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Annie: Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs, and I'm so happy to be here with you today. We literally just hung up with the guest. I am thrilled.

Okay, did you see our announcement last week about our brand new Advent series, *Stay Tuned*? Y'all, we printed actual spiral-bound guidebooks for you this time, and each day has audio and video episodes for you to watch. You can choose your own adventure on that.

This series is for those of us who are waiting on God to answer our prayers about something, and I think that's all of us. We need help figuring out how to level up our excitement and hope during Advent when it is all about anticipation.

We only printed a limited number of the physical guidebooks, so do not wait if you want a copy. Go grab yours at AnnieFDowns.com/Advent.

And before we dive into today's conversation, I gotta tell you about one of our incredible sponsors, [AG1](#). Listen, y'all know I love starting my day with AG1. I can really tell the difference when I kick off the day drinking it. I have more energy, my brain is clearer, and it truly helps me start with getting in my nutritional foundation for the day.

AG1 is a nutrition supplement that delivers daily nutrients and gut health support and is backed by multiple research studies so you can trust what you're drinking. AG1 helps you build a healthy morning routine. In just 60 seconds, you can get your daily dose of vitamins, minerals, pre and probiotics, adaptogens, and more. Just one daily scoop provides whole body benefits like gut, immune, and stress support.

So start with AG1 and notice the difference for yourself. It's a great first step to investing in your health. And that is why they've been a proud partner of mine. I mean, we're the proud ones, so proud to get to partner with them for so long.

Try AG1 and get a free bottle of vitamin D3, K2, and five free AG1 travel packs with your first purchase at drinkag1.com/SoundsFun. That's a \$48 value totally for free if you go to drinkag1.com/SoundsFun. Check it out.

Intro: Today on the show, I get to talk with one of my real-life BFFs, Danielle Walker. She's back. This is her fifth time on That Sounds Fun. So you know what that means, right? Well, you'll hear all about it in the show.

Y'all, her new cookbook is so helpful. It's called *Make It Easy: A Healthy Meal Prep and Menu Planning Guide*. And I am telling you, if you're already building your Christmas wishlist, put this on it. If any of y'all are cookbook readers, this is such a fun read.

Now listen, if you like a meal prep plan, this is the book for you. You know, I don't cook too much, but when I do, Danielle is my girl for all those recipes. Y'all know I love that cheese sauce. And her ranch made me cry because it's dairy-free and it's amazing.

So here's my conversation with my friend, New York Times bestselling cookbook author, Danielle Walker.

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Danielle: Makes me want to go back to dark. I used to have hair about that color.

Annie: I remember.

Danielle: I used to do it. Like you said, every fall I would just go and like fully change it. Now I'm like, "Oh, I kind of want to go back to that."

Annie: Let's keep talking about our hair as we start today's podcast. Thank you for your kind words. I want to tell you a thing that I haven't said publicly because this is what I would tell you in my real life. I want you to respond when I tell you the story. I want to tell you a story and I want you to have thoughts back for me.

Danielle: Okay. I can do that. You know me. I'm not one for no thoughts. I can give you that.

Annie: Yeah. It's one of my favorite things about you. I saw pictures of my hair that I really didn't like. I sat with it for about three days and then I called my hairdresser and I had one day before I was going to New York that I could get it the way I wanted it.

So I made the decision out of insecurity and I made the decision quick. What I am finding is even though I really like it, I really like it, doing that did not fix my insecurity. That's not the solution.

Danielle: No.

Annie: Respond to that. What is that? It's just been really interesting because I've been like, "Hey, guess what? You don't feel better. You don't actually feel better because the insecurity was not dealt with by changing your hair color."

Danielle: It's kind of like a momentary fix, I guess. Right? I don't know. I'm not a therapist, Annie.

Annie: But you're my friend who thinks through stuff with me.

Danielle: I was going to say I think that you look beautiful. I feel like it's very New York. But I know that if you've got something that's bugging you inside, no matter how many times people compliment you, it's not going to fix it.

Annie: Right.

Danielle: So I would say to dig into that and maybe you should dye your hair pink.

Annie: Oh my gosh. I would love it. It is one of those moments that was... so I said to someone yesterday, you know how when people get married, they talk about a wedding ring as an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual truth? Do you know that line that people say by the way?

Danielle: I don't.

Annie: It's what our pastor always says about the ring whenever he does a wedding. And so I joked with a friend of mine yesterday in New York. I said, "This is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual insecurity. So it is something to be dealt with on my inside that did not fix like I thought it would, even though I also really like having dark hair.

Danielle: I was going to say there is something to be said though about our hair. You know I've gone through so many times of losing all my hair from my autoimmune disease. And so then I'll put in like extensions or something just to feel like... It actually does help when it's something like that. But that's a real problem that it's like, it's all gone and then I just like add it back in and I'm like, I've got this confidence again. I feel more beautiful. I don't know what it is, but it's... our hair is a big thing I think with our insecurities and confidence in general.

Annie: That's right. This is not an episode brought to you by Nutrafol, but so many of my girlfriends, particularly — I mean this is a conversation you and I have a lot — particularly women with PCOS and some other autoimmune diseases like that, losing your hair is part of it.

Danielle: You're right.

Annie: And so there are things like Nutrafol that have really changed some of my friends' lives of feeling like... like I heard Jamie Golden the other day talk about what's

Rogaine, the stuff that you put on your hair. She was like, "I just use it because it keeps my hair thick." And she was like, "Why does every woman not buy Rogaine and just make it part of your rhythm?" And I was like, "I might do that." I had never thought about that and I'm not currently losing hair that I noticed except when I'm stressed.

And so I thought it was really... This whole experience has been very good for me, Danielle, because it's had me thinking about the insecurities that I harbor and how they are playing out, but particularly with my hair.

Danielle: Well, I will say as your friend to not feel any shame around that and to work through it. But it's very normal and I think we all go through it.

Annie: I'll tell you, I should do it side by side for you. The picture I sent my hairstylist, this is exactly it to the strand. I mean, she nailed it. She nailed it. And so it isn't anything except an internal Annie problem. But I went like, "Oh, I thought this would fix that." I'm trying to be beautiful for these four reasons that really are really external and have nothing to do with my spirit and myself and my inside. I'm learning a good lesson in the middle of it.

Danielle: Isn't that the way that it goes on a lot of ways? I know today we're recording on infant and pregnancy loss awareness day and something to the similar, but very different. But I thought always in my multiple losses that just getting pregnant again would fix things and really like counseling and therapy and praying and spending some time feeling the feelings is actually what I needed.

Annie: Wow.

Danielle: And then it ended up making things almost like 10 times worse because then I'm pregnant with a child that I still haven't fully grieved and processed the loss of the other. And it brings up all these other things. So let's just say that quick fixes are never great. Never the right option. We should probably sit on them for at least a bit.

Annie: In a world where I wasn't flying to Nashville to New York the next day, I would have taken three more days. Can we talk for just a second about infant loss day?

Danielle: Mm-hmm.

Annie: I told you, I love Aila from a distance, your daughter that I did not meet yet. When we shared about it on socials, one of the women wrote back and said, "I feel like it's my body's fault and that my body did this." What's your encouragement for a mom who feels like the losses are due to her-

Danielle: Her.

Annie: That's such a devastating feeling, I would imagine.

Danielle: Yeah. I think it's a very common feeling and parallel... I run in the autoimmune circle, right? And so a lot of times we feel like our bodies have failed us in that way too. So I think I've had to really learn and train myself that I didn't cause my disease and I also didn't cause Aila's death, so much so that Ryan and I went and got genetic testing to make sure that what she had was not in our genes and just to be able to add almost some sort of evidence that I didn't cause it. But not everybody can do that because sometimes there are things, but you have to still remember that it's not something you did.

