

[00:00:00] <music>

**Annie:** Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I am so happy to be here with you today. Y'all are not ready for this episode. It is so good. It is so good.

But before we dive in, I want to tell you about one of our incredible sponsors, speaking of, so good, [AG1](#). One of the reasons I love drinking AG1 in the morning is because it is like a one-stop shop. In just 60 seconds, you can get your daily dose of vitamins, minerals, pre and probiotics, adaptogens, and more. That's why I've been drinking AG1 for so many years.

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**Intro:** Today on the show, y'all get ready, I get to talk with my new friend, Leanne Morgan. You may know her and love her from her comedy special on Netflix or seeing her videos pop up on Instagram, but Leanne is here today. And if you don't already love her, buckle up because you are about to.

She's a comedian and actress, a writer, producer, wife, mom, and grandmom. Her brand new book, *What in the World?!*, releases tomorrow. Y'all I'm telling you, you're going to love this book. You're going to love this conversation.

So here's my friend Leanne Morgan.

[00:01:59] <music>

**Annie:** Okay, Leanne Morgan, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

**Leanne:** Thank you. Anything.

**Annie:** What an honor! Thank you so much for making time to be with us today.

**Leanne:** You don't. Honey, this is an honor for me. Thank you. I've been wanting to be on here. Thank you.

**Annie:** Well, mutual that. I told you before we started that the way we... You know, we go through a list of people who have books coming out or albums coming out, and a lot of people I haven't met yet. And so I Google them to see who they are. And then there's some names where Lillian or Jenna will say, "Leanne Morgan in the room stops." I was, "Leanne Morgan? Oh, yeah, 100%. What is it? A book, a special, a TV show? What is it? It's all of it.

Okay. So the first question we're asking, because the show is called That Sounds Fun, Leanne, tell me what sounds funny. What do you do for fun?

**Leanne:** Honey, okay, I'm a grandmother, you know? And so a baby's three and a half boys, three and a half and 17 months. For now, my fun is going to a book fair at the preschool, going and getting a big Costco run for my kids, and stocking their refrigerator. I'm not kidding. I'd rather do that, Annie. I'd rather go to Costco than Saks Fifth Avenue. Somebody said, "Here's \$10,000. I want you to go." I would go, "I'm getting a playground set and I'm getting all the groceries and pouches, yogurt pouches that I can hold in this car.

**Annie:** I mean, how quick could you go through \$10,000 at Costco? I don't feel like that would be hard for me.

**Leanne:** I don't know. I know it wouldn't be hard because on a regular day, I'm about \$800 and I'm like, "What have I done?"

**Annie:** That's right.

**Leanne:** I could buy a generator in case of, you know, something goes down in the United States of America. I mean, there's a million things I could do with \$10,000.

**Annie:** That's what I think too. There's a company in Nashville, one of their Christmas gifts is they did like a free for all at Costco. They let the Costco open up for the company. And I think they all got a \$100 or \$200 and just got to do like a supermarket sweep through a Costco. Can you imagine?

**Leanne:** Fun.

**Annie:** Fun. Fun.

**Leanne:** Big block of cheese, as big as your head. That kind of stuff sets me on fire. It does. And like a new dog bed. There's every aisle. I was there yesterday.

**Annie:** Do you have a garage freezer or fridge?

**Leanne:** I do. I have a basement refrigerator.

**Annie:** Okay. Okay.

**Leanne:** And I have a little tiny dorm room in my garage that one of my kids, you know, after they move out of college, they all go to an apartment and they move all their crap home and I have to store it. And nobody needs it and wants it.

**Annie:** But I don't want my parents to throw it away. They're like, come get all your childhood stuff. I'm like, "Do you not love me anymore? What do you mean? You don't want my art still in the attic? Where am I going to put it? You're my parents." And they're like, "Get this box out of here."

**Leanne:** I know. My little mom and daddy just did it to me. They're elderly and they were like, "You need to come get your stuff." I was like... But it is fun for me to think that there's lots of different kinds of drinks in a refrigerator in my house. I want to make sure I've got Diet Cherry Pepsi. You know, unusual stuff like a peach Fresca. And then when people come over, I can sling that door open.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Leanne:** And people are amazed.

**Annie:** And they're amazed. They're amazed by the variety. When I think about what I deem as rich in a house, it is not the size of the house. I don't care about the size. I don't care about the cars. I want to know if you have an outside TV and I want to know if you have a garage fridge. Those are the two to me.

**Leanne:** You're right. An outdoor space with a TV, that's rich.

**Annie:** That's rich to me. I mean, I have a condo in Nashville and I put a TV outside just to be like, watch me, watch me get this \$100 television that's going to die any minute now, but it's outside. It is outside. I've made it. I don't need a freestander house. I can be connected to other people. But I got an outdoor TV.

**Leanne:** Oh honey, and for you to have a condo in Nashville, Tennessee is a big deal.

**Annie:** Well, listen, I bought it a long time ago. I bought it a long time ago. You know, the problem in Nashville, you're like, "I could sell this for so much more than I ever bought it for, but I couldn't afford to buy anything." So I'll just stay right here. I'll just keep on keeping on right here in this condo.

**Leanne:** I know. Isn't that crazy?

**Annie:** I love it. In your book, *What in the World?!*, which I cannot wait for people to read that they are here in this episode on Monday, your book comes out on the Tuesday. So you're almost releasing it. But in this book, you talk about meeting your husband. Will you talk about meeting him for a minute? Will you tell a little bit about the story? It's so good.

