

Girls Night #229: How to Find Joy When You're Feeling Stressed and Anxious — with Raquelle Stevens

0:00:05 - Stephanie

Hey friends, welcome to Girls Night. I'm Stephanie May Wilson and I'm so happy that you're here. Each week, I have a girlfriend over and we talk through one of the biggest questions we have about our lives as women. We're talking about friendships and faith and relationships and self-confidence, about our calling in life and how to live every bit of our lives to the full. Life is so much better and easier and absolutely more fun when we navigate it together as girlfriends, and I cannot wait to get started. Friends, I'm so excited about today's episode. Today we're talking about how to find joy when you're feeling stressed and anxious.

Now, I don't think it's any secret that there is so much happening in our world right now. There are heartbreaking things and scary things and heavy things happening in other people's lives and in our own lives, and on top of all of that, there are pressures that each of us face on a daily basis at work and at home. It's just a lot to carry, and it really doesn't help when we find ourselves scrolling through social media and seeing hundreds of people who seem to be doing all of it better than us. So where is the hope on all of this? How can we find a little bit more peace and a little bit more joy, even when life feels a lot a bit crazy. And is that even possible? Well, today's guest is going to help us with this.

Our guest for today's episode is Raquelle Stevens. Raquelle is an author, producer and host based in Los Angeles, California. You might recognize her from when she starred in the Apple documentary called Selena Gomez, My Mind and Me and the HBO Max series Selena Plus Chef. This year, she released a book called *The Sunshine Mind: 100 Days to Finding the Hope and Joy You Want*. I love that word, sunshine, because that's exactly what this conversation felt like to me. In this episode, we're going to be talking about how to embrace our own path, how to stop trying to measure it up to everyone else, how to manage our stress and anxiety in practical ways, and how to experience lasting joy even when our life feels just crazy. Friends, I love this conversation, feeling lighter and so encouraged, and I hope you feel the same way. All right, friends, I'm so excited for who you get to meet today. I'm sitting here with my new friend, Raquelle Stevens, and, Raquelle, I'm so glad to meet you.

0:02:18 - Raquelle

I'm so glad to meet you. I've just been reading all about you and listening to what you're doing and I just am thrilled to be here.

0:02:27 - Stephanie

Tell for women who haven't gotten to meet you yet. Can you tell us who you are, what you do and a fun fact about yourself?

0:02:34 - Raquelle

Yes, so I'm an author, producer and a host and a fun fact about myself is that I was thinking about it. Right, I'm like what could I say? What's like a fun fact? And the other day I was driving and I have this thing where if I'm in the zone with my music whether it's I worship music or I'm just in a flow I will drive past my house and keep driving because I'm just having such a good time in the car and I do this all the time.

And the other day I had this thought. I was like this is kind of weird, because I looked at the clock and I'm like now 30 minutes has gone by, like I literally was driving home from dinner and I'm still continuing to drive because I'm just enjoying my music so much and I'm like that's kind of weird, like I could just put the music on in the house. But I just love the feeling of like driving and blasting my music. So I don't even know if it's really a fun fact, it's more like a fun quirk, but I do it all the time.

0:03:30 - Stephanie

I love that. Are you a big car singer?

0:03:33 - Raquelle

Yes, I am Same, you are Okay, so me and you need to go for a drive, seriously like the carpool karaoke version of Girls Night.

0:03:42 - Stephanie

I love this. This is a spin-off. This is amazing. I'm very much in Okay. So I want to hear you wrote a book that came out in January and it's called the Sunshine Mind and it's 100 days to finding hope and finding the hope and joy you want. What inspired you to write this Like? Tell me the backstory behind this book.

0:04:06 - Raquelle

Yeah. So my co-author, who was so bummed that she couldn't be here today she's actually recording her show, she's a morning show with Ryan Seagrest and she called me and she had been working on a book about dating and she talks about it in our book, but the book didn't get picked up and she was really discouraged. And then the woman who did the proposal for her, she called her. This was during the pandemic and she said you know, I really believe in you. Like, are there any other book ideas that you have? And she said well, my devotional book has been helping me so much.

