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**Annie:** Hi friends! Sponsor: The post-holiday sugar crash is real in my life. And let's be honest. Finding snacks that have clean ingredients can be tough. But that's why I'm so grateful for [Thrive Market](https://www.thrivemarket.com). They make it simple to find healthier swaps. Thrive Market takes the guesswork out because all of their products are 100% non-GMO and free from over a thousand harmful ingredients. Ready for a junk-free start to 2025? Head to [ThriveMarket.com/ThatSoundsFun](https://www.thrivemarket.com/ThatSoundsFun). And my friends get 30% off your first order plus a free \$60 gift. That's [ThriveMarket.com/ThatSoundsFun](https://www.thrivemarket.com/ThatSoundsFun).

**Annie:** In October of 2023, when I started splitting my time between Nashville and New York city, I started wanting to journal some of my experiences in New York city and a public essay kind of way. And I loved it. I thought it was so fun to do in real-time. It's probably as close to a reality show as y'all are ever going to get for me, but I guess never say never, you know?

In some ways it has felt like blogging again, ye olden days of 2005, when there was a spot to share a real-time, real-life story processing in the moment. Because as I continued to share those AFD and NYC episodes, I'll be at randomly in 2024, I really enjoyed tapping back into that old skill set again, that chance to share with you something that doesn't quite fit on Instagram, but I don't want to save for a book that you read in two years.

I'm Annie F. Downs, and I'm the host of this podcast. Every Monday, we're bringing you an incredible conversation with a friend of mine, and we are focusing those conversations around the seasons, winter, spring, summer, and fall.

But once a month or so, I want to tell you a totally different story. So this year, every month, I'm going to be sharing one of these episodes, one of these stories, something that I'm thinking about or wondering about experiencing myself. Hence the reason we're going to call these Always Annie. Because no matter the city I'm in or the situation I find myself in, I am in fact, for better or for worse, always Annie.

And just like with every other episode this year, we are going to answer a particular question. Today's question that I hope you will open your TSF Seasons Guidebook to page 14 and answer for yourself is, how do I find cozy moments in this winter? My nephew uses the word cozy a lot. It's adorable. He just loves being cozy. I get it. Me too.

The temperature has dipped insanely low for many of us in the U.S., signaling what we are experiencing, the deep days of winter. I know that isn't true globally. It's

why we try to think not just about the weather outside, but the weather inside of our lives too.

But I sat on my couch last night trying for as cozy a feel as possible under a massive furry weighted blanket, fleece on, beanie on, football on the TV, looking for cozy. I live in two cities. I feel cozy in Nashville. I feel electric in New York City. It's complicated for me.

Today I want to talk about how much I love Nashville. It is a more complicated sentence than I'm letting on. Things in 2025 would be so much simpler for me if I wouldn't have gotten myself in this situation of being in love with two cities for two totally different reasons. Same but different. It's why I'm not great at dating more than one dude at a time. It always leans more confusing than exciting for me.

While we often tell our single Purpose League friends to date more chill, I have absolutely not done that when it comes to Nashville and New York City. I absolutely lack all chill and have found myself in a committed relationship with Nashville and a committed relationship with New York City. And I am more surprised than any of you.

At times I wonder if it looks like publicly that I'm just tolerating Nashville while I'm in love with New York. It is true. I talk about New York City a lot more. I have a whole Instagram account about it, AFD and NYC if you're looking for recommendations and I promise to update it soon. I wax poetic about the city on my socials a lot. I keep finding reasons to be up there. But it's not like that though.

I'm not just tolerating my life in Nashville. I really love Nashville. There's a sports bar here in Nashville called M.L.Rose and I started thinking recently about all the things that have happened in that one little spot on 8th Avenue over the last 17 years.

Jason's birthday party that then turned into Matt's birthday party at midnight because it was officially then Matt's birthday. Showing up with my friend Skip on a random Tuesday night in sweatpants. Going on a first date out on the patio. The way we used to play the video games in the back room or how we all showed up there to watch the Nashville Predators in the playoffs or when we celebrated one of Drew Holcomb's album releases there. M.L.Rose was like our cheers for a while if you get that reference to the 80s sitcom.

After dinner a lot of nights we'd all just swing by M.L. Rose and see who was there and who wanted to hang out and chat. And almost always without fail a friend was already there whether we had planned it or not.

In the last few years our book club has actually started meeting there every month. It's just easier than someone hosting in their home. So we meet up on a Sunday afternoon, this Sunday actually, eat sweet potato fries with thick ranch and split salads, grab sodas or beers, and talk about the book we just finished.

A few months ago I stayed after book club with a friend, her husband and kids joining us for dinner. Midway through one of the kids lost a tooth right there and M.L.Rose. Isn't that the best? I mean I've been making memories in that particular sports bar for 17 years.

Then there's Radnor Lake where there's a memory at every turn on the path. City House Restaurant where I've celebrated with friends and had my own birthday party one year, met new team members, gone on dates, gathered out of town friends together. It is the restaurant I recommend first always when someone asks where they should eat in Nashville. And yes, get the belly ham pizza and add an egg.

Frothy Monkey Coffeehouse where I wrote a metric ton of words that has ended up in books over the years. Cross Point Church where I have served and laughed and been a tiny part of what God is doing in our city. I could keep going. I've been eating, drinking, laughing, hanging out, dating, discipling, consoling, sobbing, and just living all over this town since August 3rd 2008.

