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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.

Man, hasn't this month of shows been incredible? I know. I know. I think so too. This week, listen, this week will not let you down either before we go on our little summer Sabbath, the week of July 4th. We've got two more episodes this week that I think you're going to love.

Intro: Today on the show, I get to talk with my friend, Emily Morrow. Emily is the creator of *Really Very Crunchy*, a viral social media presence with more than two million followers. She and her husband, Jason, have traveled the world together creating video content for the last 15 years.

Today, we get to talk about all the things clean eating and toxins and well, all things crunchy. I thought it'd be a fun summer conversation. I know this may not be everybody's thing, but I am so fascinated by all we can learn about the food we eat, the products we use. And y'all know I want to live to be 100 years old. It is interesting to learn from Emily and I think you're going to love her.

I want to keep learning forever, so I'm fascinated by people like Emily who teach us things that we do not know. Her new book, *Really Very Crunchy*, is also a great resource and she's overall like a really great human. I loved meeting her.

So here's my conversation with my new friend, Emily Morrow.

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Annie: Okay, Emily Morrow, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

Emily: Thanks. Thanks for having me, Annie.

Annie: I am so glad you're here. We've already been talking a little bit about this. We share Tom Dean, who's your agent. He was dear to me when I was also at Zondervan. Will you back up and tell...? I mean, we're going to dive in because I have some real questions about Being Crunchy. But I want you to tell me how you and your husband Jason got here. How did you even start making videos that made you viral, that got you to write a book and all the things?

Emily: Sure. So about two years ago we started *Really Very Crunchy*.

Annie: Oh my gosh, just two years ago?

Emily: Yeah. But it looks like an overnight success. Our eighth video went viral. We were totally stunned. But really it took us 15 years to get to this point. When we first got married in 2010, we moved to South Korea and we thought it would be kind of fun thing to make videos for our family back home. So he started dabbling in video editing and made a few funny music videos and just silly quirky little stuff about living in South Korea.

He loved it. I hated it, actually. He was sort of a heavy director of our videos. So it was like,-

Annie: A real vision.

Emily: Yes. "...today we're going to make a video." In my mind, it was like, Today we're going to fight.

Annie: Wow.

Emily: But-

Annie: How did y'all meet, by the way? Back me up to that.

Emily: Oh yeah, we met at a door that was closing, and if it closed, it was going to lock. So we were both running for it.

Annie: Are you lying to me?

Emily: I'm not. It feels very movie-esque.

Annie: There was a door closing at a what? At school?

Emily: At our school. At college, yeah.

Annie: And you both ran to stop it from shutting?

Emily: Yeah. Otherwise, we'd have to go all the way around.

Annie: Emily! And then he moved you to South Korea.

Emily: Well, I moved to him, actually.

Annie: Okay, okay, okay. Why South Korea?

- Emily:** Well, we were living in a small town in Georgia. It was great.
- Annie:** Where were you in Georgia? That's where I'm from.
- Emily:** Oh, really? Jessup.
- Annie:** Yeah, girl, come on. I'm from Marietta, but I went to UGA, so you know every city when you go to University of Georgia because everybody stays in the states. Okay, Jessup! Sorry, keep going.
- Emily:** Not a whole lot happening in Jessup.
- Annie:** But we love you, Jessup, Georgia. Good people.
- Emily:** So sweet. Loved every single person I met. Like the kindest people ever.
- Annie:** The kindest people.
- Emily:** I still keep in touch. I was only there for three months and I still keep in touch with someone there. So yeah, amazing. But we were looking for a little more adventure. So I googled "how to travel for free". Like, I don't know.
- Annie:** Emily, I like you so much. What a wild thing to do.
- Emily:** Something came up about teaching English in South Korea. They would pay for your way. They would pay for your housing. They would pay you to teach. So I was like, Oh, let's do this. We had never really traveled, and we both wanted the opportunity to do so. A month later we were there.
- Annie:** Oh my gosh. You meet because the door is going to close and lock, you fall in love, you get married, you move to Jessup, Georgia for three months, and then to South Korea.
- Emily:** Yes.
- Annie:** Did y'all go to the Demilitarized Zone? Did you go up there and see it?
- Emily:** No. We lived in really really South Korea and we decided to explore that area a lot. And so anytime we had the chance, we just traveled to all the cities around us. But then we lived in Seoul our third year there and we were only like I don't know two hours away from the DMZ and we never made it.
- Annie:** Yeah, no worries.

Emily: There were like mud festivals and tulip festivals. Too many exciting things going on here.

Annie: So you're making videos for everybody back here.

Emily: Mm-hmm.

Annie: Okay. And that's what got y'all started in this whole video-making thing.

Emily: Yes. I mean any time we did something crazy in Korea, we just made a video. I think one of our videos got a million views over there, which we thought was massive.

Annie: And it's massive.

Emily: And it is, yeah. It was me at a coffee shop that you could put your feet in these fish tanks and the fish would nibble... you know. So that went totally viral on us and we thought we were going to be YouTubers.

Annie: Certainly.

Emily: And nothing happened from there.

Annie: Dear everyone, one viral video does not add career make, sadly.

Emily: So then we came back. I mean, we've just done so many different things. Lived in an RV. We kind of slacked on our videos. Like I said, I wasn't as gung-ho about them. My husband knew, though, he knew he could make a career out of it if we could just hit the right niche, you know?

Annie: And he likes doing the editing.

Emily: He loves it. It fuels him. He has so much passion for it. So in 2021, he was kind of working on me. TikTok had just sort of exploded and people were getting mega-famous there. And he was like, "I think we could really do something here. We could make a career out of TikTok if you would just follow me, Emily. I followed you to the ends of the earth, if you would just follow me this once."

So he had the idea to make funny videos about me being a crunchy mom, sort of making fun of the crunchy lifestyle. And like I said, by our eighth video, it really took off and we were just getting tons of followers. I mean, every day.

