

## **Girls Night #239: How to Stay Informed and Make a Difference (Without Getting Crushed by all the Bad News) — with Danielle Coke Balfour**

0:00:04 - Stephanie

Welcome to Girls Night, the go-to podcast for women in their everything era, that wildly confusing decade-ish where we have to make many of the most significant decisions of our lives all at the same time Career, marriage, motherhood and more. Thankfully, we don't have to do it alone. I'm your host, Stephanie May Wilson, and each week on the show, I interview some of the world's wisest women on the topics that keep us up at night. You'll walk away from each episode with both clarity and confidence, knowing what your next step is and also how to take it. After all, the best girls nights aren't just about eating pizza and sweatpants with your friends. They're about problem-solving and leaning into the collective wisdom of women, and that's what the show is about. I'm so looking forward to today's episode, because this is a topic I think all of us need right now. Today, we're talking about how to stay hopeful when there's so much bad news in the world, how we can stay informed without being totally crushed by the bad news in the process. We're also talking about how we can help make positive change in our world and in our communities. To help us with this, I've invited my dear friend, Danielle Coke Balfour back on the show.

Dani is a graphic designer turned artist, advocate, speaker and entrepreneur. She's the founder of Oh Happy Dani, an illustration-based educational platform that uses artwork and resources to make complex ideas more accessible and help others seek justice while staying hopeful. She recently wrote an incredible book called A Heart on Fire 100 Meditations on Loving your Neighbor as well. This is something we all need, especially with everything that's happening in our world right now. Here are just a few of the things she's going to teach us in this episode. She'll teach us how to process all the bad news when it feels like the world around us is falling apart. We'll talk about how to figure out what we actually can and should do, like what's within our sphere of influence. We'll talk about practical things we can do with our influence, our time and our money. We'll talk about how to stay informed without damaging our mental and emotional health, and more Friends. If you are feeling discouraged by all the bad news and tragic events happening in our world, you are so not alone, but amazing women like Dani are teaching us how we can stay hopeful and take action, and that's why I'm so excited for you to hear this episode. Alright, friends, I am like to say I'm excited is just an understatement, because I love our guests so much.

I'm sitting here with my friend, Danielle Coke Balfour, and I am just so honored that you'd come back on Girls Night. Hey, Dani, hey, I'm so glad to be back on Girls Night. Thank you for having me. You are one of my favorite voices. I just have learned so much from you over the years. You've been on the show before and I have reshared that episode like a thousand times, which is why I was like we need to have her back. We just we need to have you back and like come on

as often. We're just gonna, we're just gonna keep bringing you back as often as you'll come on the show. So for women who haven't gotten to meet you yet you guys, you're welcome, you're gonna love her. Can you tell us who you are, what you do and a fun fact about yourself?

0:03:15 - Danielle

Yes, so my name's Dani Danielle Coke Balfour whichever one you want to call me and I am an illustrator and an advocate, and I like to say that I use art to help people seek justice and stay hopeful. So that has looked like a lot of different things. That has looked like art on Instagram. It also looks like art in my online shop. And then I speak and I write and I have a new book out. It's called *A Heart on Fire: 100 Meditations on Loving Your Neighbors Well*, which I'm super excited about, and it's just filled with hope and encouragement for difficult seasons related to justice and how easy it can be to lose hope and encouraging you to not do that. So that's kind of what that book is about. And my fun fact, right? Yes, my fun fact, okay. So I don't know if I've used this one already, so if I did, you could just be like, eh, like, on Family Feud, okay, wrong answer, but I really like giant inanimate objects. Have I used this one before? No, and I have a lot of questions.

0:04:23 - Stephanie

What does that mean?

0:04:24 - Danielle

So, like. So I really like when art imitates life, naturally. So I at Disney World I'm just, I just feel so at home. Like there's the giant Pixar ball and then there's the slinky ride that looks like slinky from Toy Story, you know, like that's my thing. But then also it doesn't have to be giant, it can be small, like we have a little Aladdin lamp and it's an actual like lamp. We have it here. I just love Okay. So do you remember? Did you ever see Ant-Man? Are you a Marvel girlie? Uh, huh.