I mean, especially with pregnancy loss and with miscarriage, it could be on the male side of the chromosomes, right? There's so many different things that can happen that you just can't. You can't because it'll eat you alive. But I will say, I think it's a very normal feeling.

Annie: From this side of the street, I would never have said to any of my friends who had a miscarriage or lost a baby, like... It has never... when I read that, I thought, You know what's never crossed my mind? That one of my friends caused their miscarriage or the death of their child. That has never crossed my mind about my sister, about you, about any of our friends who publicly... Angie or Hillary, none of our friends who are public about the loss of their baby. I have never thought in my mind. So I'm glad to hear you say that's a common thought only because I think that'll help moms to hear you're not the only one who is wrestling with this.

Danielle: I think some of it too comes from the language, you know? Well, first of all, you are the one carrying the baby and so there's nobody else that your brain can blame but yourself. But I also think some of the language, right, it says... you know, you say, "I lost the baby. I had a miscarriage, I, you know, whatever it is.

I sometimes feel like we can change that language a little bit too because I do think it kind of inherently kind of does put the blame on the mother who's carrying the baby when you say something like that. And it's something that we just all use its terminology. But I feel like a lot of women internalize that, you know, because that is kind of what's told to you.

You know, you go into the doctor's office and you don't have a heartbeat and the doctor looks at you and said, Oh, you lost the baby. So it's like, I lost the baby? Like I did something? So I think it is very common and it's, you know, just when

you're already grieving and going through that to have that shame and guilt stacked on top is very difficult.

And so I do think that the more we talk about it, I think that the more that we take the stigma away from it. I mean, we were talking before, you had mentioned a few of the things that people had sent in to you. I mean, Aila now would be almost 11. And so we've been sharing about the loss of her life for a really long time.

Some of the most impactful stories for me have been from that older generation of women that didn't feel the freedom to speak about their babies. There was a story that was told to me about a woman whose baby actually was alive at birth but had a lot of fetal abnormalities. I mean, she was like in her 60s, 70s. So this is what they used to do. The doctors took the baby-

Annie: Not when she had the baby. You mean she was in her 60s and 70s when she told you this?

Danielle: Oh, sorry. Right. Right. Right. Right.

Annie: When she told me this.

Danielle: So we're talking... you know, this was however many years.

Annie: 30, 40 years ago.

Danielle: 30, 40 years ago. And she said that the doctors at the time thought that it would be best to actually already tell her that the baby had passed away. And so she never even got to hold her child. She gave birth, they took the baby, and then said that it was deceased already. And other stories just about going on to have other kids, but never mentioning the name of the first child that they lost, even though they had a name for him or her. And siblings growing up, just never even knowing about them.

I do feel like there's such a different kind of... it's different now. We do talk about them. But there still is a lot of shame and guilt and stigma around it. And people, especially people who haven't gone through it, feel very uncomfortable. And so then you as the person who's grieving, feels uncomfortable for making them feel uncomfortable. And they don't know how to say it.

You know, you've heard me tell you for years like the most important thing is just being willing to say their name. And so when somebody says, I think of Aila with you from afar, it's just like the tiniest little things to just hear somebody else acknowledge that they were a life, you know?

Annie: Well, I think that's part of you and you and Ryan's leadership has been so good because from when we met, I have always considered Aila as your second child. Like Aila's always been a part of the story. And so y'all leading the rest of us of like, Hey, we're a family of six. Aila is already in heaven, but the rest of us are here. I have never considered you a three-kid mom. I always knew you were a four-kid mom, you know?

I think that you and Ryan have modeled really well for us and for people who walk through this. It is totally appropriate to keep that child in your family. You know that's true for us. I mean, TJ is a very active part of our lives in a lot of ways, two years after he was born and passed. Man, it is a crazy thing when it-

Danielle: And it will continue to go for you. I mean, you've got your little nephew and Kezia who hasn't met her sister, which your nephew did get to meet and hold TJ, she brought home a picture the other day and it was our family all smiling. And she knows, she's seven. So cute little kind of somewhat stick, but like somewhat not figures. And then there's a hill with a cross in it next to us and there's a huge sun.

And Asher kind of went through... So Asher was the one who was alive when Aila was born and died and his understanding of what that meant every year just changed. And so you'll start to see it come out as he grows and as he... You know, you are remembering TJ with him, pictures, and just the way that they process death and grief and heaven. It just is so interesting to watch their brains kind of process it year to year and how it changes.

Annie: One of the things that Rachel Myers told me that was so helpful because they lost an infant as well is when TJ was alive, she said, "Take as many pictures and videos as you can and save some of them." Don't give them all to your sister or your family right now. Take pictures and save them so that kind of for a limited time you don't run out of new content. That was so helpful to me.

So for any of our friends listening who are walking with someone, you can take a hundred pictures and give them 99 of them. There's been a couple of things I've been able to send to Tatum and be like, "Did I ever send you this one?" And she's like, "I have never seen that." Because I also forgot and we're all grieving and you know, at the time it wasn't like, Let me build a folder. I wasn't like rational for an extended amount of time, as you know. I was not rational for most of 2022. So it was just very helpful though for Rachel to say, "Take as many as you can and hold back some for your family."

Danielle: And similarly, like us, I have so many that I've never shared publicly. Those are for us and those are really special and that keeps something that just feels like she's just ours because we do share so much publicly.

To just finish that kind of loop of photography, which you and I have talked so much about and I think I recommended for Tatum, but there's an organization that's called Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep. And it's a nonprofit and they have volunteer photographers that come in to a hospital room or to your home if your child's on hospice care and they gift you with photography.

My initial thought when I think Angie's probably the one who told me about it, with Audrey Caroline, my initial thought was, "That's weird. I don't want a stranger in there. I don't know if I'm going to want photos of this time." I didn't know what the time in the hospital was going to be like, or even how long we'd have her. And they are my most treasured photos.

The photographers that volunteer their time are the most just kind and selfless people. I mean, to enter into somebody's grief like that and to know that you're going into a room where there is going to be death and loss and a grieving mother and father, you know, that's just a huge gift. And they were like flies on the wall. You like barely knew that she was there, but when they gave us that folder of photos... Because when you're in it and especially if it's quicker... you know, you got to have TJ for a little bit. We had a lot only for less than an hour, but I held her for 12 hours. You just don't necessarily think to pull out your phone, you know, you're in it and you're consumed by all of it and grief-

Annie: Especially the mother and the father.

Danielle: So, you know, whether you're hiring or asking somebody like now they lay me down to sleep or you're the aunt or you're the friend to just pull out the camera and grab some of those. It's such a gift because it's all you have left. Your memory fades.

Annie: That's right. Tatum and Jacob did a photo shoot as well and she felt the same. She's like, "I do not want to do this necessarily." We love those. I mean, those pictures are so great of the boys together and of Tatum and TJ and of Jacob and TJ. So it's the same. It doesn't feel like what you want, but days later we were glad. Now, two years later, we're so glad that we have those. Okay. Okay.

Danielle: Great way to start that conversation.

Annie: Great way. Well, we went insecurity about my hair to loss of baby that has deeply affected both of our lives to news alert. Angie Smith is back on the radar. How

about Angie Smith being back out? Did you say she went out for speaking event last weekend?

Danielle: No. Angie Smith, call me.

Annie: I know. Speaking of Angie Smith, our tour partner, when we went on tour in 2018? '17?