- Annie:** And mostly on TikTok or were y'all also doing Instagram?
- Emily:** On TikTok. We weren't posting it anywhere else.
- Annie:** Oh, wow.
- Emily:** Just TikTok. And we did that for maybe six months before we started posting on Instagram and YouTube. Everywhere, it just organically took off on its own. So it felt like, wow, this is really something we should pursue. So eight months into it, my husband quit his job.
- Annie:** Oh, my God.
- Emily:** I know we really took a leap of faith there. But it has served us well. We're just-
- Annie:** I mean, almost a million followers on TikTok and 61 million likes.
- Emily:** Mm-hmm.
- Annie:** Holy cow.
- Emily:** And then on YouTube, I think we have 1.3 million tubers.
- Annie:** Oh my gosh.
- Emily:** And then on Instagram, like 450k or something.
- Annie:** It's crazy.
- Emily:** And then we have a Snapchat. We have Facebook too. I don't even check those. I can't keep up with it all. So yeah.
- Annie:** Talk to the college version of yourself. What is your faith life then? What is your... y'all talk about it some. So what do you say to her about the story God writes with your life?
- Emily:** I guess just trust. Just trust that the Lord has a plan. And also be careful. People are watching you. The choices you make matter. Whenever I first met my husband, I actually overheard him tell his friend that he was going to a church, the Wesley Foundation.
- Annie:** What school y'all at?

Emily: Murray State.

Annie: Okay.

Emily: Neither of us...

Annie: I went to Wesley at UGA.

Emily: Oh, okay. Cool. Neither of us were Methodists.

Annie: Methodists. Nor me. That's right.

Emily: But I just happened to hear him say that. I was like, Oh, he's going to a church function. Maybe I'll just show up there. I did, which is a little stalkery.

Annie: Smart.

Emily: Left a seat open next to me. You know whenever... I don't know if they do this post covid. But you used to get in a circle and hold hands and pray.

Annie: Yeah.

Emily: That was the greatest moment ever. I got to hold this cute guy's hand and just doing the little thumb rub.

Annie: He was.

Emily: Yeah, a little.

Annie: My guy. Let's go, Jason.

Emily: A little squeeze.

Annie: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well done.

Emily: I mean, just trust in the Lord and He will show me the way.

Annie: How'd y'all end up where you are now, living in-

Emily: Paducah?

Annie: I was like, is that public? I don't know if you want me to... you have a lot of followers. I don't know if you want-

Emily: I've had people send me my address. I grew up in Paducah, and my parents live there. And so whenever I was pregnant with my first son, we decided we should move home for a little extra support and help.

Annie: What made you and Jason decide that the crunchy lifestyle was the thing you were going to be public about? There's probably eight things that are true about you. You love this sport. You love this, this. What made this be what you picked to build a public life around?

Emily: Well, it's so niche. That's one. I feel like if you're going to be successful and you're looking for what you're trying to find success in, niche down. And so it's a really niche topic. The health and wellness space was really heavy and we're not heavy people. So we kind of wanted to bring comedy into that space.

A few people had done some one-offs just making fun of crunchy people but no crunchy people making fun of crunchy people, which is where the best humor happens. It's self-deprecating because you can really totally understand it.

Annie: When you're inside of the community.

Emily: Yeah.

Annie: Yes, that makes sense.

Emily: So, my husband also is looking at my pursuit of crunchiness and seeing me just look so insane. Just struggling and frantic. I'm sort of an anxious personality. So, you know, just like, Oh, I can't. I can't ever do the right thing. Trying my best to do... you know, and making weird, wild sacrifices of my time. So he was like, this is hilarious.

Annie: I mean, you tell a story in the book about making a video about mold in an apartment y'all were staying, like an Airbnb and you were literally doing it while that was happening, waiting on a clean hotel room. So it just all becomes "this could be a video".

Emily: Yeah. Everything. That's how we get a lot of our video ideas is we're just living our life and we're like, Oh, this is kind of funny.

Annie: So what made you decide to be so really very crunchy? What made you decide to live like that? What was the inspiration? I have a medium-level crunchy life. So what's your inspiration to be all in? How come? Why does it matter that much to you?

Emily: Well, okay, part of it is because of this platform. I was probably medium-crunchy when we started. I thought I was-

Annie: What do you call it? Scrunchy. Silky scrunchy or really very crunchy.

Emily: I thought I was crunchy until I put myself on the internet. And then it's like, everything you're doing is wrong.

Annie: Oh, got it.

Emily: And did you know this? And did you know that? And did you know this? And so then my crunchiness definitely has evolved through this platform. I had to make my character fit the right... like, she had to be really very crunchy. But in doing so my life has also been influenced to be a little more crunchy. I mean, I had to ask you for water. That's like a pretty crunchy fail there. I didn't bring my own water.

Annie: We do not have plastic water bottles.

Emily: It is alkaline spring water as well. Totally crunchy choice.

Annie: I told you.

Emily: I feel good about it.

Annie: Is this okay? One of the things you say a lot in the book, you probably say this every other chapter, crunchy is a spectrum. So that gave me a lot of freedom that there isn't like a door that locks behind me, as you say. That there isn't like one version of trying to be crunchy. Can you even define crunchy for us? What does that mean?

Emily: Yeah. Someone who's in pursuit of living a healthier, more holistic life. Sometimes that could be someone who spends a lot of time outside. There are so many benefits of living as much time as you can outside. Or it could be minimizing your screen time. It could be eating healthier foods. There are so many different sex and you have to choose what's most important to you. And so that's why I say it's a spectrum.

Some people will die on the raw milk hill. And then some people are vegan and they're both crunchy. So it depends on the person.

Annie: I do not eat gluten. I don't eat dairy. I try not to eat a lot of sugar. I'm pretty crunchy as a person. I'm going to buy the organic apples even though... and also I love

Cheetos. Like I love Cheetos. So it's like I don't understand me. Is that how most crunchy people feel? It's like, even I am a conundrum.

Emily: Sure.

Annie: Even I am not everything I want to be.

Emily: There is no perfection because of the world that we live in. Like, you absolutely cannot be perfect. Do you know how long I have spent looking for the perfect couch? Like, I cannot find it. Even the ones who are posing themselves as green, quote-unquote, green and healthy, organic, like they're filling their cushions with organic latex and wool, but then the fabric is treated with forever chemicals. I'm like, what? It's so hard to find one that I like the style and I like what it's made of, you know? So I'm just sticking with my old couch for now.