Yeah, okay, so my husband is a Marvel guy and so in that movie I think I hope I got the character right. But he has this book and it's like called Look Out for the Little Guy and he like wrote a book and at the end of the movie he's signing copies of this book. Anyway, I saw that book in Barnes Noble Yesterday. Like they literally created that book from the movie Look Out for the Little Guy and I opened it and it's a full book, like they wrote a book, and I was like, yes, art imitates, life imitates art. So life imitates art actually in this, in this instance. But those are my favorite types of things. It's very niche specific.

0:05:34 - Stephanie

That is so like, does it does it include? So my, my in-laws, live in Indianapolis usually, and so we spend a lot of time on the road between Nashville and Indianapolis and there's all kinds of things on the side of the road where it's like largest, like. I'm pretty sure we drove past a sign that said like world's largest Swiss army knife Wow, and we had a lot of questions about that, like is it? Does it have to still fit in your pocket? Like, what constitutes a Swiss army knife? And how big can we go? Is it like you need a really big pocket? Where's the limit? Anyway, so are you like the kind of person who would stop for things like that?

0:06:12 - Danielle

It would have to be really cool to get me to like actually stop, okay, but I may, I may stop.

0:06:19 - Stephanie

That is. I love the fun fact, fun fact question Because I'm like you would never. You find out things about people you never know and I love it so much yeah, how would you ever know that about me?

You would love it so much, you wouldn't. You wouldn't I love it so much. Okay, Danny, can you tell us more about? I want to go back. We did this in the last episode, but I want to hear it again and I want to hear just kind of how the book has fit into this. Tell us how you became an artist slash activist, Like how did, how did this thing come about? And then like where did the book fit into it?

0:06:55 - Danielle

Yes, that's a great question. So, for those who may not know, I have not. I've always been pretty artistic, but art has not always been my career. This is actually pretty new. I started doing this full time in 2019.

And a little bit before that, I had graduated from college in 2017 and I was going to be an event planner. So I studied hospitality and got my business degree and I was like, yes, I'm going to get into event planning and I'm going to look for jobs that were marketing or graphic design related, because I am soft taught marketing and graphic design, more so the graphic design part, and so I wanted a job that incorporated both, and so I found a job through a marketing position at an event planning company and I was like, oh, this is perfect, stars are aligning. And so I got that job and I was the only black woman working there. It was a small business, and that's not the only occasion where I've been the only in the room. There's been several occasions of that. But it was pretty felt at this job because there were things going on there are insensitive remarks, flat out racist interactions with people that I felt were a bit too common and so I talked to my boss and I basically said, hey, I would love maybe if we could bring in a speaker, maybe somebody like Latasha Morrison who works with Be the Bridge or some kind of programming, dei programming, diversity, equity, inclusion for those who don't know, and maybe we could get a little bit more sensitive about this topic. And I'll never forget he told me that's just not, I'm not interested in that. Why would I spend company money or time doing something I'm not passionate about? It's just not something I want to do. And so I was like, wow, that's a wild thing to tell somebody. And I decided that this was no longer a place that was going to see me in my fullness, and so I couldn't necessarily feel super safe there. And so I decided to save up a few paychecks and get some graphic design clients on the side and quit. And so I quit that job and I started doing design and marketing for, like, nonprofits and mission-based organizations, and I said that I wanted to help those folks who were so busy Doing the work on the ground that they weren't super focused on like their Instagram beats. And I was like this is be the way I give back, because I'm super passionate about things like justice, and so 2019 is when I quit my job and I started my small business called so happy social, and it was really good time. I got to work

with dream organizations, like I got to work with be the bridge several times, which is so funny because I had just mentioned them earlier.

But yes, fast-forwarding to early 2020. I had gotten an iPad Christmas of 2019, and so I started learning how to draw digitally. But I had always been a creative, artistic type of person and I decided, hey, what if I, for Martin Luther King jr Day coming up, what if I create a piece of art that kind of speaks to his legacy? And I posted it and Maybe it'd be cool. So I did that. I posted this quote that talked about how he was a radical disruptor, not just a passive peacekeeper. He was a peacemaker, basically, and so I did an art piece related to that and I posted it and people were sharing it people that I didn't know, and I had like 700 followers at the time. I was like, this is okay, you guys like my art. It was very basic, so I was a little surprised.