Danielle: '19.

Annie: '19. '19. 2019. She's back out. She's back in the game out there. I said, Ang. It was like a Women of Faith or something. I loved it. I thought it was so fun.

Danielle: That's awesome.

Annie: You are also on tour. Are you done? Have you done all your book launching touring?

Danielle: I have some corporate and some speaking events this month. But my tour with my community is done.

Annie: Your tour for *Make It Easy*, New York Times' best seller. Danielle Walker, congratulations.

Danielle: Thank you. Thanks.

Annie: Talk about the call. For everybody listening, number one, the New York times is not just based on the numbers of how many books are sold.

Danielle: No.

Annie: There are other factors. So hitting the list is very fun and exciting and it also is the least predictable thing on God's green earth and literary world. The list comes out on Sunday in the paper, but authors find out... It goes public Wednesdays at the end of business in New York. So most of us here, five, six o'clock Eastern we all see that.

I look every week because I want to know what my friends are on. I always look at the end of the work day on Wednesdays. Tell me about the moment you got the call. Who called you? Who told you *Make It Easy* was on the list?

Danielle: So my literary agent, Kari, and then the marketing and PR heads over at Penguin Random House. And you know, when you're getting a phone call on a Wednesday,

as soon as I saw them call, I was like, "I think I made it." I mean, there's no reason for them to call. They would text me. My agent would text me and be like, "I'm so sorry."

Annie: Oh, my agent called me every time we didn't make it on the list. So every time it's was like-

Danielle: Oh, pretend you hit it.

Annie: Yeah. Yeah.

Danielle: So you usually get the call?

Annie: It's the same call. The one time I hit and the 11 times we didn't, it's the same. Lisa rings. And then I go, Aah. And she's almost every time says no.

Danielle: They don't usually call me when I don't make it. I've made it five times now and two have not. Again, like you said, numbers should have put it on there, but it's just...you just never know.

Annie: Five New York Times bestsellers. That's nuts, Danielle.

Danielle: Thanks. We were all waiting with bated breath because Dolly came out the next week. First of all, when we talk about the New York Times, which we talk about this all the time, we're talking a \$35 cookbook that has to go on a list of 10 when you're competing against like self-help, spiritual books, some of which can be like \$9.99 a copy.

Annie: Your books and my books are in the same category for New York Times: Advice, miscellaneous, how to.

Danielle: Yes, how-to.

Annie: Which is so annoying because if Lysa TerKeurst launches a book, that's going to cost us a cookbook, which we love. We want Lysa to hit the list.

Danielle: Totally love Lysa. But yes, like Atomic Habits or let's talk about *5 Love Languages* that I think had it on the list for like 652 weeks because like every marriage conference in the country is buying them in the thousands.

Annie: That's exactly right.

Danielle: And it's a paperback. And so, yes. So the slots for cookbooks are slim to none. And Dolly was coming out the next week and also Stephen Colbert's cookbook. So we were kind of like, Okay, if it doesn't make it this week, that is it because Dolly will blow all the books out of the water. She landed at number one, of course. And so, yeah. So I got the call from my agent and publicity and marketing team over there. Ryan was upstairs doing an interview. He's currently interviewing for jobs. If you know anybody that's in the tech space, I'll just stick that out there.

Annie: I wish we could figure out. He's brilliant. Your husband is brilliant.

Danielle: He is. He is brilliant.

Annie: He built an app for you. Will you tell us? When I tell you, hand to heaven, I did not know you had this app until we were at the event in New York and you talked about it and I was like, "Hold on. He built an app for all your cookbooks." Please talk about that.

Danielle: We can jump to there. He did build an app. And I keep joking with him that he should come and work for me full time and with me full time. And he's like, "You can't afford me." And I'm like, "I know. We need your salary. I get it. But I would really like that." He built an app called Shop the Book in his spare time during 2020, which we had a lot of.

So we would sit down at night after the kids would go to bed and he would just program like after hours. He's a programmer after dark. It was an answer to my audience is just they needed a database, essentially, a resource. Because as I kept writing more and more cookbooks, a lot of cookbooks have like 90 to 100 recipes. Mine have 150. And so they're big, giant books.

Everybody was starting to say like, "Okay, you've now put out four or three, whatever and I can't remember where the peach cobbler is. Where is the creamy, you know, dairy-free broccoli cheddar soup or whatever?"

So we originally kind of had some things on my blog that you could search, but it just wasn't really searchable, especially with the like thousand recipes that are on my blog. So he was like, well, let's make an app. He called it Shop the Book. It's a companion app. So you can see all the ingredients for all of the recipes from now, all six of my cookbooks.

Annie: It's unbelievable.

Danielle: Not the methods, because those are copyrighted in actual books. You need those. But essentially what it is, is at the top of a button across all six books, you can tap

the photos and add it to your meal plan and then it'll create your grocery list for you.

And it's also a place... you know, some people love to mark up their books. Some people really love to just kind of keep them pretty like for a coffee table, but still cook. And so there's like a note section where if you have favorites, you can heart them and you can write, you know, oh, I added such and such so that it fed an extra person or my kids are allergic to blah, blah, blah and so I took this out. So you can kind of keep your own little notes across all the books in there as well.

Annie: That's so smart.

Danielle: But yeah, he created it. And it's Shop the Book. It's free.

Annie: Great. Okay, so go back. He's upstairs interviewing and she calls your phone.

Danielle: Yes. So I get the news. Actually, my Sous Chef page, my test kitchen assistant was in my kitchen that day. She's not with me every day, but she happened to be there that day. And she tested this book. This was the first one she did with me. So she actually found out first, not my husband. But then because he was-

Annie: The proximity.

Danielle: So we celebrated and then she's like, "You should wait and surprise him tonight with the kids." And I was like, "I can't hold that news in until they get home and after baseball and all the things." I had him come down. Every time a book makes The Times, I take a Sharpie and I write across the top of the cover.

Annie: I learned that from you. I did that because of you.

Danielle: It's really fun to do it. But also, you know, our first print runs like we don't always sell through those for sometimes months to a year, depending on how much they do at the beginning. And so I'm like, "I won't see an actual cover with New York Times for possibly a year, maybe even longer. So I always go with a Sharpie. And I have them all now. I have all five. I have the cookbook that got away and it doesn't have it.

And so I called him over and I put up my phone, you know, and I just like wrote on it. And he was kind of watching over my shoulder. And he said later, he goes, "I kind of heard you celebrating while I was on my interview." So he's like, "I had an idea, but yeah..."

Annie: I learned that. I did that on That Sounds Fun. I wrote it across the top and then I put the date. So I have that one copy of That Sounds Fun. But you're right. I mean, I bet it took a year before they printed one that had New York Times bestseller across it.

Danielle: It just depends how quickly they sell.

Annie: Yeah. We had other books come out that said New York Times bestselling author, Annie F. Downs, before That Sounds Fun said it was a New York Times bestseller. So lol.

[00:26:26] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [Shopify](#). Y'all know we just announced our advent study, *Stay Tuned*, last week. And Shopify is the reason we get to easily put resources like that in your hands and inboxes.

They're also the engine behind other brands we love like Magic Spoon and Thrive Causemetics. Nobody does selling better than Shopify. They're home to the number one checkout on the planet and they have shop pay that boost conversions up to 50% which means way less carts going abandoned and way more sales.

So if you're into growing your business, make sure your commerce platform is ready to sell wherever your customers are: online, in your store, in their feed, and everywhere in between. Businesses that sell more sell on Shopify.