**Leanne:** Okay. Annie, when I was at the University of Tennessee, and I had gone through a divorce, I married young and I talk about, you know...

**Annie:** Oh my gosh.

**Leanne:** I tell all the time, I say to my girls, like I'll be out and I'll have an interview and I'll say, I did horrible things in the 80s, you know, and I'll do that. And my girls go, "Mom, quit telling everybody you did a bunch of horrible things. By today's standards, we don't want people to think you've done heroin. You smoked cigarettes. Okay. You smoked cigarettes behind a dumpster and you dated some fools." I go, "I know, but then I didn't do well in school and my little mom and daddy worked so hard."

But anyway, I had dropped out, married somebody that was... it was awful. It's in the book. Then was divorced at 23.

**Annie:** It's just unbelievable.

**Leanne:** Which sounds like a Tammy Wynette song. It was. And then I go to work at this big restaurant in Knoxville that everybody... it was very cool to work there because you made money. It stayed on a wait all day long. And it was a big deal. It was like the Super Bowl of waiting tables. And I get a job there and I was so wounded from everything that happened to me. I cut my hair off. My hair was two inches long on my head. I don't know how to explain that. I just had to shed.

Chuck Morgan comes through a training group and he's six foot four. And I look up and I go, "You're tall as a tree." And he said, "Sorry." And I thought, "Another butthole has come to work at Grady's." Everybody thought they were something that worked at Grady's. And we were. It was the place to work. But it was, you

know, people were arrogant and egotistical. And I thought, "Oh great, another asshole."

Then we stood on the wall to see when our tables would be seated. And he started standing by me and he wouldn't say a word. He's very quiet and introverted still to this day. He doesn't use, I don't know how many words he says at home during a day. Not many. And he would just stand and I'd be talking out of my head, Annie, you know, I'm a talker and I would be telling jokes and wasn't paying attention to my tables getting seated.

And then we had a shift meeting. I didn't think anything of it. Then we had a shift meeting and I sat down beside me. I was eating a big loaded baked potato. Which if you're going to eat a baked potato, you got to have all of it. He looked at me and said, "There's too much fat. You don't need all that fat on your potato." And I thought, "Man, what a asshole. I don't want to be seated next to him. He was eating a baked potato with the cottage cheese on it."

And he was falling in love with me. That whole time that he told me that I had too much fat on my baked potato. He was desperately in love with me. And said, "I'm in love with you." And I was like, "I just got a divorce and I'm wounded and I'm broken and I need some time and I'm not into..." you know? And he would not leave me alone.

Then he knew that my uterus was aching, Annie, and I wanted a bunch of kids. Because if a baby came in, I'd sit and squeeze on a baby. He would wait tables with the family that had a baby crying, pick that baby up, wait tables while he healed this baby, then bring that baby over to me. It was very sneaky. Because he knew that that made my uterus ache.

**Annie:** Those quiet guys.

**Leanne:** So pursued me, bought me gifts, did clean my nasty, the women's bathrooms, which I always say are like the shining in a restaurant. They would say, "Your sidewalk's done, Leanne. You don't have to clean the bathrooms." And who would have gone in there? Chuck Morgan before me to clean them up for me.

But yeah, I thought he was a real asshole. And I didn't want to get into something, but honey, he doesn't take no for an answer. He's a salesman.

**Annie:** Yeah. The way you talk about him. I was so interested when I was reading the book, Leanne, because really the book is, I'm going to do the math, 200 pages. The first 60 pages, you talk about relationships that didn't work and you talk about how you went from man to man and try. And it's such a beautiful retelling of what it

looks like to find healthy relationship. Because then on page 68 or something, here comes Chuck. When you first and last name and the whole time here comes Chuck Morgan. And I just thought what a beautiful way to tell the story.

Now, all those other men, did you change their names or is that their real names?

**Leanne:** We changed their names.

**Annie:** Are any of them still watching? Are any of them out there and you think, "They're seeing all this. They know I'm a comedian."

**Leanne:** My little high school boyfriend knows what's happened for me and my little mom and daddy see him every once in a while and he is precious. And I did change his name, even though he is a sweet, sweet boy. Well, Lord, he's 60 years old now. But I think he's a good... he doesn't mind. I think he thinks it's fun and cute. And I talk about that I thought I was going to marry him and we were going to raise six children and raise our own tobacco and all that.

But there is a story in there about when... I'm not a drinker. I don't care a thing in the world about alcohol. And I drank a half a pitcher of sangria-

**Annie:** Oh my gosh, this story.

**Leanne:** ...on a date with a boy that was so with it, smart, sweet, kind, stable, good-looking. And I was like, "I'm not into that. I'm sorry. I need a twisted, pitiful somebody that hates their mother because I'm going to fix them." I thought I was a therapist. And I went on dates with him and I was so bored. I mean, he probably knows who he is, but when I say bored, I was just so broken and messed up that I could not receive love and kindness from anybody. So I had to drink half a thing of sangria and I threw up all night.

**Annie:** Threw up on yourself.

**Leanne:** And it was at that movie with Aunt Rhinestone with Dolly Parton and Sylvester Stallone. And you probably weren't even born yet, Annie. But it was a crazy movie. Little Sylvester Stallone wore a jumpsuit. You could see the outline of his little private parts and the room was spinning. The theater was spinning. I had to put my feet on the floor. I mean, it was awful. But yeah, I went through a million of ding dongs. I went through a million of sweet ones that I just could not... you know, if they were sweet, I couldn't deal with it. Which is crazy.