Anyway, then Black history month happened and I was like, well, I'm gonna keep making more art and more people start to find my page. And then summer of 2020 happened, which we will never forget. And then it was George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, center stage, in our conversations, and I kept making art about that. And then, yeah, my platform grew to 300,000 plus followers that summer, which is wild. It happened in the span of one week. I think I remember telling you that before. I don't know. Maybe I didn't, you might have, but that is shocking, still, like what.

0:11:05 - Stephanie

Even I feel like you're like you'd post with like some freedom. When you're like 700, like I mean, oh yeah, we're all really careful about what we post, but then you're like oh yeah what I say next yikes, yeah, exactly.

0:11:19 - Danielle

So that's definitely that was a lot of that going on, but yes, so I think the book and the idea of the book came along when I started noticing this pattern, at least, that I was feeling within myself of huge issues happening locally, globally whether it's injustice or or tragedy, or hate crimes or war. There was just always huge, huge things going on that I found to be so overwhelming, and it was very easy to choose to look away, to choose to distract myself or focus on other things and just say maybe I don't have to pay such close attention. And I realized that in doing that, people were finding themselves to become cold in a way, to the world and its troubles and as a form of, you know, protecting the heart. We thought we were protecting ourselves, but we were actually becoming numb and cold, which led to apathy in some ways. And so I wrote this poem for myself and Really to encourage other people.

But it was basically saying you know, don't let your heart grow cold. The world needs its warmth. With every beat life flows out, all that you do will erupt from that deep. Well, and then I said, when tragedy seeks to pierce your heart like ice, let it be met by the warmth of compassion, the heat of love in motion. And Then I said you know, let your heart swell with a desire to do all that is right and just, and Let your days be the evidence of a heart on fire.

And so I wrote that poem to kind of encourage myself and others, to say you know, what if, instead of letting this make us numb, what if we instead filled our minds and our hearts all that is good and right and just and pure and Then live a life that exemplifies our values in such a way that those who are witnessing the way we live can deny the power of it?

And so letting our days become the evidence of that is basically to say what if our lives were justice in motion, love in motion, empathy in motion? And I came up with ten different Ways, categories. Like I said love, justice, but there's also creativity, and then there's hope and then there's redemption. I took all those ten categories and I made the book out of them, and I made ten pieces of art and Ten meditations per category of just ways to spark people's hearts and minds to love in ways that they may not have considered, but In ways that will help us also to stay consistent and not withdraw when things get hard, but find a way to go deep, go deep within ourselves and our own communities. So yeah, that's kind of how I got there.

0:14:13 - Stephanie

You. We were just talking about book marketing and how it's hard and how it's weird and how putting a book out into the world is a really like hard, crazy thing to do, and it's because of that it's so fresh on my mind how important it is that we support people who are putting their hearts and their words out into the world by buying the book, and how easy it is to hear a podcast or something like this where you're sitting there going I desperately like if anyone else is feeling what I'm feeling they're like. I desperately need this book in my life. Yesterday, slash a million years ago.

But then we're going to, you know, someone's going to call and we're going to move on and something's going to happen or whatever, so we'll just get distracted. So that's why we need to pause and just add to cart and buy it, so that we can support our friend Danny and we can have this book we desperately need. So, anyway, mine will be here December 4th.

0:15:02 - Danielle

Oh, that was so sweet. Thank you for doing that. Real time support folks. Real time support.

0:15:08 - Stephanie

If you guys, if you guys just paused and bought a book, like, maybe screenshot it and send it to us. I can't screen talk because I'm recording on my phone, right? Yes, okay, so back, danny. I love this. I love this because this is something that tension between, like. So I don't know, are you an enneagram person by chance? Yes, I do.

0:15:31 - Danielle

I don't get super, super deep into it, but I love it and I'm aware yeah.