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That link and pretty much every other link you could ever hope for are in the show notes below or we will send them right to you in Friday's AFD Week in Review. We hope it's the best email you get all week. You can also sign up to get that in the show notes below, and you do not want to miss this week's.

Annie: One of the things we love about Single Purpose League is that it has become this community of friends that we get to process with and ask hard questions together and encourage one another. And as advent approaches, the question we often wrestle with is how to wait with anticipation for the birth of Christ when we're already waiting for God to answer our prayers.

This is why we created this year's advent study. *Stay Tuned: An Advent Series For Those Already Waiting*. And as I wrote this study, I was thinking about how so many of us have unanswered prayers and how long we have been waiting. Whether you're married or single, you have unanswered prayers is my guess. And I was specifically thinking about our single friends and our friends and Single Purpose League.

It's time for us to talk about the unique challenge of entering the holiday season without your prayers answered and with your hope on the line. *Stay Tuned* is for anyone who's waiting for God to answer their prayers, but there is specific attention and heart in this study for our friends who are not married today.

So if you are single today, this is your invitation to grab our *Stay Tuned* advent study. It's available in digital and in print this year. And come join Single Purpose League because we're going to go through this study day by day together. It's audio. It's video. It's a guidebook. I think you're really going to love it.

You can find all the information about Single Purpose League at singlepurposeleague.com and all the information about advent at AnnieFDowns.com/Advent.

Eric: I'm Erick Stakelbeck, host of the Stakscast podcast. If you want truth and a bold take on what's happening in our world, then listen to the Stakscast now. From thought-provoking conversations about the current state of America, the impact of global events, and issues facing the body of Christ, this podcast brings you today's biggest topics that affect your life. Make sure to follow the Stakscast on your favorite listening platform and join me every Tuesday as we have candid, thought-provoking conversations on issues that matter to you.

Annie: Okay, now back to our conversation with Danielle.

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Annie: Tell me about *Make It Easy*. And then I have some food questions for you because we have got to talk about this. But what is *Make It Easy* compared to the other cookbooks?

Danielle: Well, first of all, we had so much fun in Red Bank and talking about it. And you had so many good questions that night because that was kind of our launch into the tour and also just talking about the book in general. And the one thing that you said that I've been kind of going back to now when people ask is the puzzle piece of it.

And so *Make It Easy* was an answer to... I've been pulling and surveying my audience and my community for 13 years. And I always ask whether it's like a course we put out or it's a cookbook or they come to one of my tours. I just always ask, you know, what do you need more of and what are the biggest hurdles for you to eat healthy? And the number two reasons that we have heard over and over and over and over again is time and budget.

And then to add to that, when we were coming out of the years that we spent at home, the years not to be named, I kept hearing from people, "I cooked so much during this time. I was cooking for my family. I was buying whole ingredients because, first of all, a lot of our DoorDash options closed for some time." And so people were kind of forced into their kitchen. And then I kept hearing "I felt so much better during that time. I was healthier. I felt like I had more energy. I was sleeping better, even with all the other things that were going on in the world."

And then we kind of got thrust back into real life, at least in California. We were closed for a long time. Then it was like, Okay, everything's just open. We're back to sports. We're like back to school. We're back in the office part-time. And people just kept saying, "I don't have the mental load anymore to cook healthy and to plan the meals and to go to the grocery store but I really still want to maintain how I feel."

So *Make It Easy* was an answer to that of "I will take all the mental load out of it for you. I will plan all the meals for you. I will figure out which meals to puzzle piece together so that we reduce waste so that you have more on your budget." So it was kind of an answer to all those different things and I will give you your full grocery list so that you're not going into the store and buying things that a) you may not use, b) might end up in the back of your crisper drawer on Sunday night, wilted and slimy and also all the impulse buys that we buy when we don't go to the store with a plan.

And so it was kind of an answer to all those different things of like, Here is your guidebook. All you have to do is just go through the list and then actually cook it. But I'm also giving you all the tips for making things ahead, prepping things ahead, how to shave time off of your weekly weeknight meals by getting a few things checked off your list on the weekend. Just kind of all those tools.

Annie: The thing that... You know this. I think you're a magician because there are... So it's 15 weeks of meal prep in here.

Danielle: Yes.

Annie: But there are 125 gluten-free, grain-free, and dairy-free recipes and yet they all taste amazing, Danielle. That is the thing I don't know... It's magical how you're able to take things that we love that are full of gluten and dairy and grain, I mean, of any kind, and you're able to remake them.

So in this book, particularly... hold on, let me tell you the one. First of all, it jumps out at me is one of my favorite things is in all your cookbooks, you take pictures with the kids. So they're all like yearbooks to a little bit of watching your family grow and grow up. And I think it is so sweet.

Danielle: So this one there weren't as many for a couple reasons. Number one and foremost, I have a 14-year-old son who just does not love to be in photos.

Annie: He's too cool.

Danielle: He's too cool. So it's his back.

Annie: Wait, it's always his back? I have to go look.

Danielle: He's only in it twice in this whole book. And I have to tell you a story about that really quick. But number two was that I actually had to cut the amount of recipes in this one down to 125 from 150 because the front matter has so much in it. It was such a giant resource. So we actually didn't have a lot of room for the kids.

Annie: You know, that's one of my favorite things is reading cookbooks.

Danielle: I know. I know. And there is an abundance. Do not skip because it talks about how to best freeze, how to best defrost, what the best system is for if you're going to stock your freezer so that you don't lose things in there. It talks about how to like revive leftovers. I mean, there's just so, so much in there.

And so, yeah, there's a bunch of reasons. My photographer passed away that I've used for many books and for all my blog. And it happened pretty quickly when we were actually already scheduled to shoot the book. So we had a new photographer come in. And so that was the other reason why you don't see the kids as much is just they were so comfortable and familiar with Aubrey, whose, by the way, last cookbook that she got to shoot was Dolly Parton's book. And that came out a week after mine.

Annie: Wow.

Danielle: And that was her final book before she passed away. She was so proud to be able to do it and just loved every second of it. So that was the other reason. So there's not

as many kid and family photos because she was our person. Hopefully, by the next one, you'll see them a little more.

But I had somebody come to my Boston signing, Annie and she goes... her friends were like nudging or, you know, like when somebody doesn't necessarily want to say something, but they come up with their group of friends and they're like, You have to tell her. Apparently, she was my 13-year-old daughter has the biggest crush on your son Asher. And she insisted on being the one to open *Make It Easy* when it came in the mail because she couldn't wait to see him. And then she goes, "He's not in it." And she goes, "But wait, there's his head."

Annie: Oh my gosh. There's his head. That is one back of Asher's head.

Danielle: It is the back of Asher's head in a sweatshirt. And that is it.

Annie: I mean, it's both the back... It's both boys back of their head.

Danielle: It is.

Annie: Not Kez. Kez is in it.

Danielle: She's in it. And that picture got put in in a full page spread in First For Women, the magazine. And we go to find it. And of course my 7-year-old and the only girl is with her brother Eason and goes, "It's my face and it's just the back of your head."

Annie: I mean, it's a real story because it's the back of Easton, Asher, and your husband Ryan's head and it's your face and Kez's face. It's a ladies' picture.

Danielle: Anybody that's done a family photo shoot understands what these are like, but let's just add like 10 times the pressure because it's going out into print into millions of books. It is so stressful. And then it's also nearly impossible to get a photo where all their faces actually are working. We're like, somebody's not accidentally scowling or somebody's eye isn't like half closed or somebody's not blinking. It's a real job. It's a real job to get five people to look good in a photo for... so I just wanted to-

Annie: You're like, "Dudes, turn around, turn around. I will take this down to two."