Annie: I mean, I'm learning in real time that I should be thinking about how I buy couches.

Emily: Well, I was listening to your episode with The Nester. I actually followed her for a really long time when blogs were the only source of entertainment. So you were talking about, you know, all the decorating and everything. It is so funny some of the rules couldn't apply to me because I'm like, well, I can't make that decision because I just have to go with what's the crunchiest, you know?

In my real life, sometimes am willing to be okay with making the less perfect choice. But if it's going to be in a video, I feel like it has to be the very best.

Annie: Wow.

Emily: You know, that way if somebody is like, "Oh, can I have the link to this?" then I'm not directing them to something coated in formaldehyde and flame retardants or whatever, you know? So it's kind of weird. It's kind of a tricky spot to be in.

Annie: A second ago you said "the character". So are the videos we watch you and Jason being an amplified version of yourselves? Is that a character? They're so interesting.

Emily: I would say the person... Jason in the videos really doesn't have to do any acting at all.

Annie: Yeah, that's true. He narrates.

Emily: Yes. He is who he is. He is definitely rolling his eyes and raising his eyebrows at me in real life. My person in the videos... I'm not a judgmental person. I don't really

care what you're doing in your life. I want you to be making healthy choices, but I'm not gonna insert myself into your situations, and really... You know, it's none of my business. So that part of my character is definitely not even within me.

Annie: That's gotta be so helpful, though, because then when you get criticism or pushback...

Emily: It's like, you don't get the joke. It's not me. That's not me.

Annie: That's my character. Emily, that's brilliant. The way that you have... you're like separated yourself.

Emily: But it's not really, because I just wrote a little devotional for Proverbs 31. And in the comments on my devotional, there's someone who said, "As soon as I saw her picture, I could not receive this message."

Annie: Oh, geez.

Emily: So it's like, it is my face. So Jason and I we sometimes struggle with what to put out because he loves to stir the pot. And he thinks people who get fired up on the internet are hilarious. Like that just brings him so much joy.

Annie: Do y'all do Enneagram numbers? Do y'all do Enneagram?

Emily: Yeah, I'm a two, probably very obviously.

Annie: And he would say he's a?

Emily: Five.

Annie: A five. Okay. So he can stir it up and just walk away.

Emily: Yeah, he doesn't care.

Annie: Because he's done the... yeah. Interesting. But then it is your face that's saying the thing that...

Emily: Yeah. I am still saying it. So what I like to say is like I do make crunchy choices, but I'm also flexible, you know? And my character is unwavering in her convictions. She is unable to be flexible. And that's what makes it funny.

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

- Emily:** Without that, people will be like, Or you could just blah, blah, blah, blah. And it's like, well, then this would be a really boring video, wouldn't it?
- Annie:** Wow. Emily, you have such thick skin. Well done. That is so impressive that you have in the maturity in your brain of this is a character. She cannot be wavering. She has to be all in. That's not me. That's really smart.
- Emily:** I mean, you think about actors. We just filmed one where I'm pretending to be Mel Gibson on the horse in Braveheart with the blue face paint.
- Annie:** Oh my gosh.
- Emily:** I'm really disappointed in my performance actually. My husband showed it to me this morning. But anyway, nobody really thinks Mel Gibson is Braveheart.
- Annie:** That's right.
- Emily:** You just kind of get in this mindset. I'm just acting. It is what it is. But sometimes I do speak truth and I hope that it probes people towards researching for themselves. You know, just figure out things. Don't just go with the flow. Question it.

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- Sponsor:** Hey, friends, just interrupting this conversation to tell you about one of our incredible partners, one of my favorite partners, [Beam](#). Today, my friends get a special discount on Beam's Dream Powder, their science-backed healthy hot cocoa for sleep with no added sugar.

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Okay, now back to our conversation with Emily.

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Annie: One of the things I thought when I was reading this is I thought, I kind of want to know where being crunchy runs into my spiritual life. Is there a God mandate here? Is there something you think, man, one of the reasons to do this is because God (fill in the blank). Is there any of that?

Emily: Yeah. I mean, aren't we supposed to steward our resources well. And our bodies are a resource given to us by God. I mean, we should be treating our bodies like the spirit is living in us. So we have to treat our bodies well. I mean, like this is a gift from God and we only get one.

So I'm thinking we need to eat as clean as we possibly can. We need to make the healthiest choices that we can. It's just like our financial resources. We have to be wise with spending our money. Well, we have to be wise with living in this body, this vessel.

Annie: I love that. That's a great way to put it when. And this is the perfect season to talk about it, because-

Emily: Can I just say this? It really disappoints me, but it seems like churches are the least crunchy place ever. Ever. Ever. We have resisted doing any videos about it because I don't want to turn people off from the church. There's like already a million things.

Annie: Right, right, right. You're not out here trying to talk about a church thing. Right, right, right. Girl, I hear that.

Emily: But I wish some churches would wake up. Like, why are we sticking a dum-dum in kids' mouths as soon as they walk in the door? That is not a good choice. That is not teaching children how to sit there and listen and learn, you know? So anyway, what were you going to say about this?

Annie: No, that's exactly... I think that's really good. A conversation that sometimes gets downplayed, especially among women in the faith space is we treat our bodies because we all have a history with our body and food, every single one of us, and shame is so near to the door that to talk about it sometimes makes women and men feel like we are intending for them to feel shame for something or another. Absolutely not. That's not what your book does. That's not what I...

But also I think talking about our physical health really matters. I think it's important. And this is such a good time. June is such a good time to talk about this because we can be outside in the Northern Hemisphere-

Emily: Oh, for sure.

Annie: ...and everything is at a farmer's market. Like, there's so much fresh-

Emily: Available.

Annie: Available.

Emily: Yeah, totally.