0:15:35 - Stephanie

What art do you know what you are? I'm a seven, okay, wing eight, okay, okay. Well, okay, we'll need to link to. We have a great enneagram episode, a couple I think. We'll link to them, in case people are like what are you talking about? It's a. Basically, to sum it up in a very simple way, it's

a personality test, but it's just a way to kind of put some language around, like why you react to some things, the way that you do, or things you struggle with or things you're good at.

I'm a two, a two and three, and I think part of my just deep wiring is that I feel really deeply and I'm overwhelmed by my feelings, like in the same breath, and I'm super relational, and so when someone around me is hurting, I know it, I know it so deeply and like I'm feeling it with them and this makes life in our world really hard, like and I know it's hard, for everybody it's but it just feels like this is something that I think about and struggle with every single day is how do I, how do I live in a world that's so brutal and how can I help without being crushed by it? And it's just this thing I feel constantly, and so the fact that you talk about this and talk about it so beautifully is it's like this feels like therapy for me, and really it's something that I talk about in therapy because it's such a such a hard thing for me. So I want to. How do we do this, danny? How do we? The world is so hard.

There are, I mean, at least two major wars going on in the world that we hear about like that are really really happening in real time, and also a bazillion other things happening, but like just off the top of all of our heads. There are two like major wars happening right now and we know that people are being killed and separated from their families and treated terribly, and I mean people in our own backyard are hurting. How do we, yeah, I guess, how do we ingest what's? How do we not look away without being crushed by what's happening?

0:17:41 - Danielle

yes, huh. So my answer what I may have told you last time still stands, but there's a whole other side to it that I've had to add because of the immense amount of suffering that we're collectively experiencing this year. It feels unlike anything. So can I get a little spiritual as well? Is that okay? Yes, yes, girl. Okay. So first things first. I have had to really get grounded, and this is something that I've been thinking of as recently as this past month is my foundation has to be sure, it has to be solid, it has to be firm, and for me so I started out the book with this message that says a life well lived requires a firm foundation. So before any of the meditations begin, before any of the chapters open, I have this mini intro.

0:18:42 - Stephanie

It's like three paragraphs and it's like you can read it. If you want to do, you want to read it. I mean, is it easier to talk? Is it easier to talk about it or is it easier to read it?

0:18:50 - Danielle

I can read part of it and then summarize the rest. Okay, but um, so the beginning. It basically says the sturdiest and most long-lasting buildings were not created by accident. They are often the result of months and years of meticulous planning, preparation and construction. When considering how a building will stand the test of time, we look to its base. What keeps it standing tall? How is it fortified?

The journey of good work is undertaken by individuals who know what they stand for. Their values and beliefs are laid brick by brick, cemented together by an unwavering dedication to

living these values out loud. And then I go on to describe why I chose the 10 values that I chose for the book and then expand upon it, but then I end with solid groundwork helps us weather storms, survive attacks and stand strong in the face of adversity. As you seek to live with a heart on fire, let these meditations help you fortify what you stand for. So that's kind of the goal of the book from my angle, and I thought that that was so important. And I'm living it out even more so recently, because when you are sure you will sway, you will sway, you will sway.

And it's not just being, um, not just being swayed by the difficulty of life, but being swayed from having opinions and beliefs that are rooted in what you stand for. You'll be swayed from even having those because you're like oh well, the world is telling me that certain people deserve to die, but I know in my heart, and I know that the bible teaches me, that nobody deserves to die. And so there's there's moments like that where the foundation of what you believe in has to be solid and it has to be sure. You have to know okay, my value is human dignity. Human dignity, for me, is meaning that every single person is created in the image of God.

If anything is coming against that and causing me to forfeit that belief in any sense, I will not align with that and I will be sure and strong in that belief, because that is my value and that's what I stand for. And when we don't have those, we'll hear this opinion and be like oh well, they sound really passionate about that and that must be right and I must be wrong, and we're just swayed and we're swayed, and so for me, I'm like who, danny? It's time to enter into a season of intense fortification at the base, the base level, and reminding myself of the basics, um, and so that's one thing that I want to lead with, because I think this is more important now than ever, and so that's one thing that I would say but how do you?