Danielle: The title of this book is called *Make It Easy*. We are going to take that into all aspects of the book. And so, yeah, I was like, "We're just going to get your backs to your head." They're probably never going to let me live it down when they're like in their 20s. They're going to come back and be like, "Were you embarrassed of us, mom? Like you always put the backs of our heads."

Annie: Why did [inaudible 00:37:11] you guys?

Danielle: It was you.

Annie: Okay. My favorite week is week 15 because it's the one that involves your nacho cheese sauce that I love so deeply.

Danielle: It's a good one. For starters, that nacho cheese sauce is a blessing. We have a little group of friends that gets together and hangs out and talks about work and life and all these things. One of the constant themes is your nacho cheese sauce in our group thread. But what you did in here is you gave us like, okay, make the cheese now. Also make shrimp and spaghetti squash with feta and tomatoes. Also make sheet pan smashed potato nachos. Also make Tex-Mex mac and cheese. I mean, you just keep telling us how to use it. It's brilliant. That's what I love about this one. It's brilliant. It just is so all-encompassing.

Danielle: You know, so my thing... Well, first of all, you will actually only use it twice in there in that chapter. But because-

Annie: The nachos and the mac and cheese?

Danielle: Yes, nachos and the mac and cheese? But we talk about making a giant batch of it and freezing it in those little pucks. Like it's a silicone muffin molds, but we call them queso pucks. And then that way you actually have them for another chapter that uses it for a few different things.

But one of the biggest things for me, when I looked through meal prep books, was just how monotonous the meals got. I just don't want to eat for 15 weeks, four nights a week, like practically the same thing, but that's just like an extra sauce added. I can't do ground meat with roasted vegetables and buffalo sauce one night, ground meat with roasted vegetables and ranch one night, ground meat with roasted vegetables, and like tahini. I just need variety.

But I chose the meals so that they would go really well together. And also that if one took a little longer or maybe had a few extra ingredients that the one, the next night would be significantly shorter with less ingredients. So that kind of as a whole collectively, your week is still really easy.

And that there's slightly different flavors, but that maybe we use up some of the same ingredients so that we don't have as much waste. And so that they're very kind of cohesive.

Annie: It's also, you do a lot of "here's how long you can freeze this." So I was imagining doing one of those things with my friends where we make a bunch of like... everybody brings enough for one batch, especially for one house, one person households of like, I make that. But then it's four servings of that Tex-Mex mac and cheese. And I give three of them to friends and those three all make something else. So we all go home with four different freezer bags.

Danielle: I think it's brilliant. I love that. I've heard about cooking parties even, you know, where everybody gets together and brings the ingredients for one recipe, different recipes. And yeah, you kind of like, like on Thanksgiving where you like put your leftovers in containers and send them out with people. I've heard that.

In Ryan's app, you can actually scale the recipes just by tapping negative or plus. So if you do want to cook for one or you want to cook for two, it'll just do all the math for you, which is also kind of a big component of the planning.

But I love that. And yeah, there's freezer... almost everything has freezer instructions or time because I love finding things in my freezer. And I would imagine for you now too, with being back and forth from Nashville to New York, if you have like a few frozen meals in each freezer so that when you got there, you didn't have to think about grocery shopping or ordering DoorDash and you had something you could just pull out.

Annie: Spending so much money on DoorDash. So instead of having, yes, having food in the freezer. Okay. Let's stay on the *Make It Easy* track. We did have some friends from our AFD Weekend Review email send in some questions for you. So let's take a couple of minutes and answer those if you don't mind. I love all these questions so much. These are so my... Our listeners are so my people.

Danielle: I know. I love it.

Annie: Erin said, "I don't have a gluten intolerance. So is there any benefit to reducing gluten in my diet?"

Danielle: Yes.

Annie: Give it to her, Danielle.

Danielle: There is, Erin. I've just heard anecdotally, you know, and doctors will tell you you don't need to go off of gluten unless you have celiac. I don't even have celiac. I don't have a gluten allergy, but there is inflammation that comes with eating gluten. And some people's bodies are able to handle it a little bit better than others. But let me just say that if you have any sort of ailment, whether it's a chronic disease like I

have, or you just have aches and pains, you don't sleep as well, you feel like you have some brain fog, you hit the like three o'clock, I'm exhausted every single day type of a feeling, you can't go for a run without coming home with like achy joints, you get migraines, you get headaches, there's so much that can be fixed by going gluten-free.

Ryan is like a true kind of testament to that. He started eating paleo and gluten-free with me back, you know, 13, whatever, 14 years ago just because I didn't have the self-control to not pick things off of his plate if he was eating them next to me. And I was in a very dire situation with ulcerative colitis where I had to do it so that I could become healthy and get into remission.

So he was like, I will do it with you so that you're not tempted to eat things. But then if he was at work or something and go out, you know, to lunch, he would still get a bun on his burger or whatnot. He would come home and just be like, "I felt really good yesterday and I don't feel as good today." Or, you know, just like stomach cramps or not sleeping as well. And so he just kind of figured out over time that he just feels better without it. So he's been gluten-free as well for 13 years or whatnot.

Annie: Will you remind me how long it actually takes for your body to feel different if you get rid of gluten? It isn't that day.

Danielle: It's not.

Annie: It's gonna take two weeks or something for your body to kick it all out?

Danielle: I think it's two to four weeks. I think it's two weeks to form a habit. But I think that 30 days is really what your body needs to start to really like kind of go through like a detox period a little bit. And then, you know, by week three I think you really will start feeling the difference.

It's kind of the equivalent of if you had a band aid covering up a sore and you just kept taking the bandaid off and like scratching it. So if you eat gluten every other day, your body just isn't going to have time to heal, specifically your gut and your intestinal tract.

Obviously I'm not a doctor, but I've been doing this for so many years now and I've heard stories from millions of people how helpful it can be. It would be the first thing... You know, gluten and dairy are always the first things I say, but gluten would be the first thing I would suggest if you've got any sort of just pesky ailment or if you're popping Advil all day long and just kind of like banding, band aiding it up. I think that it's the first one that you could really see a huge difference in.

Annie: One of my favorite memories of our friendship is when I sent you a picture of my stomach after I'd eaten... Do you remember this?

Danielle: I think I sent you one back.

Annie: I had eaten pizza or something and it was... my stomach blew up like I had just gotten pregnant very fast and it had grown very fast. I was like, "Danielle, look at this." And you're like, "Yeah, dude, that's it." So that's been my life for the last... I don't know, I've probably been off gluten as a regular part of my life for a decade. I think pretty close to a decade.

Danielle: I know. I always love that you say that it makes you feel like a tranquilized bear cub.

Annie: It makes me feel like a tranquilized bear cub. And I still do it sometimes. So like last night I was in New York at an Italian restaurant with my friends and we ate pasta. I feel that today. So I don't think it's going to... correct me if I'm wrong. When I do that once, but my body isn't used to gluten, I don't have a four-week recovery from that. It's just like, no, just back up again. Because I usually do gluten like once a week at something so that I'm not like never eating pizza.

Danielle: I think it just depends. Everybody feels a little differently. Obviously, if you have celiac, you're having an entire autoimmune response in your body. I don't but I definitely... we call it getting glutened if I accidentally get it. It's like it's a verb. And I will be in bed for the next day and have to just drink bone broth and take digestive enzymes and things just to get myself to feel better. And then by the next day, I'll be okay. But if I were to do that every other day or once a week, then I would likely wind up in the hospital like I have before.

Annie: It's a very unenjoyable life.