- Annie:** So tell me how you live in June versus how you live in January when it comes to being outside, when it comes to what you are buying and feeding your family and yourself.
- Emily:** So we love to support local farms. I will admit, I shop at the grocery store. So we buy produce from Kroger. I mean, it is what it is. That's just like the world that we live in. There are some people who eat totally seasonally and I respect that so much.
- Annie:** I do too. I have an app that tells me seasonally. I respect it so much. I don't always hit it, but I respect it.
- Emily:** Especially people who have gotten their stuff, grown their food, canned it all, you know-
- Annie:** Those people.
- Emily:** It is amazing.
- Annie:** I love them.
- Emily:** I can grow like 12 tomatoes. I mean, I just...
- Annie:** If you're listening and you are growing your own stuff, please post a picture of your garden and tag Emily and I. We would love to see you are the person.
- Emily:** I want to fawn over it.
- Annie:** Exactly. That is something I want to sit around and just stare at.
- Emily:** Which I do. And then I feel really inadequate. But no, we have a lot of farms in our area, and so I love to support them. We have even organic farms. So we have this farm. If you happen to live in Western Kentucky, you can look it up. It's called Magney Legacy Farm. They will deliver to your door for five dollars. Five dollars extra. It's totally worth it. They have regenerative farming practices and meat and everything. It's amazing. So I order a lot of my food from there. I do try to grow some things. It doesn't really-
- Annie:** I live in a condo. I absolutely grow nothing. So that is not my story. But I love supporting farms.
- Emily:** Yeah, that's my plan. And even through the winter they have some things. I guess they have a tunnel so they can grow greens and stuff like that. So I'll order some of

that. In the winter, I cook a lot more soups so I can cook meat that we have frozen. We have a deep freeze full of all our meat, you know, and then make bone broth from the bones.

Annie: Oh, my gosh, I love in the book where you make a list of like, here are the things you could actually be making that would say crackers, yogurt, bone broth.

Emily: So easy. Yeah, it's so easy and doesn't take hardly any ingredients. If you're having a hard time purchasing organic and quality things, just make it yourself.

Annie: Earlier you did make a joke where you said, I look at it and then I feel inadequate. I mean, there are a lot of moms listening who are like, "Hey, we're trying to stay on budget. I have three kids. Both of us are working. I'm a single mom. I'm working." How do we bring in a crunchy lifestyle and look at people's pictures and look at them canning and not feel inadequate? Like, what is that balance? How have you learned how to balance doing what you can and letting go of what you can't?

Emily: One thing you have to decide is if you want to live a certain lifestyle, are you willing to make sacrifices to make it happen? I know for me, I used to just veg out and watch Netflix.

Annie: I love talking about you and Jason [inaudible 00:26:45] 250 nights watching TV or something. I love it.

Emily: But how can you allocate that time more wisely? It's just like anything you want to accomplish. How can you make it happen? So if you're interested in canning your own food, one thing that really just filled me up and gave me so much joy was hearing someone say, you don't have to grow your food to can it. So you can buy-

Annie: Oh.

Emily: Yeah. You can can a ton of pasta sauce from tomatoes that you bought at the farmer's market. And that is totally valid.

Annie: Listen, I hope someone's taking notes. Buy groceries-

Emily: You can buy in-season vegetables and can them at their peak and then have it through the winter if you want to try and eat more seasonally. And so that made me feel a lot better about myself because I'm just never going-

Annie: It makes me think of that old semi-homemade TV show where she was like, Okay, so if we're going to bake a cake, here's the parts I already bought and we will make

this part and we'll put it together and it'll be semi homemade. That's what you're kind of going like. There's a version of that where we're living crunchy.

Emily: You can make it work. I mean, you can always go to extremes. Like we have a mill, which sounds way more impressive. We mill our own wheat.

Annie: Cool.

Emily: It's really just a countertop machine. You just pour the wheat berries. I don't have a donkey out my backyard with a millstone.

Annie: Yeah. That's what I was picturing. I'm sorry for you. I'm sorry you don't have that donkey. I

Emily: I know. Or like the water wheel.

Annie: Yeah.

Emily: But you can buy flour and that's okay. You can still make your own crackers. It's going to be better than what you're buying off the shelf, you know? So you just look at what can I do and what are the resources I have available to me?

Buying non-organic flour and using oil and water to make crackers is still better than buying the ones that are pre-made at the store. You know, even if you can't buy organic or whatever, just take steps in the micro instead of focusing on the macro.

Annie: You're right. The micro idea... because one of the things I thought about a lot as I was reading the book, and you did a whole section on this in the book of like the easiest crunchy things you can do on the cheap. Because how do we... I mean, I can't imagine anyone listening who'd be like, you know what, I don't want to eat organic. That sounds gross.

I mean, I think everyone wants to eat organic, but to buy in those two aisles of the grocery store is twice the price. So how do we do crunchy on a budget?

Emily: So look at your lifestyle. What are things that you can automatically decide? Moving your body is a healthy choice. That is one of them.

Annie: That cost nothing.

Emily: That costs nothing. You can go for walks or you can do jumping jacks. We can do push ups. You know, you can move your body, exercise. Everyone can drink more

water. We can choose to eat less processed food. We can choose whole nutrient-dense ingredients.

Annie: I love how you say in the book, go around the edge of the grocery store as much as you can.

Emily: Yeah, just stay to the outside aisle.

Annie: I don't always do that, Cheetos, but I am aware when I'm in the grocery store, the things that are having to be heated or cooled like around the edges are the more natural things that are fresh.

Emily: Those are the whole foods. Yes, exactly.

Annie: I would love for you to talk about this, bringing your own grocery store bags to the store. I think that is such an easy, cheap thing we can do.

Emily: That is so easy, and it's not that hard. I just keep my bags in my trunk-

Annie: Same.

Emily: And then they'll always be there whenever you unpack your groceries at your house. Just take them right back out to your trunk, stick them in. It's not a difficult task. I am not an organized person, but I can do that.

Annie: It absolutely serves me. Do you know I live part-time in New York?

Emily: I did hear that, yes.

Annie: So when everyone's hearing this I'm in New York. But my bags I bring to the grocery store tell me how much I can carry home.

Emily: Smart.

Annie: Like if I take a buggy through the grocery store, I'm in big trouble when I get to the other side and I've got eight bags and nine blocks to walk. But if I take my one or two bags, that is exactly what I can carry up my stairs. That has always been a... I did it this week. I had to get groceries here in Nashville. And I was like, take in two bags, and once they're full, you can't get anything else.