0:21:23 - Stephanie

figure that out, though, like I mean because, because you're so right in the fact that whoever you talk to, no matter who you talk to, yeah, everyone has like different thoughts or like angles, or even if people agree with each other, there's like a slightly different take on it about what the most important thing is, and I think that I get so overwhelmed by that is like it's like, well, we should be fighting for this, well, but but you forgot about this. Or like, like I remember I posted like I rarely post things that are I don't know that anyone could see it to be controversial, because it's not my, it's not my thing you don't like to fight on the internet.

0:22:02 - Danielle

I don't like fighting on the internet.

0:22:04 - Stephanie

It's not like I don't see the purpose in it. It's not. That's not my whatever it's not my thing.

Um, but I posted something and it was like, hey, I really care about this cause and you know I'm, I'm standing up to fight for the this specific group of people, and someone posted in the comments well, what about this other group of people? And it was like a totally disconnected like topic. So, anyway, all that to say. I feel like everyone has different angles, opinions,

whatever, and then also things that are like their thing, that they want to fight for, and so how do we figure that out in ourselves? Yeah, what our core?

0:22:41 - Danielle

base is yeah, what's our thing and I love that you asked that, because I talk about that so much in this book but I have a specific meditation, um, and it's so. There's a couple, but one that comes to mind immediately is the one that's called carry what you can, and it basically talks about how I compared the injustices that we face. They're just so numerous and they're so many, so I compared them to leaves falling from trees. I'm like, if you put your hands out and the leaves are falling into your hands, these represent all the issues, all the injustices, all the causes that are important, that matter, that somebody should care about. You put your hands out, you can only catch so many. There will be some that will inevitably slip right through your fingers. That's not to say that the ones that slip out are not important, but it is to say that you can only carry so much.

So in deciding what yours is, I like to think of it as thinking through a couple of different things. So there are things that you have proximity to, so causes that you naturally care about because of how it's affected your personal life. It's okay to start here, there's nothing wrong with that. So, for example, if you have a parent who is struggling with dementia, you may be really passionate about causes that speak to that and want to solve that. Super cool. Those will be a cause that you carry. Then, on top of that, there's personal struggles in your life and then there's a global issue that caught your attention and really pierced your heart in a very particular way, to where you feel called. So these are all very important and these all matter, and there's only so much you can do. So as you hold those, I think about the person that responded to you and what you posted about. I don't remember what your post was. I don't know if I saw it, but I do know that you had you gone to that person who posted about something that they cared about and you could have easily commented well, what about this?

Because it's another thing that matters, I will say that that's a strategy that some people use in bad faith, called what aboutism, where you're raising up something that's important and somebody in bad faith, to distract from the topic at hand, will come into your comment section and, quite literally, be like, well, what about that? Or, in a conversation, be like, well, what about that? And so that is extremely ineffective. I would throw that right in the bucket with devil's advocacy, like just things that are not helpful in the moment when someone's bringing something to light, and so, unfortunately, it's one of those things where it's guaranteed to happen and you just have to be strong and unwavering in the fact that you care about what you care about, and it does not mean that you don't care about everything else. It just means that right now, what's pulling on your heartstrings, for you personally, is what's pulling on your heartstrings, and I even have this illustration that I posted the other day that I was talking about and had different hands and strings that were tying the hands together, and I said with what we're witnessing now in the world around us, specifically with I think I wrote this in reference to Israel and Palestine we are seeing now that we are all being affected by the strings that tie us together. None of us are looking at what's happening overseas and saying, well, it ain't got nothing to do with me, not anybody with empathy at least? Right, we're all like, wow, this is



really really difficult. This is really hard. Injustice is at play, oppression is at work. But I also think that one thing that I mentioned that's super important was the thing about the strings is we're all tied together, but we're tied together differently. So when you feel a tug, you might be pulled in this direction, towards oh, I'm going to get to doctors without borders. Somebody might be pulled over here and saying, well, I'm going to get to World Central Kitchen, or I'm going to order this book and learn more about this, or actually there's another war happening at the same time over here. That's really pulling my heartstrings and this is important because this is how humanity works. It's how we cover ground, all of us.