**Annie:** Oh, listen, I've had my counselor tell me a lot, if you're bored, that means he's probably healthy. I'm like, Oh, okay. You know what? Yeah, that's a good point.

That's a good point. All right. Okay. So I'm not married yet. There's a crew of our listeners who aren't married yet. I'm with you. I'm a big talker, but I love a quiet guy. So give us some tips to the single ladies listening. How do we find our Chuck Morgan?

**Leanne:** Okay. This is what I would say. You've got to find somebody that is your friend first. I think that's so important to be friends and to really enjoy the same things, whether it's, you know, going to movies or hiking or whatever it is. You got to have that kind of stuff. And if they are quiet, I mean, there's just something about a steady Eddie. There's something about, you know, if somebody knows how to... and they're jazzy, you stay away from them.

I've often thought Chuck Morgan and I knock on wood, he's never done anything against me. If he had to get out here and get another woman, I'm worried because he cleans his ears out with the cordless foam cord. So you always want to get with somebody that can't. I mean, even though he wooed me and pursued me, it was very quiet the way he did it. You don't want a jazzy man.

**Annie:** I kind of think the jazzy guys are peaking right then. If he's jazzy right now, this is his peak. And I'm not sure I want to sign up to live with somebody for the next 60 years of my life who peaked when we were dating.

**Leanne:** And there's just something about just steady... Chuck Morgan... I've got health insurance because of Chuck Morgan. I would be in a hole. I would have had a ball. I would have had a ball. These little children, I have had a ball. But I have pruffff money away and Chuck Morgan has kept us all alive. Praise God for Chuck Morgan.

**Annie:** He seems wonderful. Once he shows up in the book, he's this faithful... he is the same thing in the book as he seems to be in real life of like, he's just the undertone of the rest of it.

**Leanne:** He is.

**Annie:** He's the undertone of the rest of the book. It's really sweet.

**Leanne:** Thank you. Well, and let me tell you, he's a baby cuddler and cuddles babies at children's hospital. He gives away my furniture to, if he meets a single mom.

**Annie:** Oh, you've got to tell that story. Tell about your dresser.

**Leanne:** Oh, well, there was this little single mama where he works at Clayton Holmes and everybody's is war death about her. He came home and got my youngest child's car

and it was an old car because he believes in everybody driving old cars and he doesn't believe in joy. But he got her car, drove it off, gave it to that little mama. Then he came back, got my dresser and said... I go, "What are you doing?" He goes, "She doesn't have any furniture." And I said, "My panties are in that, Chuck." He goes, "You'll find somewhere else to put your panties. She doesn't have anything," And hauled it off on a trailer. But he would give everything he had away. He really would.

Now, let me say that he's aggravating. Chuck Morgan's not perfect. He's aggravating. There's many a time where that introvert who has worked all day and has no words at home. That's hard. When my children left for college, I took to the bed and grieved because I knew I was going to be left with their daddy and he doesn't talk.

**Annie:** But the generosity. Wow. I love that part of the book.

**Leanne:** He's very charitable.

**Annie:** I love that when you're like, "My panties have nowhere to go. He cannot get my furniture out from under me." Oh no.

**Leanne:** And Annie, they're big panties too. They're big panties.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh. Leanne, the story in the book where you switch to the big panties is so funny, but you're like, Sorry, now they're tense. Now they're just mad. I just love it.

**Leanne:** Catapults.

**Annie:** Oh yeah. That's it. The catapults is where you...

**Leanne:** I have to have it over my stomach. Hey, listen, I'd love that club.

[00:17:12] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [Lumen](#). Y'all, the Lumen is so fascinating. It's this device that measures your metabolism through your breathing. So I just breathe into my Lumen first thing in the morning, then on the app, it lets me know if I'm burning fat or carbs, gives me tailored guidance to improve nutrition, workout, sleep, and even stress management. Oh, it's so helpful and so fun.

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Okay, now back to our conversation with Leanne.

[00:18:28] <music>

**Annie:** I want to read something to you in the book that I thought was really interesting. You said... let me see if I can find it. I mean, you're talking about "if I'd have focused on my faith instead of counting on beauty as a saving grace, I might've been less scared about my future when I was just starting out." You talk a lot about how your parents kind of instilled in you like being pretty is a high priority. Will you talk about that? I'd love to hear you talk about your faith a little bit and kind of why is that true. Why is it true that if you focused on faith instead of your beauty, your life would have been easier?

**Leanne:** I think, Annie... well, and my little mama Lucille is a doll.

**Annie:** I love her from a distance. I'm so glad you still talk. I'm so glad she's healthy and doing all right because you kind of leave us in the book like she's doing okay. And I was like, "I'm going to have to ask Leanne how Lucille is."

**Leanne:** Yeah, she's doing okay. She's been through a lot, but she's doing okay. But has been the most fun mama. My sister and I would come home from something and she'd say, "We were all the prettiest ones there." And we'd go, "Yeah, we were." But we were in, you know, a town of 500 people and there's beautiful people there, but we thought we were something, Annie, and we should have been whipped in the yard.

But anyway, we did prioritize, you know, being pretty. The man in our little town said at the water plant that we use more water than any household in Adams because my sister and I were constantly washing our hair and putting in hot oils.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh.

**Leanne:** Now, I raised my children... They went to a Christian school. And I just remember there was a chapel about, if you put everything into your looks, money... You know,

money can be taken from you in a heartbeat. You know, things can go south. And they have in my life where you don't have any money. You don't have your... beauty fades. If you put all your worth into all these worldly things, it means nothing. All that's fleeting.