Emily: Nice.

Annie: And so that also helps me not just shop for funsies.

Emily: Impulse buying, yeah. It's like that whole trick of not going to the store whenever you're hungry.

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Emily: Just go to the store with a set amount of baggage.

Annie: That's right.

Emily: Yeah, that's a good idea.

Annie: Emily, one of the questions I had when I read the book is, what do you do if your husband or your partner or your best friend... What do you do if you're the only crunchy one? What do you do if the person who lives with you doesn't want to live like this?

Emily: Sure. And I think that's important to realize that you are only in control of yourself. So you have to be willing to allow them to make their own decisions. We can't control others. We can only live... It's just like sharing the gospel. You can't save someone. You can just live a Christian life focused on Christ and they can see how you're living and then maybe adjust accordingly or pray to receive Christ. I mean, not to compare crunchiness too.

Annie: No, I think that makes total sense is the lifestyle you choose, you can let others watch and they can decide if that's a lifestyle that they would like as well.

Emily: Right.

Annie: Interesting. It's not complicated.

Emily: And you have to be okay with that though. I think in any healthy relationship, if something's important to you, then you should have the liberty to talk about it without getting emotional, without using charged language, just like you would approach any problem at a neutral time. Talk about what's important to you. Maybe we could make these changes.

It does get tricky with kids. Because I know my children, anytime they have a lot of sugar or food dye, especially, they go crazy. They are just wild. And so it was really important to me to avoid those things. My parents don't hold the same convictions that I hold, but they love me and they want to honor the decisions that I'm making for my children.

So we've just had open conversations. Especially my dad. I mean, he still slips up. I saw my kid with one of those red and white striped peppermints in his mouth. I'm like, red 40? Like the devil's color. How could he? But I'm just like, Okay, dad, you know, if it has color, then it probably has dyes. So I just don't want my kids to have that. And he's like, Oh, yeah, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. And then we move on. You don't have to hold grudges. It's not a big deal. Just move on and hope that they'll listen the next time.

And, you know, if you're in a relationship where they're not doing that, then maybe some hard conversations need to happen.

Annie: Let's talk about going outside.

Emily: Yes.

Annie: This is a great time to be outside. You talk repeatedly in the book about touching grass. Teach me why I need to touch grass. I've never thought about this.

Emily: Okay. I get really nervous in interviews like this because-

Annie: People love it actually.

Emily: I was going to tell you the story about how earlier this week I ran into my old boss at a soccer game. I saw on your little page about Annie. You love soccer.

Annie: I do. I love it.

Emily: Because I feel like a great topic of conversation.

Annie: Okay, good.

Emily: So I saw my boss at my kids' soccer game, my old boss. And I went up and I was going to give her a hug. And as I was going in for a hug, she was going the same direction. So then I swapped directions and then she swapped directions. You know how like whenever you're trying to walk through a doorway and you keep moving back and forth? Well, we were like doing this with a hug. Well, I kept moving in. I don't think she was moving in. I kept moving in and somehow I kissed her on the mouth.

Annie: Oh, my gosh, Emily.

Emily: Like our mouth just booped.

Annie: You are lying.

Emily: No. It was terrible.

Annie: Our mouth booped.

Emily: And then I'm like, I am so sorry. I was not trying to kiss you. I was not trying to eat you. I was just trying to give you a hug. So that's how I feel about podcasts.

Annie: Oh.

Emily: Am I going to mouth-boop?

Annie: I know. You are doing so great. I'm having a great time. Are you okay?

Emily: Yes.

Annie: I can do to make it feel like we're less mouth-booping.

Emily: No, I'm just thinking like, Okay, I'm about to start talking about the Earth's electric charge.

Annie: Oh, I love.

Emily: How am I going to mouth-boop this?

Annie: No, no, no. Oh, I'm so glad for that story. Thank you for telling us that story.

[00:35:29] <music>

Sponsor: Hey, friends, just interrupting this conversation one more time to tell you about one of our awesome partners, [Lumen](#). Y'all, I am obsessed with my Lumen. I think it is the coolest thing.

Lumen is the world's first handheld metabolic coach. It's this device that measures your metabolism through your breath. And on top of that, it lets you know if you're burning fat or carbs and it gives you tailored guidance to improve your nutrition, your workouts, your sleep, even stress management. Y'all, it is so cool. It is so cool.

All you have to do is breathe into your Lumen first thing in the morning and you'll know what's going on with your metabolism. What I have learned has blown my mind. I'm like telling my doctors it is crazy.

And Lumen then gives you this personalized nutrition plan for the day based on your measurements. You can also breathe into it before and after workouts and meals. You can learn as much as you want to learn. You're going to know exactly what is going on in real-time

Because your metabolism is at the center of everything your body does. Optimal metabolic health translates to a bunch of benefits, including improved energy levels, better fitness results, and better sleep. So if you want to take the next step in improving your health, go to Lumen.me/TSF and you're going to get 15% off your Lumen, which is a big deal. That's Lumen.me/TSF, like That Sounds Fun, and you'll get 15% off your purchase.

Thank you Lumen for sponsoring this episode and teaching me about my own body. I'm very grateful.

And now back to finish up our conversation with Emily.

[00:37:03] <music>

Annie: I am so into the earth because I think that's what happens with jet lag when you do grounding that helps you.

Emily: Yeah, that's exactly-

Annie: That's the only time I've thought about touching grass is when I'm in other countries.

Emily: Whenever you are so far removed from the earth, you're not receiving the energy from the earth. So it's something to do with ions. I don't know all the scientific, you know-

Annie: But there's science to it.

Emily: Yeah.

Annie: Interesting.

Emily: But by grounding, you can heal faster, you can increase your heart rate variability, which helps you adapt in situations. And it's just good for your blood pressure. It protects you from cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases. There are just so many benefits to grounding.

That's why people buy grounding mats to sleep on, right? So they can get that while they're sleeping. But I don't really think that's totally necessary. I guess it depends on where you live, especially if you can't get outside much. But just like even 15 minutes a day-

Annie: Yeah, that's what's gonna ask you is like, if we could do it today, you'd say go outside for 15 minutes barefoot and be on grass?