So many people I know are really struggling right now. I would love to do a devotional book but I don't really feel qualified to write scripture. And she said well, is there anyone in your life that you would want to partner with? And she said my friend Raquelle. So she called me. I immediately was like I'm all in. Yes, and I had been having, you know, similar conversations with friends, just people feeling really anxious about the future and you know, just kind of feeling the heaviness of life. And Tanya and I are both believers that we can always find hope and we can

always find joy in the midst of hard times, and so that's how the idea came about, and I was so thrilled that Tanya asked me to be a part of it.

0:05:26 - Stephanie

I love that it's so timely that we're talking about this today. I mean, I want to we're going to dive into all kinds of things about like feeling like you're falling short, and comparison, because I know that that's something that every single one of us feels at different times and that it can be just like positively crippling. But I'm so grateful for your book, especially today. I feel like as and this is going to be true whenever this comes out, but like when, as we're recording this it just feels like the world is so heavy. Yeah, oh, it's so heavy, and so I just am. I'm grateful for any bits of sunshine and any like arrows towards hope, Because we just need them.

0:06:08 - Raquelle

We just need them and you're doing that too with your work. So I I'm so grateful and I meet people you know, like you too, who are just, you know, out there doing the work and being kind and putting out messages of hope and joy, and I think that's what you know what. What we can do is what is in, you know, our, our control, and and so that's. I totally agree with what you're saying.

0:06:34 - Stephanie

I want to hear a little bit more about your work. Yeah, because I know that you are you in LA now.

0:06:43 - Raquelle

I am. I've been in LA for 13 years.

0:06:45 - Stephanie

I know that you did a really cool project that I've actually seen and loved with Selena Gomez. I don't know when that when that came out.

0:06:56 - Raquelle

I saw it like a few months ago.

0:06:57 - Stephanie

Uh-huh, yeah. So tell me, like, how did you, what does it look like to be a producer and a host? How did you get started doing that work? And then how did you end up in LA and doing projects like, like the documentary with Selena?

0:07:13 - Raquelle

Yeah. So my path was really unconventional. I grew up between Chicago and England. My dad is British. I went to all of elementary school in England. Then Chicago was 12 to 18.

And then I was born in the U? S and when I was 18, I was in my first semester of college in Chicago and I went through a breakup and during that time my family was moving here to LA

and I was so sad about this breakup. So they were like, well, do you want to move with us or do you want to stay? I wasn't really loving my school so I thought you know what I'll? I'll move. And there was a woman at my church who was a news anchor for Fox News in Chicago and I said can I come and work for you for six months? I thought I wanted to be a journalist at the time so I was like, let me just work for her and see if I want to continue on that path when I get to LA. And I absolutely loved it. It was amazing. Every day we were covering different stories. We were going all over the city of Chicago just seeing so many things that I loved the adrenaline of it. I loved the people, part of it, and so I was like, okay, that's my path. She really encouraged me to move to LA as well and I'm like I'm going to continue to do that. So I moved to LA and I took community college courses and then I was going to transfer to USC, continue on the journalism path.

Now, during that time so imagine I'm like 19 when I get to LA the whole news business was changing right, because and it's still you still can go that traditional path right, where you get the four year degree and then you move to a smaller market, eventually work your way up by you know 40, you have a job at a big network, hopefully right. But it was changing where you know you could. You could start a YouTube channel or you could put yourself out there on Instagram and then people get hired for ratings or they're hiring, you know it. Just the whole business business was changing. And so I was continuing to take my courses and and then I was also working at an art showroom. I honestly worked a million jobs in my like late teens and early 20s just to kind of figure out where exactly my place was, and I spent a lot of time in prayer.

So when I moved to LA, I did not know anybody outside of having family here, and it's an amazing city but it's very lonely and I think any city when you're new, it's difficult to move, especially when you're you know. I think when you're younger and you're in grade school, I mean it's a little easier to maybe meet people, but it's really tough as an adult. So I prayed, I was like God, if this is where I meant to be, make it clear I pray that I would make the best friends I've made in my life, or I'm moving back to Chicago and I put like a one year timeline on it, right, because I think it's important to try things. But then you do have to give it some time. I can't say, like you know, by next week I need to meet people. Like you have to give things some time and you know.