I hope that I've been able to help my children to... if you put your worth into you're a child of God, you're a child of God, nobody can take that away from you. And you are a child of the King. I just feel like that would have been a cornerstone for me. Maybe some of these other things wouldn't have happened to me. And I was raised in church. I was raised in a tiny little country, Methodist church. It was precious.

In our Sunday school class, I remember we all had to go around and do the 10 commandments. And one of the little boys said, "Thou shall not kill ducks during something season." We didn't know the Bible, it's what I'm telling you, Annie. It was sweet. It was about love and forgiveness, but I didn't know the Bible. I didn't know... It was sweet.

But it wasn't until I was probably 38 years old at Max Lucado's church in San Antonio, Texas, where I really and truly, even though God was always with me and I asked Jesus into my heart at probably 12 and He was always with me and He never left me. I left Him, but He never left me. But at 38, I went to a Christian counselor to work through some trauma in my childhood and different things and that man was so precious. All this guilt and all these things that I had carried and being divorced and doing all that, all that kind of stuff, I knew I was forgiven. I was white as snow.

And Max Lucado was the one that I finally got it. I got it. I feel like it was like before and after, ever since then. I mean, like, I don't care what anybody thinks. You know, I talk about I wanted to tell more horrible things in that book, Annie, but my literary agent who is darling and yummy said, "Girl, you're not Joan Crawford yet. She goes, "Why don't we do... let's do this. Let's tell them, you know, most of it, but then let's do a cookbook and then maybe when you're an old woman, you can tell horrible things."

**Annie:** Oh my gosh.

**Leanne:** Yeah. I thought it was hilarious.

**Annie:** That's it. I love it. Now, listen, I'll tell you my upbringing. I got the faith part. I wish someone would have taught me how to wear makeup. I feel like I was a little loosey-goosey for a while on trying to look like a female. I was an athlete who just... I didn't wear makeup till college probably and was so surprised why my life

wasn't going exactly the way I wanted to. And so there's a happy medium between us. I got the faith part, you got the beauty.

**Leanne:** Were you raised in a castle[00:23:24?

**Annie:** Nope. Methodist.

**Leanne:** Methodist?

**Annie:** Methodist. Just like you. Yeah.

**Leanne:** Where were you raised, Annie?

**Annie:** Marietta, Georgia.

**Leanne:** And those girls in Marietta — my daughter-in-law's from Marietta — they weren't wearing makeup or what kind of...?

**Annie:** They weren't pushing me to. Somebody needed to go back and push and give me a little peer pressure. Everybody was working too hard to let me be me. I need y'all to not let me be me.

**Leanne:** Oh, I would have had you in a hair salon. I raised my children and all that. Okay. What sport did you play?

**Annie:** Soccer. Soccer was my sport of choice. And then I was the manager for the football team, Leanne, because you know, if you're not dating them, but you're with them every day, I don't get you halfway there. I mean, you're with them every day of the week. So that's all you gotta do is give them water.

**Leanne:** And I bet your legs are cute from soccer kicking.

**Annie:** That's right. So, yeah, I've loved reading that in your book about... because that is... I mean, being honest, that's, is one of the things that I've dealt with as an adult of like, "Oh man, I wish I'd had a little more peer pressure in some ways to be... The only pressure I really felt was spiritual of like, Oh, my friends have to get saved and Oh, I've got to do that. And I felt a lot less pressure to conform. I kind of wish I had.

**Leanne:** He would have that heavy burden on you. Annie, when you were playing soccer, you were worried about their salvation.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Leanne:** Well, okay. See, your little Methodist church, we didn't talk about salvation, but we were also a bunch of tobacco farmers and they just didn't talk about that a lot.

**Annie:** Where is Adams? Is Adams outside of Knoxville?

**Leanne:** Adams is outside of Nashville. Robertson County on the Kentucky, Tennessee border near Clarksville.

**Annie:** Got it. Okay.

**Leanne:** But it was only probably 50 to 100 people. It was sweet though. It was so much. I always say I was raised about forgiveness and love and love thy neighbor and all that. We just didn't know. It just wasn't a Bible teaching. Now I go to a non-denominational, there's more Bible teaching.

**Annie:** I mean, there's no world where you're... And you talk about this in the book. There's no world where you're a little girl in Adams and you are thinking about, "I can't wait to be a standup comedian." I mean, that is-

**Leanne:** I thought I'm going to be a movie star. And I think that's just a little bitty child from the country seeing movies. I thought, "I don't know how, I don't know what, but I want to be a movie star." But then yeah, later on thinking, "It's standup."

**Annie:** Yeah. You got it. There's a story you tell in the book about Carmen peeing on the couch that really got you going. Will you tell that story? That is such a beautiful... there's so many of us who have Carmen peeing on the couch stories as far as like you're doing one thing and suddenly God goes, actually, what if I made you to do this in a moment? Would you mind telling that story?

**Leanne:** Yes. Okay. You know, as a child, I thought I'm going into show business, but didn't know how, didn't know what. Went to traditional college, finished after all that hoopla went through with my first marriage and all that, finally got a degree, married Chuck Morgan. He moved me to Bean Station, which is the foothills of the Appalachian mountains, bought a used mobile home business. At 27 years old he was running a business and had so many employees because he's anal-retentive and overachiever in Taipei.

So then I had my first baby, Charlie, and I wanted to stay home and nurse all the while, in the back of my head, knowing I wanted to be a mom more than anything, but also I'm going to be a movie star and a standup comedian, which is insane.