Emily: Or you could just touch it. You don't even have to use your feet. You could touch a tree. Just as long as you're touching the earth.

Annie: Oh, great. So like when I'm out on my walk, I can just stop, sit down, lean back on the grass with my hands on the ground. And that counts.

Emily: It doesn't have to be your feet.

Annie: I never thought about that. My brain this whole time has been like, take your shoes and socks off. Like when you're on a run, you got to take your shoes and socks off. No, it can be my hands. Just any part of us directly touching the earth matters.

Emily: Yeah. I think it's best if you're not holding your phone or anything that could also be like disrupting your electric flow.

Annie: I think in general, it's probably better if we set our phone down more than I do.

Emily: And take your wireless earbuds out or, you know-

Annie: Just be totally electronic-free. And help it. Do you wear an Apple watch?

Emily: I don't.

Annie: No.

Emily: No. I don't really wear any jewelry because it bothers me.

Annie: Oh, okay. Okay. Okay.

Emily: So I kind of lucked out there. I don't really have to make the choice. I get annoyed by the feeling, but it also breaks me out in a rash.

Annie: My homeopathic doctor is always like, I wish you didn't wear an Apple watch. I'm like, I hear you. I'll see you next time.

Emily: The benefits are so great. My husband has one. He loves it for running and... yeah.

Annie: So 15 minutes outside. In a world where we decide, okay, for 15 minutes outside for June and July, I'm going to do it. I'll find a way to touch the ground with my hands or my feet or my back or my something for 15 minutes.

Emily: I mean, the more the better.

Annie: Certainly.

Emily: But if you could get 15 minutes.

Annie: What difference are we going to feel or experience? Are we going to notice a difference?

Emily: I think so. Yeah. Have you ever heard of forest bathing?

Annie: No, but I'm writing it down because that's hilarious. Forest bathing.

Emily: Well, it's like a whole health movement. Just getting out in the woods. You don't really have to do anything. You just get outside because there is a feeling... I'm sure you've felt it if you've ever gone for a hike. Like you just feel this rejuvenation, this like awe of nature and peace. That's biological processes happening within you. It's not just by chance, you know?

Annie: Yeah.

Emily: Getting in nature gives you peace. It gives you that calm that we so crave. So I think you'll definitely automatically feel more peace. You'll probably start sleeping better. Whenever we are so trapped inside with all the artificial light and all that, it can throw our circadian rhythms. I mean, how many people take melatonin now just to be able to fall asleep?

But then we're sitting there looking at our phones right before we go to bed with all that blue light in our receptors, in our eyeballs where... We have no signals anymore. Like when is it day? When is it night? I don't know. Our bodies are so confused and so out of whack.

So if you start getting outside more, I think your body will sync up more with your natural circadian rhythm. You'll start sleeping better.

Annie: How early do you put your phone down each night?

Emily: I'm really bad about this.

Annie: You're good.

Emily: I am. It's like a fatal flaw of me-

Annie: Me too. I know.

Emily: ...because I don't want to be on my phone all the time whenever I'm with my kids. So then I put my kids to bed and then it's like, Okay, I need to respond to comments. I need to respond to messages. I need to get all this work done. But I would like to put my phone down two hours before I go to bed. And I do sometimes accomplish it. But you can also wear blue light blockers if you're just so unable to set it down.

Annie: If you're like you have to do work after the kids go to bed, if you're prioritizing... I mean, you said earlier you have to make sacrifices and you are choosing "I'd rather wear my blue light glasses for an hour at night than sit when my kids are still playing and be doing my work".

Emily: Definitely.

Annie: That's really smart. Okay, let's talk about sleep. In the world of physical health, this is the one that I think is... I'm just going to be... This one I think is so stupid. I cannot imagine how much sleep matters, but it matters so much.

Emily: So much.

Annie: I had no idea. I listened to a whole podcast about your whole environment, your sleep environment. And I was like, it's not really dumb.

Emily: No.

Annie: It just feels like, Aren't I just supposed to lay down and turn the lights off and close my eyes?

Emily: Yeah, I know.

Annie: But it is life-changing for us.

Emily: Well, I haven't heard that podcast. You need to send me that.

Annie: I'll send it to you. Yeah.

Emily: But I know that I-

Annie: It was on The Diary of a CEO.

Emily: Okay.

Annie: It's so amazing.

Emily: So toxin-wise, the bedroom is a spot where there are so many toxins lurking that can affect your physical health, like forever chemicals. If you have anything that is treated to be stain resistant, then that means it's probably treated with a PFA or a PFU, which is a forever chemical. Which is linked to cancer and learning delays, reproductive issues, like so many things.

So bedding, especially if it's swishy or polyester, it probably is treated with something. And then beds are treated with flame retardants a lot of times because that is one thing that's like really apt to catch and keep going if your house were to catch on fire. Even though there are natural materials like wool that is naturally flame-resistant.

Annie: You're so smart. I love this so much.

Emily: I was listening to my book on the way here like, Okay, I better try and remember all the things.

Annie: Oh, bless your heart. No. No, no, no. You're doing great.

Emily: So the bedroom, not just like trying to get good sleep, but then trying to sleep in a healthy environment. Lighting wise, you know, you want to use warmer tones so that it doesn't, you know, emulate blue light. And then also have you seen where people slow down their videos and the lights are flickering? That's happening all the time. We just can't see it. So that's like messing with your circadian rhythm as well.

I think about sleeping with your phone right next to your head. You have not only the EMS, but that distraction. If you wake up in the middle of the night, are you tempted to reach over and grab it? And then you're not sleeping well. And when you sleep, your body's able to detox and rest and heal. And so many good things happen when you're sleeping and it's like the world is trying to just steal it from you.

Annie: Yes. Because the times I know I'm the most stressed is when it comes time to sleep and it's another thing I have to check off. You have to sleep and then you have to get up and go again, but you have to sleep. And I'm always like, that is not restful. But there are a lot of our friends listening who are young moms like you who might have a kid get up.