Danielle: It's very unenjoyable life. So that's the thing, right? It's like, I try not to villainize foods ever. I really try to focus on how healing all the foods are that I get to eat. Gluten is kind of my enemy. So I'm like that one, I'm okay villainizing for myself. But it's really about the way that you look at it. And I think, you know, when you can realize how healing the foods can be, I think that it can be really empowering too.

But I also have learned what's worth it. Right. Like it was worth it for you to be out with your friends and eating pasta last night, knowing that you might have a day where you just kind of feel, eh. For me, if I'm like in bed for an entire day, that's not worth it to me anymore. A little ice cream might make me kind of feel eh and I

might be in the bathroom a little more the next day. TMI. That might be a little worth it for me if I'm like at Disneyland and I just want a few bites of my kid's ice cream. But like there's certain... so right. It's like, I figured out here, what's worth feeling like crap and what's not at this point.

Annie: I'm very often like, I will eat... My body will be fine if I eat everything. I don't have any... my dairy allergy has kind of gone back away to some extent. But I also know here's how I'm going to feel afterwards. Do you have space for that tomorrow or not? And if I just go like, well, I can't do that because tomorrow I have this, this, this and this and this, so I just can't, you know... so.

That's a really interesting point, Danielle, because one of our other questions from Amanda is, so what is the number one... like in a world where we're all seeing grocery prices go up, when we are seeing budget be a big deciding factor of what foods we can and can't have in our houses, what would be your like highest priority for somebody, your best tip of like, here's the thing worth putting your money into, or here's the thing worth handling differently? What's that tip?

Danielle: You know what I would say? I think I would follow one of the weekly meal plans, honestly, of *Make It Easy*. I think people are really surprised when they buy whole real foods versus the packaged products. The package stuff is really expensive. It's what we go for because it's easy, but that's a huge piece of our grocery bill, plus that waste that we talked about.

So there's a statistic in the beginning of the book that we talked about that night. The average American throws away \$1,400 to \$1,600 of produce a year. And that's just produce, right? So I think when we talk about having a plan and only going in for what you need to cook those meals. And then if you for some reason run out or you've got, you know, company coming over or whatnot, you need to go back to the grocery store for a second time.

But we buy so much on impulse. I mean, there's the amount of food that's not just the produce, that factor, but when we throw away cans that have gone expired because we stock up on things when we don't need them. That's the biggest thing for me that I've been... you know, my mom and I talk about it a lot. It's like, don't buy it unless you need it because a trip to the grocery store is cheaper than you buying excess and then throwing it out. Right?

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Danielle: A lot of times that happens when we go in and we're hungry, we go to the grocery store hungry. We always grab all the things on the end cap that look good, you know, or we go and find the seasonal things that they totally market to us.

I really think coming up with a meal plan, even if you don't use those ones, but coming up with a meal plan and sticking to it when you go to the grocery store can significantly save you money. So if you're on a budget, that's the biggest thing.

And then when I say gluten-free, dairy-free, grain-free is what I do. The baking ingredients are the most expensive part. So if you're on a tighter budget, I think, you know, go for those things every once in a while. But it might be more affordable for you to grab a box of a grain-free or gluten-free cake mix and get to enjoy some cakes or the mud cakes in the book, but not go and stock the whole baking pantry with all those different things because honey and almond flour and those things are pricey.

And then I also over the years, you know, I was in the like early days of the paleo camp that was very kind of indoctrinated of you have to buy grass-fed meat and you have to buy organic chicken and you have to only get organic produce. And over the years, I've just realized, first of all, it is important if your budget allows for it. But if you go get conventional produce and you get conventional meats and chicken, but you're cutting out processed foods and seed oils and sugars, you're still making a giant step in the right direction for your health. And so to not put so many boundaries and barriers around it, but to know that you're still eating a much healthier diet by eating whole real food ingredients. I think that's another big piece that I think so often in the health food community, it's very pushed on you that it has to be the top of the top and that's not accessible for everybody.

[00:49:20] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation one more time to tell you about one of our incredible partners, [DailyLook](#). Y'all, y'all, hand to heaven, I love every piece of clothing that came in my first DailyLook box. My stylist, Esmeralda, nailed it.

DailyLook, which is the number one highest-rated premium personal styling service for women is super easy. I just filled out their style quiz, you know we love a quiz around here, had my own dedicated personal stylist. What's up, Esmeralda? She curated a box of clothing for me.

They asked questions about my colors, which you know I know, my size, my normal styling, and then a real person stylist, not AI, picked out clothes for me. Seriously, everything fit. I blew my mind. I genuinely loved what they sent. And you get the same stylist every time, which is so cool. You can try on up to 12 premium pieces per box and it's all shipped right to you. They also have a ton of sizes from extra small to 3X and 0 to 24.

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Raj: I'm Raj Nair, host of the Can I Trust the Bible? podcast. Now did the events recorded in the Bible actually happen? Is the Bible trustworthy and reliable? Well, join me on this comprehensive Christian apologetics journey as we talk with experts and renowned apologists to provide compelling evidence that will strengthen your Christian faith. Make sure to follow Can I Trust the Bible? on your favorite listening platform and join me every Tuesday as we discover why you can have rock-solid trust in the Bible.

Greer: Hey, I'm Greer. Together with my husband, we have two boys and two dogs and raising a child with additional needs. Our day-to-day experience isn't being talked about in everyday life, and I see a gap in those leading people who are neurodivergent. Whether you're a parent, a friend, a teacher, or a neighbor, we can all journey together to better understand the neurodiverse world.

I created this podcast to have conversations over a cup of tea or coffee, helping to bring awareness about how neurodivergent people experience the world, as well as families who are raising children with different needs. This podcast will share practical help, tips, and the joys, struggles, and differences in being neurodivergent or raising a child who is.

Each week, I will spend 30 minutes talking and interviewing others in a neurodiverse space and giving you the opportunity to learn and grow and feel seen and heard by how we interact with each other and the world. We are so glad you're here. Make sure to hit the follow button so when our first episode drops on October 17th, it will automatically come straight into your podcasting feed.

Annie: And now back to finish up our conversation with Danielle.

[00:52:38] <music>

Annie: The grocery store thing is interesting, Danielle, because in New York and in Edinburgh, both places, when I lived in both those places, people don't buy more groceries than they can carry.

Danielle: Right. Because you have to walk home with it.

Annie: Right. But here in Nashville, you take your car and you fill the back of the car because you're only going to go once this week. I waste so much less food in New York because I only bring home what I can carry and I can only carry six eggs and I can only carry one thing of almond milk. So the opportunity to have 19 things that go bad is-

Danielle: Not an option.

Annie: It's not a part of my life up there.

Danielle: And you have less space, typically.

Annie: Yeah. And I'm walking by four grocery stores to get to my house from the subway. And so all I'm gonna do is pop in. And because things are heavy, I buy LaCroix on my way home from a dinner because I'm just going to carry that one thing up.

Danielle: That one thing. I think that we should all take that into... I mean, not only are you walking to get your groceries, which is huge, but also we're not stocking an entire extra pantry or fridge in your garage. If you've got three kids that are eating, you do have to have a little extra. But I even... and I have too much. Like I have too much down in my freezer. I have too much in my extra pantry that's in my... you know, because I just buy things if they're on sale or I forget and not look to see what I actually have before I go to the grocery store and I'll just grab it just in case. And so really the planning aspect is huge and can save so much money.

Annie: Okay, last question before I ask you what sounds fun. Okay. Bonnie says helpful ideas for high-protein meals that are dairy-free. This is so hard, Danielle. It is so hard for me to get high protein without dairy.