So then one of my girlfriends from Nashville says, here's a God thing, she goes, "Leanne, I'm selling this jewelry. I think you would like Tupperware and Mary Kay. I think that would be good for you as a young mama. You can meet people, make a little money, get your hair highlighted." Because Chuck Morgan, you know, had me on a tight budget.

So I started selling jewelry. And I sling schlepped this jewelry around. I didn't care about jewelry. I'm in women's living rooms every night, and I start booking real far in advance because, you know, I'm telling about breastfeeding and hemorrhoids instead of the jury.

Carmen, who I'm still good friends with, was sitting on a couch, laughed so hard she urinated on Jan's couch. They started blotting it up. And I'm not kidding you. I was like, "Okay, God, if she can do this, I mean, if I've made this, okay, I've got it. I can do it." And I remember saying, which is so arrogant of me, but I remember saying to these little women in East Tennessee, "You either book a party with me now or see me in Las Vegas later."

**Annie:** Wow.

**Leanne:** It was just insane. So then the company noticed and asked me to start speaking at their big things. And that's when I got the confidence. That's when Dennis Swanberg, Christian comedian, came up to me and said, "You could be a standup comedian." That was a pivotal... I've said that in interviews. And he wrote me a letter saying how sweet that was that I mentioned it. But it's true. I thought if he can do, if he thinks I can do it, "I can do it."

And then Chuck sold the business and we moved to San Antonio and I went to a club and did open mic. And from there, I mean, you know, was a professional comedian. But it was that I thought of all... there were no comedy clubs around. I was a little mama wanting to breastfeed in foothills of the Appalachian mountains and God made me a comedy club.

Every night I was in front of my demographic talking about things that I thought was funny, they thought it was funny. I just look back on it... and I do. I look at it as that was God's plan. You know, like, okay, girl, hold on, hold on. I'm going to... until then let's do this. I feel that in my heart.

**Annie:** So you have a real gift, much like our friend, Nate Bargatze, of you do clean comedy, but it's not Christian comedy, and therefore your audience is varied. I mean, the people who come to your shows do not believe everything you believe. And in fact, there are... and you talk about this a lot. There are groups of people that come to your shows that probably wouldn't come to a church, but they'll come and

see Liam Morgan because they know they are loved by you. How do you do that from a comedy stage? Have you done some intentional things to make everyone feel welcome with you?

**Leanne:** Well, I do think I've got an emotional IQ to read the room. But early on, talking about the Christian comedy thing, I remember people would say stuff to me in San Antonio, like, "Oh, you're a comedian. You must, you know, be..." you know, some horrible... And they go, "You need to be in churches." And I've done churches. And I thought, "You know what? Church people are already there. If I'm in a club and I drop a little seed, like, Oh, my Sunday school class, we did so-and-so or my three little children go to a Christian school and this is what their teacher said or whatever, I just thought, they need me more than... church people already in church. With Netflix, that gave me a really big audience.

**Annie:** Gosh.

**Leanne:** But I tell you what it is, Annie. It's just people out in the middle of the United States that just want to have a good time. Laughter is medicine. I believe that. And I think everybody is worried sick over politics, geo global, blah, blah, blah. Nobody wants to hear about that. That's why Nate is so... I think people love him. He doesn't talk about all that. You don't feel uncomfortable. You don't feel like you're not wanted or this side doesn't want you or what all that mess. And I do the same thing.

I just know nobody wants to know what I think about that. They want to know what I think about perimenopause.

**Annie:** Yeah, that's exactly right. That's exactly right. It is a sweet. Something we've had to say a couple of times in our work is it is going to hurt, but it is okay if the Christians are mad at you. It's okay. If you are reaching people that don't believe everything you believe, that may sometimes make some church people upset for a short amount of time, hopefully, but okay. And so I'm with you that church people are already in church. Me too. You and I are church people that are already in church. But man, what a gift when we get to reach people who don't know everything that we know or believe everything we believe. I think it's a gift.

**Leanne:** I think it is too.

**Annie:** I love it.

**Leanne:** And I'm not beating anybody over the head with anything, but they know that I'm a believer. You talk in the book about... the line is "the wisdom and grace of

unanswered prayers". So will you talk about that for a minute? Because you tell a devastating story about losing a TV show that you had and how that was the promise and then COVID. And that was your next big thing and then COVID. Can you talk a little bit about that? Because everybody listening, Leanne, has unanswered prayers that they can't understand why it's going the way it's going.

**Leanne:** Right. Okay, the first, the big... I look back on it and I think, "Oh my gosh, thank you, Lord." I had a television deal with ABC and Warner Brothers. It was, I mean, going really well. Paula Deen was going to play my mother. It was going, going, going. And I thought, I got swept up in it. And my children were in elementary or maybe... I can't remember, but they were elementary middle school, maybe. And I thought, "Okay, we'll figure it out. We'll figure it out."

Matt Williams was my showrunner who created *Roseanne* and *Home Improvement*. Precious believer. Precious. And he said to me, "Leanne, don't let Chuck quit his job. You know, it could get canceled. You'll have to go out there and live away from your family for a year because you don't want to uproot them." How irrational. I was to go, "Oh, okay, well I can make that work out." I could have never left my children. Annie, it would have killed me. It would have killed me. But at the time I got caught up in it and I thought, "Oh, this is it. This is my dream to be a sitcom star."

And then the writer's strike hit and it was over in one day.