My sister... my nephew woke up like four times last night, she told me this morning. Y'all aren't going to get this... I live by myself. I get to set the temperature to the degree that I want it to be. I can close the car... Like my lack of sleep is a lack of self-control. Y'all don't have that. So what do you say to moms and dads and people who have a different lifestyle that doesn't allow what mine could allow of eight or nine hours of just laying there?

Emily: Sure. Well, I think in a lot of ways as moms sabotage ourselves by allowing our kids to have too much screen time because then that's messing with their circadian rhythm and too much sugar.

Annie: Oh, yeah. You say that. Refined sugar and screen time. And I was like, these are two things I need less of. All of us.

Emily: It's so bad because it's just constantly shoved down our kids' throats. Sugar is a problem. Kids are supposed to get something like 16 grams of sugar in a day. And that is not... My kids are barely staying under that, you know, and I'm hyper-aware of it. It's just everywhere. And every opportunity someone can give your kid a snack that is full of sugar, they're going to.

Even going to the post office. Like it used to just be the bank. And now like going to the post office, they're like trying to offer my kids dum dums.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Emily: And I'm like, No, we don't need it. Thank you. And it's all the time. So I feel like we sabotage ourselves by not getting our kids outside, not getting them outside, touching the grass, burning their energy. Kids have so much energy. A lot of kids are just sitting there looking at iPads or screens. They're not actually expending the energy that they need to, you know.

So I think being mindful about the choices with your kids will help. But sometimes there are things out of your control like illness or... my older son struggled with anxiety. He got sick once and it was at night. And so in his mind going to bed, he was going to get sick.

Annie: Totally.

Emily: And for months, we lost so much sleep over this. I mean, you just have to try to work through that. Lean on the Lord in those times for strength. Try and rest. Give up something that could maybe give you time. You know, give yourself leniency to not be perfect in every other area if you're struggling with sleep.

Sometimes... I mean, I don't know what your average listener is. I know I'm a big proponent of being open to co-sleeping because if a kid-

Annie: Yeah, I read about that in the book.

Emily: If a kid can be there and if you can comfort them in the night right there-

Annie: Are you not worried about rolling over on them? No

Emily: No.

Annie: Okay.

Emily: Actually there are studies about moms who co-sleep safely. There's just a sense of the child. Now the danger is your partner. Like my husband's not as aware. So you definitely want to make sure you have a large enough bed, which I read.

Annie: I loved it. I loved it. And you're also like, Hey, sex doesn't just happen in a bed. You'll be fine. Figure it out.

Emily: It's not totally going to ruin your relationship. I think a lot of people have that in their head. Like if we let our kid in our bed, then it's over. But we're good. We conceived another kid.

Annie: Yeah. That's exactly right. So that has helped you sleep too, is having them closer?

Emily: Yes. Just like letting go of that my child must sleep alone in their room. Because I don't even want to sleep alone in a room. I mean, really. I'm so used to sleeping next to my husband that when he's not there, I'm a little scared.

Annie: Yeah. That's right. I'm the opposite. Anytime I share a bed with a friend or my sister or whatever, I'm always like, This is very weird. What is another person doing here? Whenever I get married, I'll sort it out.

Emily: Yeah, I can see that.

Annie: You just get used to what you're used to. So would you say to... I think that's really good advice, by the way, to moms to be like, give yourself a little bit of a break. This season will not last forever.

Emily: Yeah, it won't.

Annie: Do you ascribe to sleep when the baby sleeps?

Emily: I did when they were little. Now, they go to bed obviously earlier than we do. But when they were little... oh, yeah, I just sent a picture to my friend. And it's of both of my boys. One's laying on my shoulder, he's two, and one of them's draped across my chest. He was probably four months old then. And we were all laying there and they were taking a nap.

I remember during those times, we probably spent two hours a day like that. And I was just trapped there. And in those times, I was so frustrated. Like, I wish I could just get up. But here I am. I've done this to myself. I've made it where my kids need me to be able to sleep, and I'm laying here, you know?

But now looking back, like, oh, what I would give to just be able to lay there peacefully. I mean, I should have been in that time, using it for prayer, using it to listen to my Bible. I did listen to audiobooks. I could have been a lot wiser, like accomplishing more in that time of rest, that forced time of rest. And I wish that I had that now, you know? Like now I can get up and do my dishes and sweep my floors whenever I want. But those things will be there. I just really miss that. I really miss being able to-

Annie: What is that phrase? Babies don't keep?

Emily: I know. I cannot read that poem now. I'm just sobbing.

Annie: Speaking of, you have a new kids' book coming out next month.

Emily: Yes.

Annie: Little *Helper*, *Big Imagination*. It's so cute, Emily.

Emily: Thank you.

Annie: You just handed it to me, so I've not gotten to read it. Tell me the idea of it.

Emily: It's about infusing everyday moments and everyday tasks with imaginative play. That's another thing. Kids, they've lost the ability to know how to play because of

so much screen time, I think. I think it's really important for kids to be bored, so they can figure out how to play, figure out how to entertain themselves. That is one thing that has served me so well in motherhood, is my kids know how to play.

Right now they're four and six, and we live in an area where I can just send them outside. But they can play for hours and just go off and get in their own worlds. And it's really beautiful to watch. So I used them as an inspiration for this book. Because if you can infuse your mundane tasks and the things that have to happen, your daily rhythms with playfulness, then kids are a lot more apt to go along and do it joyfully. So it's just about introducing playfulness into your daily rhythms and infusing every day with imaginative play.

Annie: I love it. I love it. That's awesome. Okay, *Little Helper, Big Imagination*. We'll be sure to share the cover of that so people can find it.

Emily: Thanks.

Annie: Okay, the last question I'm going to ask you before I ask you about fun. Ma'am, we need to talk about makeup. Because in your book, *Really Very Crunchy*, you say you can use Nutmeg as highlighter. Emily Morrow, please tell me you're not... Are you using Nutmeg as highlighter?

Emily: I don't do a lot of makeup. I really don't. I buy most of my makeup from Toups and Co-

Annie: Okay, that's what I was going to ask you is where can we buy it? Please don't make me use things out of my pantry.