So I, I got involved in church and started meeting people. And then that Christmas my parents knew a couple. We went to their house for Christmas. I made friends with their son on Christmas day. He at the time was living with a guy named Jason Kennedy who was a host for E news at the time, and he kind of included me in their friend group. They were starting a Bible study and that's actually how I met Tanya, my co-author, and eventually, through a mutual friend that was a part of that Bible study, I met Selena, and so that was now this New Year's Eve it will be 11 years since we've been friends. So her and I became really close.

I worked for her in like a number of different positions but to kind of save time, basically I worked a lot of different jobs. I worked freelance for doing like red carpet takeovers, a Snapchat and Teen Vogue and all these different outlets, so I was kind of doing the journalism thing, but not in the way that I wanted to. It was a little bit too like, I don't know, just felt too superficial the way

that I was doing it. So through working for Selena as I was an assistant for a while, through that role I kind of learned the ropes of everything and I realized that I wanted to give the rest of my life to working on projects that we're going to make a difference and truly help people.

Because what you learn through being in the entertainment industry long enough is that you're around people who have achieved the height of success and unless you have a deep sense of purpose and you are living fully in that, then nothing means anything. Right? And we live in a world that's so focused on the external where it's like, well, if I just get this right, if I just, like you know, make the most money possible or become famous or something, then somehow my life is going to mean something. And it's just not true. There's a lot of inner work that has to be done to find that inner purpose.

So, anyway, so I figured that out and then shifted into working for Selena, project based, and then also working independently as a producer and a host. So the way I was able to do that was I just built a lot of relationships over the years and so I reached out to people. I wanted to host an interview series, so I started a series called Giving Back Generation, interviewing people on their life story and how they use their life to give back. The documentary was a long journey. Alongside Selena's team, we actually started recording for that in 2015 and then it came out last year.

So documentaries are a very very long process, so that was on and off. You know a seven year journey.

0:12:42 - Stephanie

So that is so good to hear, because I think that I don't know. I think that so often we feel like someone has an idea for something and they make it, or they, you know, like we hadn't heard of someone, and then they made one thing and it was like it just blew up and it's like no, no, no. Basically everything you see, every person you see doing something that you would like to do. They've been working on this thing for a long time.

0:13:05 - Raquelle

You're so right. There's and I think a lot of people want overnight success Now. They want something to just happen. But there's a journey to it, there's a process to it, and you're so right. And something else that we've worked on together that just kind of came about during covid is we have a cooking show together. Selena and I called Selena and Chef, and we've filmed now five seasons, so it was four seasons on HBO Max, now known as Max, and then our fifth season will be on Food Network, coming out later this year. Ok, ok, that's so cool.

0:13:44 - Stephanie

Are you? Are you like, are you a good cook? Is it or is it like you guys are learning from?

0:13:49 - Raquelle

school. We're learning from the top chefs all over the world, so we're that's. The funny part of the show is that we are not chefs, so I'm helping Selena cook and her. Neither her or I are chefs,

although now we've done about 50 episodes, so now we are definitely much better, but it's been hilarious.

0:14:09 - Stephanie

That is, I don't know. I laugh you know.

0:14:11 - Raquelle

So it's like food and again to talk about like the times we're living, and I think food is a great connector. Food makes people so happy. The show is funny, it makes people laugh, so I think it's something that's out there. That's just like good, wholesome TV.

0:14:25 - Stephanie

Oh my gosh. Ok, seriously, I feel like I have to pause for a second because, Raquelle, I feel like we are cut from the same cloth. First of all, my degree is in broadcast news what? And so as you're talking yes, so, as you're talking about like I was dead set on the journalism path, and so as you're talking about, like moving to the middle of nowhere and by the time you like reach 40, hopefully you've made it to a place where you want to be, I'm like I was ready for that path and really the reason I got off of it was because I felt, because I met Jesus, I became a Christian and I was like, oh, I, I didn't want to be telling stories as much as I wanted to be like part of them, and there just was a big shift.

It was, and it was right around the earthquake that happened in Haiti in 2010, was just super. I think it was. I think it was 2010. It might have been 2009, but it was just super impactful for me and I'm like I want to be on the ground helping people. I want to, I want to be part of the story, and so I ended up doing a like humanitarian trip that next year, so I wasn't in Haiti, but also, like I didn't have any skills, that we're going to help anyone in Haiti, so I definitely should not have been there.