Danielle: I know. Everybody just throws like two cups of cottage cheese into their high protein, you know, things that they put out on the internet and that's really tough. What makes it even harder is if you can't have eggs because eggs are obviously a very high great protein source. I've been really trying to focus on getting more protein. So I've been really looking into the things that can add a lot.

I will say I have a few... actually on my Substack, I just released a high-protein apple cinnamon breakfast porridge. It's not oats because I can't do oats. But some of the biggest kind of bangs for your buck are chia seeds, flax seeds, and hemp seeds if you can't do dairy. So I would say sprinkling those or blending them into smoothies, things like that can actually add a ton.

Annie: Chia seed pudding is so good too.

Danielle: It's so good and it's actually really high in fiber and really high in protein. So those would be like-

Annie: Why did I not know this?

Danielle: ...a few powerhouses that I would go for. Also, you know what's really high in protein too, which I was really surprised? Pumpkin seeds. So like a pepita if you're... Oh cute. How cute. I mean, we're not talking about like jack-o'-lantern carving and roasting the seeds like we used to as kids. There's Go Raw brand is my favorite. They're sprouted and so they are easier on your digestion. But I think it's like nine grams of protein for, I want to say a quarter cup. And so I throw them on top of my salads, I'll blend them into smoothies. But there's some surprising resources for protein that...

And then obviously, of course, getting healthy animal fats, I think is the best way. If you're vegetarian, it's obviously a lot harder. You have to do legumes. Lots of chickpeas and beans and things like that. But yeah, I think that those are some really easy ways.

And then, I mean, if you add a couple soft boiled eggs to your breakfast with that yummy jammy yolk, that's like big one. And then I eat a lot of meat sticks is what we call them, like Chomps and New Primal, like those. I think they're like 20 grams of protein. I just stick them in my purse and that's what I'm eating.

Because a lot of the protein bars and the protein powders and the shakes and things, they have a lot of extra ingredients and a lot of sugar a lot of times. So I try to kind of stick to more of the whole sources and just try to combine a lot so that you get a bunch.

Annie: I do love a protein powder. I am a big fan of a protein powder, but I also keep meat sticks in my purse. So I'm with you on the meat sticks. I love the turkey ones from Chomps.

Danielle: I love a protein powder too. I will say I really love... There's one called Paleovalley that I like because it's bone broth-based, which just gives you a different amino acid profile. So you see people putting collagen in everything because it is high in protein, but it's actually not the right protein structure that your body needs to have like a whole amino acid profile. And so I really like the ones that are made with bone broth because then it has like all of the minerals and all the other things that you need in it too.

Annie: I mean, bone broth is like a secret ingredient, right? We should be crushing stuff, right?

Danielle: We should be crushing bone broth. I love it. Didn't you ask me if we should put that bone broth into our smoothies? The one that I... So when we [inaudible 00:57:25] together, you were like, "So it's something I should be putting?" And I was like, "Well, if you want it to taste like carrots and celery and garlic, then yes."

Annie: It was not my best interview question of my life because all of a sudden I was like, oh yeah, that would make my morning smoothie taste like beef.

Danielle: Like soup.

Annie: So probably not.

Danielle: It would make it taste like soup. But there are bone broth protein powders that take the bone broth aspect but don't have... and they put in vanilla or they put in chocolate and they sweeten out a little bit. So those would be great. But drinking broth, it's a huge powerhouse. I mean, it's so healing for the gut. It gives you so much protein. It's got collagen and gelatin in it. That's like great for the lining, which can cause... I mean, 80% of your immune system is in your gut. So that's another thing when we talk about, is it good to go off of gluten, right? So the healthier your gut is, the healthier you're just going to be as a whole. And then you get the byproducts of better skin, hair, and nails because everything originates in your gut. So taking care of your gut lining, whether you have something diagnosed or not, can just be huge.

I mean, we've had the best cold and flu season we've had in years because I've got the kids on a great probiotic and I make bone broth soups all the time. They won't sip it out of a mug like I will, but they will eat soup. So I use bone broth over chicken stock or chicken broth.

Annie: I trade out all my chicken stocks for bone broth.

Danielle: And it tastes better too.

Annie: Yeah. I think it's richer. There's more meat taste to it.

Danielle: Yes. You have a place in New York, by the way, called Brodo, B-R-O-D-O, best bone broth. And I don't know if they still have it.

Annie: What?

Danielle: Oh my gosh, it's so good.

Annie: Do you know where it is?

Danielle: It's down in Greenwich, I think. So if you happen to be go-

Annie: That's okay.

Danielle: I know.

Annie: I was there... That's where I eat dinner.

Danielle: So they used to have, and I don't know if they still have it. They used to have like a little walk up window where you could just go and just get a little bone broth. But they also package it.

Annie: Okay, I'm writing this down right now.

Danielle: They have a ginger turmeric one that is so delicious. And they do sell their pouches in some stores in the freezer. Like I've actually been able to find it occasionally out here in California, but it's where I go when I go to New York, always. Because if I'm traveling, I know that my immune system is being compromised and also my gut is never great with all the flights and hotel foods and things. So I get bone broth when I'm on the road. So Brodo.

Annie: Let's also give Modern Bagel a shout-out for having-

Danielle: Man, I love that place.

Annie: ... Gluten-free bagels.

Danielle: I love that place. I watched their Instagram and I just am like, Oh, I wish we had that here. I've shipped it because they have one in LA. I shipped it to my house before. They have like cinnamon rolls and those French toast sticks. Oh my gosh. I mean, if you're a gluten-free person, I will say, Annie, I got that bagel. It became my ritual to get a modern bread bagel with cream cheese after Today's Show segments. Like right before I got on a flight, two flights, I was miserable the entire flight home. And that's a long flight. Six hours. It's the cream cheese for me. The gluten free bagels, no problem. But the cream cheese, not happening. And I was so unhappy. My stomach the whole way home was just like, Grrr. And the poor person next to me, I'm like, "Excuse me, I need to get up again. I need to go back."

Annie: Like, "I'll just be back. I'll be back." But yeah, I walk by it all the time. It's like my favorite. They aren't open on Sunday. They have an off day that is inconvenient.

They have an off day that's inconvenient. I think it must be Sundays because I walk that way to go to church. But I'm going to go after church.

Danielle: Or a donut. They make donuts. Like yeasted donuts. I mean, it is-

Annie: I think that's what makes it inconvenient.

Danielle: I love that place. I wish they would come to San Francisco.

Annie: I know. I'm going to get bone broth. Is there anything we didn't say that you want to make sure we say?

Danielle: Nope, I don't think so. I don't know.

Annie: Thank you for your time. You're very generous to us today. The last question we always ask, Danielle Louise Walker.

Danielle: Louise. Lynn.

Annie: It just felt right. I knew it wasn't right. I just wanted to give you-

Danielle: It is an L.

Annie: I was close.

Danielle: It's an L. It's close.

Annie: Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, and you have now been on the show... Oh my gosh, Danielle Walker-

Danielle: I was going to ask you this.

Annie: You are in the Hall of Fun as of today. This is your fifth show. You are in the Hall of Fun. I wonder if your name is already up. Hold on. I'm going to go look. Hold on.

Danielle: I feel really proud of that. Thanks for inviting me back.

Annie: Danielle, it is. Hold on. Hold on. Real-time, everybody. Real time. Oh, gosh, my headphones are going nuts. I'm losing control. Danielle, you're the newest member of the Hall of Fun.

Danielle: I'm so proud to be there.

Annie: Danielle Walker.

Danielle: I love it.

Annie: I'm so thrilled.