Emily: No. They will make it out of Nutmeg for you.

Annie: Oh, do they really?

Emily: Well, I don't know about Nutmeg, but they do use Beef Tallow for most of their makeup. It's so funny when I tell-

Annie: Say it again. Tubes?

Emily: Toups. T-O-U-P-S.

Annie: T-O-U-P-S. Okay.

Emily: And I think she's local to Nashville.

Annie: Hey, okay.

Emily: Or at least-

Annie: I'm going to look her up.

Emily: Emily Toups is her name. So they use grass-fed, grass-finished beef tallow to make their makeup. So it's funny to tell people.

Annie: Do you smell like beef?

Emily: No, you don't. Every time I put on makeup... I don't do fragrances, even natural fragrances. So when I'm putting on their makeup, I guess it's infused with herbs and such. And my kids will always be like, what is that yummy smell? Mom must be wearing makeup today. It smells so good. I don't know how they do it, but all their stuff is super clean, organic, wonderful. And they have the everything blush and... but I don't wear a lot of makeup.

I do use Elderberries for lipstick. I just have a whole big bag of frozen elderberries in my freezer and just go get one berry when I want to put it on.

Annie: I love it.

Emily: You can use that as cheek stain. I use cocoa powder for dry shampoo. It is life-changing.

Annie: That's what I've heard.

Emily: Except when you're exercising. Just yesterday I went and worked out and I could smell the chocolate. It was warming up, but none of it dripped down. It still worked. It was good.

Annie: Oh my gosh. It's so good. You had me in the whole book up until Nutmeg is highlighter. I was like, my girl.

Emily: You should try it. You should try it.

Annie: I mean, I should try it just for fun. Yeah.

Emily: Totally. And nutmeg actually I love the smell of it.

Annie: I do too.

- Emily:** Anytime I'm making quiche, I put nutmeg in it and then I'll just take the rest of the... like I use-
- Annie:** The nut?
- Emily:** Yeah, the nut, and just stick it in my pocket for a little fresh smell the rest of the day.
- Annie:** Emily. Okay. I love you so much. Thank you so much for doing this today. Is there anything we didn't say that you want to make sure we say?
- Emily:** I don't think so.
- Annie:** Okay, great.
- Emily:** No, this was great.
- Annie:** Here's what I get to ask you at the end. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun—I can't wait to hear your answer—tell me what sounds fun to you.
- Emily:** Okay. I thought about this on the way here and I haven't actually done it yet, but my friend is hosting a flower potluck where everybody brings one flower and then we're all going to make arrangements. Doesn't that sound so fun?
- Annie:** That sounds really fun. That's great. And what an easy thing for you to do with your girlfriend.
- Emily:** Yeah. Especially if you grow flowers, which I think she's inviting people who are really into growing flowers. So we're all going to bring one flower. And that happens in like a week. So I'm super excited. I think it'll be so much fun.
- Annie:** Oh, I love it. That's awesome. Great answer. I mean, we don't judge fun. Everything is fun if it's fun to you, but I'm like, that sounds so sweet.
- Emily:** Yeah. Anybody could do that. Even if you just bought the flowers or go out and foraged something, you know?
- Annie:** Yes. I love it. Well, thanks for doing this.
- Emily:** This was a blast.
- Annie:** I can't wait for people to read *Really Very Crunchy* and *Little Helper, Big Imagination*. It's awesome.

Emily: Thank you.

[00:56:21] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, isn't she great? She's so fun. And I learned so much. And I love having guests on that operate in worlds that I do not know. And that is the *Really Very Crunchy* world. Y'all know it. So I absolutely loved meeting her and getting to introduce her to you in this way through this episode.

So make sure you grab your copy of *Really Very Crunchy*. When Emily was in the office, I said, will you please sign a copy of *Really Very Crunchy* for us to give away. So today on That Sounds Fun podcast, that is the handle on Instagram, @thatsoundsfunpodcast, we are giving away a signed copy of *Really Very Crunchy*.

And all you got to do in the comments is put your favorite emoji that makes you think of the summer. And we're going to pick one of you to give that signed copy of *Really Very Crunchy* to. So make sure you are over on That Sounds Fun podcast today so you can win your free copy. And grab a copy for yourself or for your friends.

Make sure you go follow Emily on social media, tell her thanks for being on the show. It is such a gift to our guests that y'all let them know you appreciate the time that they have spent to talk to us. That is a feedback I get from guests all the time. It happened at the K Love Fan Awards where people said how kind y'all are to them. And so I love that. I'm so thankful for that.

If you like this episode, I think you're also going to love Episode 870 with Nicole the Nomad. If you have not looked at Nicole's Instagram, she has a very fun announcement that you need to go check out. So go do that. Or I think you'll also really love Episode 495 with Aarti Sequeira. Y'all, how do we love Aarti? Oh, she is the star of the Food Network. I love her so much.

If you have any questions from this episode, you can drop them in the Spotify Q&A box. It's over on Spotify if that's where you listen like me. Or send them to us here on Instagram @thatsoundsfunpodcast and we will answer them there. Remember, that's where you go to enter to win a copy of Emily's book signed today.

If you need anything else from me, well, you know I'm on summer Sabbath, but you can keep up with the show over @thatsoundsfunpodcast and let us know what you think there. If you ever have any questions for us, you can also email us at tellmemore@Anniefdowns.com and my team will get right back to you.

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 is my family is in the cab on the way to my apartment in New York. Sounds really fun to take my little nephew Sammy to the park. So we're going to be doing that.

Y'all have a great week. We'll see you back here on Thursday. It is our last episode before a little summer Sabbath for everybody, the week of July 4th, so there will be no episodes next week. But we're going to finish with a really important episode with our friend, one of my favorite pastoral voices and leaders, John Eldredge.

His podcast is one of my very favorites episodes here on That Sounds Fun are my favorite. So you are going to love this conversation about how we rest well, how do we go into the summer well, and make sure that we are refilled and refueled. It's really important. So I can't wait for you all to hear that on Thursday. And then we will be on a break for a week and back on Monday, July 8th. We'll see y'all on Thursday. Have a great week.