I saw someone post today and they were like I really wish I just knew what the plan was, and I think it was Sharon McMahon.

She had said you are the plan, we are the plan, and so when you think of it that way that there's no magic potion, there's no script, there's no blueprint, it's just you feel the tug that you yourself are pulled to and you go there. You don't worry about where other people are going if they like where you're going. It's how we cover ground. If we were all dead set, dead focused on one single issue over another, then there would be so many issues across the world that would never, ever get attention and so go where you are called to. And that does not take away from the importance of any other cause or any other issue. You just have to remind yourself, hey, this issue matters too. Not only it matters too, and so that's something that I like to think of. It's the strings. I'm feeling the tug on the strings that tie us together, and I'm being tugged in this direction, and so that's where I'm going to go.

0:28:16 - Stephanie

And finding some peace in the fact that someone else is tugged in a different direction, like this is my thing, this other thing will be someone else's thing. Yes, did I tell you? I'm sure I told you about this last time we talked, but I'm going to share it again because I think about it so much. During the pandemic I was pregnant and that was wild, but also so period, and so I spent a lot of time watching Animal Planet. I think I could have stopped it I was pregnant or it was during the pandemic, but anyway, I spent a lot of time watching Animal Planet and I watched all those shows that are like the zoo, like Tampa Zoo, like Zoo Down Under Zoo, whatever.

And the thing that I found so much peace about in this season of life where everything fell out of control was watching people in these different zoos care immensely about this one specific kind of tree frog that only exists in the jungle of Cambodia or something like that, and they knew that this tree frog was going extinct and they're working on repopulating this tree frog and they're bringing it back out into Cambodia and letting it go, and whatever. They're concerned about the tree frog population and they know that it connects with everything else, but this is the one thing that they can work on. And I just felt so much like when I thought that there is someone who cares more about tree frogs and is equipped to do something about it. That isn't me. I felt like I could sleep better at night and it was like, ok, that's also true about, like, people who know about how diseases spread and you know, like vaccine developers and doctors and you know people who take care of babies and like I mean just all the different things that felt so out of control.

It just was so nice to think about the fact that there are other people who are better at this than me and who are paying attention, and I forget about that sometimes, but always like it, and it always just looks like tree frog in my head. It's like if you say tree frog, I kind of take it, take it, eat breath, but I love that. That's exactly what you're saying is that everyone has has something different that pulls at them and if we all walk in the direction of the thing that pulls at us, yeah, most things are going to get covered.

0:30:25 - Danielle

Yes, yes, and that's the best part about it. I think a lot of us. The heaviness that we feel is, in fact, you know, tied to the struggles of what we're witnessing on a global scale and also connected to the guilt we feel for not being able to hold everything, the fear we feel of not wanting to say the wrong thing and then have our character malign didn't just be attacked, and it all is. It feels like it's all this coming together to form its own big, heavy weight and for me, I just had to be like OK, let me sit down and be like OK, for real, what is mine to carry? Because, aside from all these issues that matter so much, I also have to show up every day and do my job, like my actual job, like what gives me money. So there's that, you know.

There's people who are fighting things like poverty and are waking up every day wondering how am I going to make ends meet Meant? And is that person heartless in comparison to the other person who has the capacity to be on Instagram all day, every day, advocating for their specific cause? They care about that person's cause. The person who's trying to make their ends meet, that person's cause right now is their family and the food that they're trying to get on their table, and that's OK too. That's not the end all be all of their contribution to the world, but that may be their focus, and that's OK, because our life is full of ups and downs and strings there are so many and so I just want you to find a way to encourage people of that, because, jumping online, it can just seem as if that's not the case and yeah, we can't. We can't live that way. We can't live that way.

0:32:11 - Stephanie

So what do we do with if, like once, we kind of figure out what our thing is or what our thing is right now, you know well, I guess, sort of separate from that.