Danielle: One of those was like a mini Christmas show. So I feel like I kind of like, you know, had a little loophole there, but I'll take it.

Annie: No. It still counts.

Danielle: It still counts.

Annie: Episode 36. Early bird. May 2017, 2018 Christmas Party, Episode 332, September of 21, and then our live show, July of 22. And today, Danielle!

Danielle: Yay! Thanks, Annie. Thank you for having me back.

Annie: Thank you for being on our show five times. Oh, my gosh. We're the lucky ones.

Danielle: I'm sure it gets old hearing the same person over and over again. So thanks.

Annie: No, that is not true. We don't have people back that annoy the audience. Nobody in the Hall of Fun is somebody that people don't want to hear. Danielle, thanks. That means you've given a lot of time to our friends in person and online. So thank you. That's really, really kind.

Danielle: Of course. Thank you for having me back.

Annie: Hall of Fun! I'm so glad I didn't read that when I should have. Okay. So this is your fifth time answering. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you today, Danielle.

Danielle: You know, we just got back from Disneyland, so I feel like I've had a lot of fun in the last few days.

Annie: If people have not Disneylanded, that is worth. If you're a Disney World person, it is worth going to Disneyland one time because it's got such an OG feel.

Danielle: Such an OG. Do you know that we haven't actually taken the family to Disney World because it kind of stresses me out? Like, I grew up going to Disneyland. My parents would throw us in the car at midnight because we couldn't afford to do

hotels and we would drive down. My dad would sleep on the side of the road. We'd go to the parks for the whole day and then we'd load back up into our VW van and drive back up to the Bay Area. So like, those are my memories. We go all the time. Ryan and I actually went for Aila's birthday by ourselves, and it's my fun place and it's my special place.

So right now, what sounds fun is for the weather to cool from 105 to actual fall.

Annie: Is it 105 for you right now?

Danielle: Not today, but it has been. It's cooled down to like 80s right now, but it's 50 in October.

Annie: It is the middle of October. It's been crazy.

Danielle: I am ready. I am wearing a sweater, but my air conditioning's on. So what sounds fun to me is like actually enjoying fall. I want to make some hot apple cider. I want to watch a fall movie. I want to cozy up in a blanket and I want to enjoy the season. It's just not here yet. So that's what my fun... just like low-key at this point right now.

Annie: Let me ask you a follow-up Disneyland question.

Danielle: Any Disneyland questions I will answer.

Annie: Anybody going for the first time, what's the don't miss experience at Disneyland?

Danielle: Disneyland? Oh boy. Okay. Well, that's a hard one. I mean the classics, right? You've got to do *Haunted Mansion* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*, I would say. Our favorite is probably *Big Thunder Mountain Railroad*. Oh gosh, there's too many. The *Star Wars* land is incredible.

Annie: It's incredible.

Danielle: My boys love *Star Wars*. I don't even really care for it, but it is like you're in a whole other world. And then this is one that's over in California Adventure, which is the park directly across. So you should get a park hopper. That's the one thing you shouldn't miss is get a park hopper.

There is something called Disney's Animation Academy. It is my kids and me and Ryan's favorite thing. We did it five times. They teach you... I'll send you a picture. They teach you how to draw all of the classic Disney characters and you sit in an auditorium while there is an actual animator on the stage showing you. And I am

not an artist. I actually am like the worst. My kids ask me to draw something and it's a stick figure. But I've drawn all these fun characters now because they teach you how to do it. It's like a great time to, if you're just... if it's hot or you're tired from walking like 17 miles that you walk to just go sit and just like have a little moment to... it's 20 minutes and they teach you how to draw a fun character. So I'd say don't miss that.

Annie: Okay. Good answer.

Danielle: Can I add one more?

Annie: Yes.

Danielle: Genie Plus. It's worth it. It's an extra expense and I hate that they've started to tack it on. You used to be able to run and scan your ticket and get these fast passes. Now you pay for it. But let me tell you, especially if you're going with kids to have like quicker entrance into the rides and to kind of plan your day. It makes it so much more enjoyable.

Annie: Pack a sandwich and pay for Genie Plus.

Danielle: Don't buy the \$5 bottles of water because that's-

Annie: That's right. You'll just have so... Bring your water bottle. That's the thing I love about Disney too, is they're very chill about bringing food and bringing just a permanent water bottle. Because I'm like, there was water fountains everywhere. I just got filled up with a water bottle.

Danielle: There's lockers for like \$8. You can stash your lunch. I agree. I mean I have a whole series on eating gluten-free at Disneyland on YouTube, so I do enjoy eating there.

Annie: We will link to that.

Danielle: I do enjoy it. It's very old. Ryan filmed it and it's like I have darker hair. I mean it's like from like seven, eight years ago, but I don't care. It's still relevant. But I love eating there. But yes, packing some snacks and some food can make a giant difference. Big difference. There's our Disneyland.

Annie: Thank you.

Danielle: We could have a whole episode.

Annie: Listen, we should start a Disney pod. I love Disney podcast. If you need me to like... if my brain needs a rest, I just go find a Disney podcast and listen to people talking about the part for 30 minutes and then I'm back at it.

Danielle: Some of my favorite Instagram accounts to follow. And if you haven't watched the docuseries called Behind the Attraction on Disney Plus... when we go through Disneyland withdrawals as a family, we've just watched the Behind the Attraction because we want to learn about the rides. It's really fun.

Annie: Oh, I love it. Thank you for doing this. I love you so much. I can't wait for people who haven't gotten *Make It Easy* yet to grab it.

Danielle: Thank you.

Annie: Love you.

Danielle: Love you too.

[01:07:12] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, isn't she the best? And now officially in the Hall of Fun. Oh, I love Danielle. I'm so grateful, like I said in the show, for how she and Ryan have been so generous with their own stories and now with her recipes, with the app. I mean, she's just the best.

Go get your copy of *Make It Easy*. I'm telling you for cookbook readers, this is the Christmas gift. If you are looking for a way to rest sitting outside in the fall, oh, just read, *Make It Easy* and then cook all that food. It's so good. Go follow Danielle on social media. Tell her, thank you so much for being on the show.

If you enjoyed this, we have linked to all of our previous episodes in the show notes. And I also think you will love our Episode 495 with Aarti Sequeira. Oh, I love Aarti so much.

If you have any questions from this episode, 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.

If you need anything else for me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. Anywhere you may need me, that is where you can find me.

I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home, do something that sounds fun to you and I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me, y'all are not going to be surprised. I got to get to Modern Bread & Bagel on the Upper West Side, New York. That is on my to-do list.

Y'all have a great week. We'll see you back here on Thursday with pastor and author, my new friend who I am a fan of, Ryan Wekenman. We'll see y'all Thursday.

Eric: I'm Erick Stakelbeck, host of the Stakscast podcast. If you want truth and a bold take on what's happening in our world, then listen to the Stakscast now. From thought-provoking conversations about the current state of America, the impact of global events and issues facing the body of Christ, this podcast brings you today's biggest topics that affect your life. Make sure to follow the Stakscast on your favorite listening platform and join me every Tuesday as we have candid, thought-provoking conversations on issues that matter to you.

Raj: I'm Raj Nair, host of the Can I Trust the Bible? podcast. Now did the events recorded in the Bible actually happen? Is the Bible trustworthy and reliable? Well, join me on this comprehensive Christian apologetics journey as we talk with experts and renowned apologists to provide compelling evidence that will strengthen your Christian faith. Make sure to follow Can I Trust the Bible? on your favorite listening platform and join me every Tuesday as we discover why you can have rock-solid trust in the Bible.