But I did a humanitarian trip that led to a blog, that led to podcasts, that led to all of this stuff. But it's so cool because it's like my degree, like all the way wrapped around in the same way, like same as you.

0:15:46 - Raquelle

And you're doing it. You, essentially, you are doing journalism, you're interviewing, you have your blog, so it's like I feel the same way, it just took a different shape, but the heart is still the same. And you're doing it, and that's so cool.

0:16:02 - Stephanie

I also am a very dedicated foodie who's a really bad cook. Okay, so you and I are kindred souls.

0:16:10 - Raquelle

I'm going to be in Nashville soon, so I'll message you when I'm there and we can have a little in-person meetup.

0:16:17 - Stephanie

We're going to have to go try some food.

0:16:18 - Raquelle

Yes, exactly, we'll go out to eat, pick a restaurant.

0:16:21 - Stephanie

Yes, yes, even though you're probably really great. Okay, so tell me, I love hearing your career story. You know, one of the things that we're going to be talking about more on the show is just how we make big decisions about our lives, and so many of the things that you just shared are such big components to it of. Like, I love how you said I'm going to give LA a year and you know, I'm like I'm going to, I'm going to pray a really big prayer over this time, but I'm going to give it some time.

Like, I'm not going to say you know, I need my best friend dropped in my lap in a week, and so that's just a really good strategy. I'm really glad you shared that.

0:17:02 - Raquelle

Thank you, and something else that might be helpful too as well, because it can be really confusing to find your path. It took me, honestly, it was actually like 10 years of all of my 20s. I'm 31 now I turn 32 next year, but I would say all of my 20s were spent trying a lot of different things keeping integrity, building trust with people and, honestly, in a two-year span of time, it was like I turned 30. And literally all the pieces came together of, like, a lot of stuff that I had been pushing for, trying for, but also living surrendered not not like not enjoying my life because things hadn't happened yet, but it was 10 years of groundwork and the last two years everything has really taken off.

So I think advice that I would give is that you have to live surrendered and then you have to say yes to, yes to things and take the next right step and know that, even if it doesn't work out, it is redirecting you into what, what is meant to be, and it's also shaping your character to be able to handle success when you get there.

And what I've learned and I've seen is that you can have someone so talented but if something happens instantly, they lose it, because the character that is developed in the process of getting to where you're meant to be is what sustains you, and I know that I heard people saying that growing up and I'm like, okay, whatever, it doesn't make sense until you're living it. But I hope that I can communicate clear enough that that, like that, truly was my path, and I'm still so young, like I'm 31, and it was. It was a lot of years of groundwork and now I've found my groove. And then challenges come with that right, because the more you have, the more you've achieved. The more responsibility you have, the more the less time you have, you know. So it's like actually everything is, it's just new levels of responsibility.

0:18:59 - Stephanie

I love. I love everything about that. I feel like I've been living that a little bit too. I've been doing this work for like probably 12 years total if you really start from the beginning, but then I mean longer if you go back to. You know, getting my degree, but it just nothing happens fast or nothing has happened fast for me, and every but every moment along the way it's like I know so much more now than I did five years ago and so I'm able to do so much more now, and the only way to get from there to here was just a lot of hard work and a lot of Googling and a lot of making mistakes and it just, it really is but it but it all does build up, it does add up and, yeah, even when it doesn't feel like you're making progress, you are Absolutely. I want to talk to you about I spent a little bit of time in LA.

I haven't spent a ton of time, but I, from what I know, it's a. It's a hard place to like. I feel like comparison if comparison has like a home base, like maybe LA would be, it is that like. Is that a false perception or is that like?

0:20:07 - Raquelle

No, it's, it absolutely is an accurate perception, because you're I mean, obviously, entertainment industry exists around the world, but LA is the hub of the entertainment industry and the entertainment industry a lot of it is very superficial, right. So when things are superficial, you are naturally falling into comparison, right? Because you have some of the most beautiful people in the world by societal standards. You have endless acts to you know a lot of people. They'll look at a picture of someone and be like, oh, I just want to look like that, and they don't know how much time and energy and money people have spent on looking a certain way. Or you have people that have achieved the top of the top, so you see them living a certain lifestyle.