How do we pay attention to what's going on in the world without something my counselor and I were talking about is like secondary trauma? Like I have been so deeply affected by the mass shootings in our country, like I grew up in Colorado I was really the Columbine was really really present in my life and there have been several, like several, mass shootings that have been just absolutely way too close to home. And even if that wasn't the case, the amount of like coverage that I've read or videos I've watched, or of what it's of what's happening is, has left me with with wounds. Yeah, it aren't. So I have never been in a mass shooting, but I carry similar wounds to as if I had been. And I know that that's a real thing in our psychology, that we can be traumatized by something without it's secondary trauma. And so how do we, how do we pay attention to what's going on in the world and be present and be a warm heart who cares about humanity without like taking so much of it that it crushes us?

0:33:41 - Danielle

Yeah, yes, I, yes, I. Ooh what? When you first described this, what I immediately went to in my mind was when videos of black men being killed by police kept circulating on social media, and one thing that activists were consistently saying was stop circulating these videos, stop asking people to watch these videos, because not only the fact that it's traumatic because oh, my goodness, yes but it's also dehumanizing, because it can cause you to forget. In some instances it's like wow, this is really bad and it can awaken yourself to the reality of the violence. Yet, on the other hand, it can be dehumanizing to consistently see this, and so I thought for me as a way to protect and remind myself of the sanctity of life and that these are human beings, they're not roadkill Like. These are people. And so I wanted to remind myself that I didn't have to consistently take that in, and I realized that that was beneficial for me and it actually improved my advocacy because, yes, I know, I know that this is happening and now that I know, I'm going to avoid the heaviness and the traumatic experience that would come from ingesting all that information, because it's going to take me away from what I now know is mine. To do so now, with this information, the action that I take in response to it won't be bogged down by the heaviness of witnessing it. It's already heavy enough to know that it's happened right, and so that is the direction that I decided to go in.

And for people who feel like they just can't look away because there's also that rhetoric of don't look away To look away means that you don't care, and that cannot be said of everyone, and that is not true for everyone you know how you're built, you know how you're wired, and I follow this account called Good Good Good on Instagram. Love, love it, love, angels Angels on the planet. Branden Harvey is one of the most beautiful people.

0:36:16 - Stephanie

He is so great, he is so great. I have for years been like hey, you might need to break our girls' night rule and bring Branden Harvey on.

0:36:24 - Danielle

Oh my gosh and he would live, he would love it.

Branden Branden's a really good girls night edition, even though we like the girl party, but we also like Branden yeah, we also like Branden.

So I they posted this post and it was called how to Stay Informed About Global Crises Without Doomscrolling and I was like, huh, it's interesting, because it's kind of what you were just talking about. That's exactly it. And one thing that they put on there which is kind of related to what I was just talking about was situational reports. So he was like a great alternative to just taking in this graphic content all day long is to consult the situational report, which will kind of give you the overview from an organization like UNICEF or OSHA. They will or OSHA, sorry, not OSHA they will give you kind of like an outline of here's the updates of the day, and you don't have to, you know, look at all the graphic content. And there was a little bit of pushback when this was shared. There were people who were saying you're just trying to desensitize yourself to the reality of this. And no, for some people, we are trying to maintain our stamina.

Sensitivity, yes, yeah, our sensitivity, our stamina and our ability to take action quickly by protecting, you know, our eyes and reminding myself that these are people and I don't have to watch them die to know that I care about them and want to take action on their behalf, and so I just thought that was a really great practical step that someone could take if they're like I want to know more and I don't want to have to see all of this yeah, all at all times, and so it can be a tricky situation to navigate, but overall, I think if you, if the intake of this content is taking away from your ability to do the work you're put on Earth to do, they're made to be an adjustment, you know, of the balance of what you're doing and how often you're doing it.

0:38:26 - Stephanie

Yeah, I love that because, you know, I'm someone who, like, I don't watch scary movies because I just can't get things out of my brain, and I know that a lot of us are that way, yeah, and so, like, there is the thing, though, where it's like don't look away, because, okay, you have the privilege of looking away, because this isn't happening to you, yeah, but I feel like it's, there's actually a benefit to not being the one this is happening to, because you're able to act differently, like there's no sense in putting yourself in the hospital also, you know like correct.