My history here really matters to me, and so does my present. I really love my little condo. It is just right sized for me. I cleaned up all the Christmas decorations a few weeks ago and now in the mornings when I turn on those first lights of the day in the living room, I just stand there in the kitchen as my tea steeps and look into the living room and sometimes literally say out loud, man I love this little house. It is so pretty in the mornings. And it is. It is prettiest in the morning, I think.

The other Sunday evening I tidied the whole place and lit a candle and you know I don't even like candles. But because I was in a cute Sunday night state of mind, because I was staying in, I felt okay about it. I also set an alarm on my phone to remember to blow it out.

I put a football game on TV but I muted it. I had music quiet in the background as I got ready for the week by looking over my calendar and working through some emails. It was a cute Sunday night.

I've been in Nashville for about six weeks straight without a trip for work or a stint in New York City. And for me that's a long time. Well I did go to Montana for three days so six weeks minus three days. That's a lot of Sabbath Saturdays and a lot of cute Sunday nights. And I have loved it. I love Nashville.

The vision I'm working hard to catch is where Nashville is going for me. Better said, what is God doing here that I can be a part of? What you often hear these days are old biddies like me complaining about the traffic now or how our favorite coffee shop closed because the landlord couldn't afford the rent anymore.

So many people who have been here for a while have lots of thoughts about the best and worst parts of the growth of our city over the last decade or so.

And also when you've lived somewhere this long there are places that hold heartache memories and they have as much power as the ones that hold the sweet ones. There are restaurants I don't go to anymore because the memories are painful. There's a path between two rooms at church that I just don't take because of the wash of sadness that happens. All that is true too.

But there is also this vision for where this city is going and what God is doing here and the reason He keeps bringing new people to our town. I sit with friends who have just moved here and they feel inspired by Nashville, called by God to be here. Or I sit with colleagues, particularly in the movie industry, who feel like Nashville is on the cusp of becoming a powerhouse in the film and TV industries. And I love that. I really love that.

But in a season when I'm in love with two cities, I wonder if it's making me slower to see a future with either. Should I call a dating coach about this? Because I want to sit with my friends who are moving Nashville into its next iteration and I want to think, yes, I am part of that, but instead, I feel a little bit like I'm at the zoo and we're all breathing the same air and can reach out and touch each other, but there's a fence too. They are in and I am out for some reason. It feels hard sometimes because I love Nashville.

As TikTok was shut down for a minute a few days ago, people started comparing TikTok and Instagram reels. And because I don't do TikTok, I didn't realize how different they were. But I heard one creator say, Okay, so we wear makeup over here on reels. We can't just be bare-faced. And I feel that a bit today.

Without a cozy bow on the end of this, I feel a little like I've made a TikTok without any makeup on. And I'm not even sure this will help you, which is absolutely not me asking you to tell me it helped you. I am not fishing for anything. I am telling you what I'm feeling right now.

There's a lot going on for me in Nashville and New York City that I don't know how to talk about. Some is too soon, some is too personal, and some is too confusing. And I think this part being in love with two cities may fit in that last category. But my overarching theme I wanted to say today is I love Nashville.

So if you have any thoughts to share, there's a great place for that on Instagram @ThatSoundsFunPodcast. I hope you have got your TSF seasons guidebook. If you don't, you can get that at [AnnieFDowns.com/Seasons](http://AnnieFDowns.com/Seasons).

If you want to, when you fill out page 14, tell us, answer the question yourself. Tell us what do you do to feel cozy in winter. We'd love to see if you want to share.

In your guidebook, there's a lot of things to do. There's a fun little word find, and there are some questions, some journaling spots, some places to reflect on the winter. We will give you spring, summer, and fall pages as those seasons get here. You are not too far behind in the guidebook to not sit down and catch up with us. Do not even worry about that. Just listen to the other episodes from January whenever you get a chance.

Just know there is a question we're going to answer with every episode, and there is a page in the guidebook for you to take notes.

Hope you have a great weekend. We'll see you back here Monday where we deep dive a really great question: where is God in the winter, with a first-time guest that I have been dying to have on, and y'all recommend him all the time, one of my favorite pastors and thinkers, Tyler Staton from Bridgetown Church. We'll see y'all on Monday.

**Sponsor:** Listen, I know y'all love learning about tools that help us spend more time with God, and I want you to know about the [Glorify app](#). If you haven't downloaded it yet, I think you're really going to love it.

It's set up like this. You start your morning by reading the Bible passage of the day, then dive into Glorify's daily devotional—today was on Genesis 28 about our dude Jacob and being awake to God's presence. So good. After the devo, then you can wrap up with an immersive experience called Daily Walk with God. It's like a guided meditation and prayer. It's really helpful, really cool.

Plus, Glorify also has sleep meditations you can use at night to help you wind down and put your mind at heart at ease. There really are so many options to choose from. Right now Glorify is offering my friends a free 14-day free trial when you visit [Glorify-app.com/ThatSoundsFun](http://Glorify-app.com/ThatSoundsFun). Go right now to download the Glorify app. Again, that's [Glorify-app.com/ThatSoundsFun](http://Glorify-app.com/ThatSoundsFun). And you'll get to download the Glorify app for free. [Glorify-app.com/ThatSoundsFun](http://Glorify-app.com/ThatSoundsFun).