**Annie:** Oh, that was it. The writer's strike. Sorry, it wasn't the writer's strike.

**Leanne:** Yeah. Because this was years ago. But I know that it put me into a clinical depression. My producer called me and just said, "It's over, Leanne. There's a writer's strike." And that's where you got all the reality shows came out of that. Nobody was doing any kind of scripted television. And I was devastated. It was my first big rodeo and I didn't know how things worked. It was over in a day. Chuck Morgan was trying to make me feel better and bought me a bagel. It was a sweetest dog I've ever owned in my life. But he just sat and look at me and pee in the floor. And I just had like, I... you know, I don't know if you've ever been depressed, but it's just like gray glasses, like you can't see.

**Annie:** Great. That's exactly how it stoked me. It doesn't feel like you're losing all the color.

**Leanne:** And I couldn't get my breath. And I had these babies to raise. And I thought, "What am I doing?" And I grieved over that for a long time. Then I'd get other television deals. By then I was jaded and I was like, "That's not going to work."

But I'd look back on that and I think, "Oh my gosh, that was God's protection over me because there's no way I could have left my family. If it made it, my children would have been raised in Los Angeles. Nothing against Los Angeles people, but I tell you, I got a baby child who's 26 now, who's very bougie. And if she had been raised in LA, honey, I don't know what would have happened to her. They would not have been the people that they are. They got to be raised in the middle of the United States and they've got to go to a sweet Christian school. They've got to raise them around precious children.

And let me tell you this, after I did the movie, Little Reese Witherspoon, the movie that I did with her every day, she looked at me like this because she's so tiny and I'm big and she said, "Leanne, you got to raise your own children. You got to raise your own children." And I would be like, "You're right."

So when everybody else is in LA or wherever trying to make it or making it or whatever, that is so hard to be able to raise a family at the same time. I got to raise my babies. And what a blessing.

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

**Leanne:** Also, Annie, it gave me the material that now I've built on all these years that's real because I've really been in a house with the toilets not working, with cooking and doing and trying to lose weight and soccer teams and football and everybody's crazy. I got all that because if I wouldn't have had that, if I had-

**Annie:** That's right.

**Leanne:** That was God.

**Annie:** Wow.

[00:36:41] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation one more time to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [Shopify](#). When you think about the businesses that are selling like crazy, like Allbirds or Thrive Causemetics, you know, how we feel about Thrive Causemetics, you typically think about how great their products are and how brilliant they are at marketing, but we don't often think about the businesses behind the business.

The ones making selling and buying super easy for millions of businesses, the behind-the-scenes magic is Shopify. And that's definitely true for us at [shopanniefdowns.com](#). We don't get to put advent resources, coming very soon,



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**Sponsor:** And I've got to tell you about one more incredible partner, [Our Place](#). Okay, I don't do a ton of cooking at home. You know it. But when I do, I am mindful about what I'm putting in my body. And companies like Our Place have helped me be super mindful about the cookware I'm using to cook with too.

Our Place is nontoxic cookware and appliances that also make cooking and cleanup way easier. Not to mention their designs are for everyone, no matter what your experience in the kitchen is and they are super cute. There's so many fun colors to choose from.

Our Place products are made without PFAS and Teflon. PFAS is also known as the forever chemicals. Do you hear it? You don't want forever chemicals. And most of today's nonstick pans have forever chemicals in them. You've got to go look at our place appliances too. Their wonder oven is a super stylish little air fryer and toaster oven and one but it is double the capacity of traditional air fryers and importantly free from forever chemicals.

So go to [fromourplace.com](https://fromourplace.com), enter my code, TSF, like That Sounds Fun, at checkout and you're going to get 10% off sitewide. That's fromourplace.com and the code is TSF. Our place offers a 100-day trial with free shipping and returns.

And now back to finish up our conversation with Leanne.

[00:39:09] <music>

**Annie:** I'll tell you one of the parts of stories of my life that people connect with the most is when my best friend and I had a breakup and the way even God worked in that. And women do not talk about breakups with women enough. You talk in the book about a pretty significant... a best friend breakup. Can you share a little bit? Because there is somebody listening I'm sure of it who is in the middle of, like you talk about the book, not getting invited to coffee when you're dropping everybody off at school where suddenly y'all were going to CrossFit together every day and now she's not returning your calls. Will you talk a little bit to the women who are in

the middle of that right now. And no one talks about it. No one talks about breakups with other women and friendship that are so devastating. That's the worst breakup of my life, and I've been dumped a lot by men, and that by far my worst breakup was my best friend.

**Leanne:** Oh, it was devastating, yeah and I reeled from it for a year or more than that. My sister — this was crazy — she went through at the same time I did and it was devastating for her. And everybody's kids are intertwined and husbands were intertwined and elderly parents and funerals. And you've been through all this stuff together.

And I try to say in that chapter that, you know, I don't know what she was thinking, what she was going through. She wouldn't talk to me about it so I don't know. I had to guess. But because I wanted to work it out, I was like, "What's wrong? I mean, we've been together and I don't understand." But she didn't want to... it was over for her. It was, boom, it is over.

So I was also going through a terrible time. My father-in-law had died a tragic death, the economic downturn was around that, yeah my husband's in the building... in the home manufacturing business that was in a devastating hole, and he had lost his daddy. We were all just reeling. And then that happened.

So when you need people the most, you know, when things... I think bad things happen in three. I was just by myself and Chuck was by himself and we were just like on this island. It was bad because we were intertwined at work. Like her husband worked with my husband. So that's a whole nother thing. All kids went to same school. But all my friend group was kind of... I don't think they took her side, but somehow I was left out. Everybody was going and doing. Everybody's going to a Garth Brooks concert and putting it up on Facebook. And I was devastated.