You can't take care of people if you are also like, if you got like sympathy wounded also, mm, hmm, mm, hmm. So I like that. That it's. What are we consuming and why? And is this actually the most beneficial thing I can do for this other person to enter into this with them in this way? Or can I be more helpful if I'm not like in a puddle, also because this is like secondarily happened to me because of how much I've like taken in about it, yeah, yeah. So what do we do about something that, when something comes along that isn't our thing, like our hands are full of leaves? Something else happens in the world and we care and we want to care and we want to help, but like we, our hands are full. What can we do?

0:39:55 - Danielle

Yes, and that's an excellent question, and I have an art piece in the book called Finding your Starting Role that seeks to answer that exact question, based on analyzing your context and your capacity. I don't remember if we talked about this last time, but I may have just drawn it last time, which is very interesting, but it's so. It basically says it just basically gives four starting roles for somebody based on their context or their capacity you have just mentioned. You know they don't have a lot of capacity, right. So if the context is low, it may be an opportunity to amplify other voices that are trusted, that you know. If this is talking about social media, maybe amplifying the content that other people are posting that you know is vetted from people you trust. If the context is high, then maybe taking moments to share what you know quickly you know, in ways that are accessible and deliberately lean on your expertise. But if none of those are true and you are like no capacity, no context, don't even have time necessarily be an advocate online either. I think I think of the little quick actions that can be done based on what I know. So I think it's really good to have a trusted global nonprofit organization in your back pocket that you are just like, oh, no matter what, I know World Central Kitchen is on the ground, no matter what Doctors Without Borders is going to do their thing, and be like, oh, I just heard

about this, this is a global issue and WCK is always there. Let me send \$10 to WCK. I know they're gonna do something and that matters. That matters a lot, right?

Also, you can consider what you're already doing in your day to day. Let's say that you listen to podcasts on the way to work. How can you substitute, in a podcast episode that contains information related to this thing you just heard about so you can get your knowledge up, and now you know so that's another 15 minutes that you dedicated to this thing, 30 minutes or whatever. So little actions like that, whether it's listening to the podcast episode or finding \$10 as you can give to World Central Kitchen, because you know that they're always going to be on the ground. Yeah, a conversation. How can you hold space for someone else who's wrestling with this topic, just like you are, and kind of sitting together and being like it's heavy for me. Is it heavy for you? Yes, girl, it's heavy for me. Yeah, that matters too. That really matters a lot actually. Yeah, so yeah, those are just a couple of ideas that came to my mind.

0:42:36 - Stephanie

I love that. Danny, I am so grateful for your work and I just can't tell you how much it matters. It just matters so deeply to me. You know, when I think about the things I've learned from you so often whenever anything hard happens in the world.

One of the things that I know you said last time we talked was like about giving money. You said something to the effect of and you said it so well, but you said something like are these other people asking you to solve this problem or are they just like asking you for 10 bucks? Yes, and that was so humbling for me because I just I feel like if there is something that can be done, I need to figure out a way to do it. Even things where I'm like no one wants my help with this, like I am so illiquid, like doctors without borders does not want me to volunteer Right, do not come, right, it will not be helpful but like we'll take your 10 bucks. Yeah, it just was so, it just was so helpful and I so.

Anyway, I just want you to know that the work you do is so valuable and so important and has just made such a difference in my life as I'm carrying all the things that we carry as human beings in the world right now. And so I just thank you and everyone listening, like, go follow Danny and go get her book. For the love of all authors in the world, go get her book. But really, friend, we're going to, like you know, give it a couple months and I'll be calling you again because we're going to need to have you back.

0:44:04 - Danielle

We're just going to and we're just going to show and it's just what it is. Thank you so much for having me. You're so kind and your words really do mean a lot.

0:44:11 - Stephanie

Love you, friends. Friend, thank you so much for listening to today's episode. I cannot tell you how much it means to me to have you here at Girls Night. Before you go, I would love it if you would do two quick things. The first is to subscribe. Subscribing to the podcast is the best way to make sure you never miss an episode. It's also a way easier way to listen because it's a way

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