings, a lot of... those are free. There's also some paid collections that we do during Advent.

The Blessings for Hellos and Goodbyes is a free offering for anyone who buys the book. So if you purchase the book, there's a QR code in the back that you scan and takes you to a website that you can get the blessings for free.

And really what they are, there's seven blessings for goodbyes and seven blessings for hellos. There are ones I've written, and then Caleb Peavy does the music for the background. And really it's just a way to, you know, especially for those endings that don't have any closure... you know, there's different blessings for different things, like for when you're ready, but it isn't time, or for when it's time, but you aren't ready, or a blessing for the morning, which is another kind of hello, it's a daily hello, or a blessing for your first day, or a blessing for leaving a beloved space, or for leaving a faith community.

So these are just another way to engage some of the rooms that we're entering and leaving. It's sort of a companion to the book. You don't have to read the book first, and you don't have to listen to the blessings before you read the book. It sort of can go along. But that's what they are. And they're, again, available to anyone who purchases the book.

Annie: I love it. My one request of you would be as you continue to leave rooms, go in hallways and enter new rooms, can I just be tied to you? Can I just always go with you? I don't want us to be in different rooms. I want to always be in the Emily room.

Emily: I want to always be in the Annie room. So it sounds like we agree.

Annie: Okay. I love it.

Emily: Great.

Annie: I love you. Thank you for doing this.

Emily: Thanks, Annie.

[01:05:17] <music>

Outro: You guys, isn't she just the best? Go get you a copy of How to Walk into a Room. It is such a good book. It is such a good book, you guys.

Go follow Emily on social media, tell her thanks for being on the show. I loved her walking through the future of Let's Read the Gospels with us. I mean, she live spiritually directed me about a decision we have very recently made. I just loved it.

I absolutely loved it. She is just brilliant. And that will happen for you all through this book. So make sure you get your copy today.

If you have any questions from this episode, you can drop them in the Q&A box in the Spotify app if that's where you're listening or send them to us on Instagram @thatsoundsfunpodcast, and we will try to answer them there.

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

I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home, do something that sounds fun to you, and I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me, y'all, I'm getting to see an off-Broadway show tonight that features Marc Summers from *Double Dare*. It's called *The Life and Slimes of Marc Summers*. I cannot wait. I will give y'all a full review. But check in on my socials tonight. But I am so excited to see *The Life and Slimes of Marc Summers*.

Y'all have a great week. We'll see you back here on Thursday with one of my favorite influencers and one of my favorite friends. You may know her as Nicole the Nomad, Nicole Renard. She'll be here with us on Thursday. We'll see y'all then.