But I tell you what. This is what I would say to people listening, to these darling women listening. God was in it and I think it was not a healthy relationship. When I look back of what we talked about, it was... to me at the time I didn't think it was superficial but it was not what God wanted for me. It was not healthy. We talked all day long every day and we talked about nail polish and I don't even know what. But it was not like I...

Okay, let me go back to say, when God removes somebody out of your life, there's a reason. And then he brings the people in that He wants you to be with that love you for who you are, pray with you in a parking lot, love you, they don't care if you're in show business, they don't care what your husband does for his job. It's not political. It's not jock in for this social whatever.

He put the sweetest women in my life that have loved me ride or die, don't care a thing in the world about what's happening to me. If I said, Tess is getting her wisdom teeth out today, honey, they'd all be lined up here with a bunch of pies, casseroles, balloons, you know. Honest, do you need me to go sit with your mama if you've got to go do that?

I can't tell you. And it hurts and it's awful but He's got somebody better. I mean not better. I don't want to say that because-

**Annie:** But better for you at the right time.

**Leanne:** Better for you at the right time.

**Annie:** That's what was true for me too is that I wasn't my healthiest self in that relationship either and so then I got to become who I really wanted to be. And that brought other friends that were also there working toward their healthiest self. So everybody holds part of it, but that was what was true for me.

**Leanne:** Yes. That's a wonderful way to put it, you smart thing. That's what happened to me. That is what it does. And as hard it is in lonely... Like you say, I've been broken up with man and all that kind of stuff but there was something about somebody that you talk to all day long and you know that, oh, we're going to go and do this and we've got plans and you were always there for each other. It was devastating. Devastating. I've never been as lonely in my life.

And my kids had gotten to a point where they were young adults and my middle child, Maggie, who is so emotionally high IQ and understands things, and she's like, "Mom, we're blocking her on Facebook. This is unhealthy. You're sitting here looking at all your old friends and you can't get past this. We're not doing this." I don't know what about social media you feel like if you unfollow somebody you're stabbing them in the...

**Annie:** That's right. It feels too public. Feels too public.

**Leanne:** And I was like, No. What is she gonna think? And she goes, "No, we're doing this." Annie, it was the best thing that ever happened to me. And I was able to then heal and get on... I probably should have been in therapy, Annie, over that. I probably should.

But along with a tragic death and the economic downturn, being worried about money and all that, that was a hard time in my life. But I feel like I'm better equipped when the next valley comes. I feel like God gave me that experience. I'll cope more effectively. I did not cope effectively during that whole thing.

**Annie:** No. No. And also I think I've learned how to right size my investment in friendship because I'm also like, Let me tell you what I'm not doing again. I'm not going all in on one. I'm not doing that again. I've learned how to right size my investment as well that I think is healthier.

Speaking of blocking, listen, I'll tell you. My best advice to all my friends when people break up is I'm like, Block that guy. Not because of him seeing me but because I will spend my life researching. I'll be the best detective the CSI has ever seen if I can get to his account. So I've blocked all of them. I'm like, "This isn't about y'all. It's about me. I can't. I need to block you because you can't show..."

One time I dated a public guy and so he would be in my "discover feed." I wouldn't even follow him anymore but he's in the Discover feed because he's public. And I was like, "We got a block. I can't. I can't run into you and I'm trying to look at recipes and nail art. Can't run into you like that. I'm still crying. I can't run into you like that."

**Leanne:** You gotta be able to remove yourself. I heard Dr. Phil say this. And I love my Dr. Phil. Dr. Phil had me on his show for a very comical thing years ago when I couldn't get arrested, nobody cared. So I'll always be indebted to little Dr. Phil. But I heard him say on one of those shows. I heard him say, Everybody says time heals all wounds. He goes, "It does but what it really it is is what you do in that time." He said, "That's what heals the wound."

**Annie:** Absolutely.

**Leanne:** And I look back on what I did to try to get over that. We exercised every day together. I quit exercising which was the worst thing I could do. I was heading into perimenopause. My thyroid crashed. I, honest to goodness, thought I had cancer. I was sickest I've ever been in my life. And I think the stress of all that was starting perimenopause. And I should have kept walking, kept exercising, take up pottery, learn to watercolor paint.

**Annie:** Get a hobby.

**Leanne:** Start canning. Something. But honey I took to the bed, I took to the bed. It was about the same time some of my children were launching and going off to college and I was in a whirlwind and I did not cope effectively. I would do different. I would do different.

**Annie:** Well, I mean the good news is I think that size of tornadic grieving... grieving probably only happens once. I don't know that it all aligns like that ever again.

**Leanne:** Oh, wow.

**Annie:** So you've done it. You've come to the other side. I think we're done. I mean, I think we'll grieve again but I don't think we'll tornadic grieve like that ever. Two summers ago I had three tragic things happen in a week and I remember saying the Lord, "Well, at least this won't ever happen again because you can't ever do this again. So won't ever happen in three days again."

Okay, this book, *What in the World?!* I just cannot wait for people to get it this weekly. It is such a... I mean, it's you. It's you in a book. It's such a fun read. What made this the right time to write? Why was this the right time to do a book?

**Leanne:** Oh my darling, well, finally somebody cared. That's one thing.

**Annie:** Well, they told you, we've cared. They just told you.

**Leanne:** Yeah. I always felt like I had it in me. I always wanted to write a book. There was, years ago, an agent who said, "Yeah, just write a chapter for me and let me see your point of view." And I wrote it. And Chuck Morgan who made straight A's in MBA school circled every word in red and said, "This is not grammatically correct." And I said, "They don't care about that, Chuck. They just want to know my point of view."

But I was so intimidated because I was not... I went to a precious little country school where a lot of people got out to farm and wonderful. Nobody knew what dope was. But we couldn't write an English paper either. I was not prepared to go to a big university. So all that was kind of in the back of my mind that, oh, maybe I can't, maybe I shouldn't, all that.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Leanne:** Then I was starting to tour all over, selling out all over the United States, my first tour, The Big Panty Tour, and my story... I just think my story is unique that I was selling jewelry like Tupperware in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains and a comedy career, bloomed out of that. It took 25 years.

I also thought, I do think my story's inspiring in that... this hit for me in my 50s. And I think in society we all kind of think, Oh, nobody cares. You're invisible after 40 and all that kind of stuff. This is the best time of my life. This is the smartest I've ever been, the wisest I've ever been, the best at what I do. You know, if this had happened to me when I was 20, dope, I probably would have ended up on-

**Annie:** Certainly. Me too.

**Leanne:** But I want women to know, and men, it's never too late. You got a dream. Keep going. All that cliché, sappy stuff but it's true. Also, Annie, it was important for people to know I did do stuff in the 80s that I'm ashamed of. But you know what, I've been washed in the blood and I'm okay. I'm okay. And God loves me no matter what. And I don't have to carry that burden.

And I hope that people get that out of that. I know it's not a really faith-based book but I hope that they get in there that that's important to me and that God has been with me.

**Annie:** 100%. Yes. Repeatedly you said that: "God was with me in this." So you did in this book what I think you do with your life, what I've seen you do in comedy where you say I'm going to show up me and you're not going to be able to meet me without knowing that there's some power behind who I am that is not of this world.

You wrote a book that people who don't believe everything we believe will love picking up and then they're going to run into them, which is just what more can you ask for? What more can you ask for that people will run into?

**Leanne:** Thank you, Annie. I hope so, you angel. Thank you for saying that.

**Annie:** I loved it. So next is a cookbook. That's what we can get ready for?

**Leanne:** Maybe a cookbook. Nate was saying, what if you did a cookbook and tell all the nasty things?

**Annie:** Oh my gosh, with your rocket story.

**Leanne:** In the cookbook, I go-

**Annie:** Oh, well, my mom-

**Leanne:** I know. My kids are like, "Mom, okay, you made out with some people?" I'm like, "Okay. But back then that was bad.

**Annie:** Yeah, that's right. It was different.

**Leanne:** But anyway, I scare little Nate to death because I don't think Nate has done nasty things because he married little Laura when he was a baby, you know?

**Annie:** I love him.

**Leanne:** And he's the oldest child and pleaser. I know. He's like my oldest child. He's like my oldest child, Charlie, who's 31 who's got my babies. Sweet, spiritual. We called him our little Billy Graham.

**Annie:** Oh yeah.

**Leanne:** And I put that on him and I shouldn't have. But he would say that he would get in my car in the middle school pickup line, he was going through puberty and he had two big teeth with the space between them and he ain't got his braces yet, [inaudible 00:52:46] and he would go, "Mom, do you want to ask me anything about the Bible? Is there anything you'd like to talk about with the Bible?"

**Annie:** Sweet.

**Leanne:** And I would go, "I don't even know what to ask." He goes, "Okay, don't worry about it. Let's talk about the Jewish people." And would go through... Anyway, that makes me think of Nate because Nate's always had, you know, his family. Nobody could say a cuss word. I don't believe in cussing. But anyway, now I'm talking out of your head.

**Annie:** No, I love it. No, I love it. I'm really happy that people get to read this this week. I think this book is just... it's going to be such a gift for so many people.

**Leanne:** Thank you.

**Annie:** So thank you for this being the right time. We are just so for you and cheering for you. And if there's ever anything that I can do or we can do for you at That Sounds Fun, just know you've got an open invite here. You just come on back anytime you want to.

**Leanne:** Thank you, my darling. And if you want me to come and wash your clothes and iron or something because you got a lot on you, I will.

**Annie:** You're very sweet. Thank you, Leanne.

**Leanne:** Thank you.

[00:53:50] <music>

**Outro:** You guys, I mean, what do you think? Do you love her so much? I know. She was amazing. I mean, when we finished recording, she was like, "Can I just come over

and do your laundry for you? I mean, she was the sweetest. She was the sweetest. I adore her.

And this book... okay, go grab your copy of *What in the World?!* and go follow Leanne on social media, tell her thank you for being on the show. If you enjoyed this episode, I think you're also really gonna love our 2021 Christmas Party episode 5 with Nate Bargatze or Episode 373 with Anjelah Johnson.

If you have any questions from this episode, you can drop them in the Q&A box on your Spotify app, if you're a Spotify listener like me, or send them to us on Instagram @ThatSoundsFunPodcast. We'll try to answer them there for you. You're following That Sounds Fun podcast, right? There is a lot of fun happening over there.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Down's 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. Man, today what sounds fun to me... what does...? I'm getting to take dinner to some friends who need some help while the dad had surgery, the mom's out of town. And it is really fun for me to go see some of my MiniBFFs and take them burger up. So I'm gonna do that today.

Y'all have a great week. We'll see you back here on Thursday with our good buddy Eddie Kaufholz. We're going to recap the year 2021. I mean, maybe. Who knows what'll happen? But Eddie will be here. We'll see y'all Thursday.