I, yeah, it can be very easy to fall into comparison and that's why having a strong inner life and really really like seeing yourself as God sees you helps you to show up full and to know that no one else is you, so it doesn't matter. You could have someone in the exact like for a film or something going for the exact same role as you, the exact same job. No one is you. No one can bring what you can bring. So if something happens for you, it's because that was God's plan for it to happen to you and if it doesn't, it was because it was for that other person to get that role and you have to get to a place where you can celebrate them in that, where you can, and actually I find them. The less that we compare and the more we cheer other people on, the more your life grows, the more it expands, the more that you are actually like getting rid of that by getting rid of that feeling of comparison, by celebrating people.

0:21:50 - Stephanie

Yeah, I love that, do you if someone's sitting here going you know? Because I know that comparison hits all of us at different times, and so I want to kind of talk about different stages of it. If we are in a place where we haven't necessarily built up this strong inner life, we don't really feel like we have a great sense on who we are and what value we bring to the table. Like, talk to us about how you've been able to find that in your life, that like strong center.

0:22:23 - Raquelle

Yeah, well, I think that you have to acknowledge when the feelings come. I think when those uncomfortable feelings come of, like I'm not good enough or I'm not this enough, pretty enough, that enough, I don't have what that person has, I think that you can. You have to acknowledge that feeling, right. And I think so often people numb you feel that you don't want to feel it, so it's like let me just make that feeling go away, so I don't want to sit in it, I'm just going to call a friend or I'm going to do whatever you do to numb something. So I think it's accepting it.

And then I think what's worked for me is prayer and worship. So I go on a lot of walks or a lot of long drives, like I talked to in the beginning, and I'll just have those conversations. God, I'm like I'm feeling this way Help me to see myself, the way that you see me, and kind of allowing, like that presence to heal and to come in. And I always feel a sense of peace after. Sometimes you need to talk with a friend. I have a like one of my closest friends, ashley cook, like I'll call her and we can really talk things out and I think that that's helpful. But, like being selective with you know who you share those hard things with. I think that's helpful as well.

So, yeah, I think that there are a number of different things that people can do, but I think acknowledgement is key. I think prayer and worship is key. I think also, sometimes you have to. You know, our minds are so powerful, and what are the? What are the thoughts that we're telling ourselves? What are the thoughts that we're thinking? So it's really important, if they're not good, to replace them with positive ones and replace them with the truth. And if you can't even find that for yourself, then maybe ask a friend or someone you love to tell, to tell you the things that they see in you, and then you can take that in if you can't do it yourself.

0:24:16 - Stephanie

Yeah, yeah, I love that. I feel like those things have been just so big for me also. And I like specifically how you said calling a friend, because I think that, yeah, sometimes we get so caught up and so like twisted up in our own minds that and we do it by ourselves. Like when we're feeling small, we get small, and so we get quiet and we don't tell people what's happening inside of our heads and so then we have to try to fight it by ourselves, but it's like it's big, it's hard to fight and I feel like almost our resources are compromised.

You know, the thing that the place where we're lost is what is supposed to be the thing that gets us unlost, and that's really it's really hard. Like our brains are busy and so calling in a friend and having you know one person or a couple of people who you've, who really know you, who you can be really honest with about what's happening inside your minds I feel like they're having an outside person to be like okay, I like let me find you in there. Yeah, like I see the ugliness because you, let me see it, which is so important, and like now that I'm in there with you, let me like pull you out, you know yeah.

0:25:24 - Raquelle

I think you're so right Community is huge yeah.

0:25:29 - Stephanie

Yeah, I feel like we talk about this so much but it's because it's so real in our lives. But social media has added this whole new level of comparison and ability to look at other people's lives. How do you like? Have there been any things that you've found that have been helpful to keep you from like comparing your life to someone else's on social media?

0:25:53 - Raquelle

Yeah, I think social media is a tough one because and I like to always remind other people and myself too that you are seeing a tiny glimpse of somebody's life and, if I can say it just from like, from a perspective of being around a lot of people who people look up to, who they follow, who they think they have the most perfect life no one, it's just not true. Nobody in this life is exempt from pain and from hardships, and it looks different for different people, but everybody experiences pain. So I think it's knowing that when you're scrolling and you're seeing things, you're seeing a small glimpse of whatever someone is choosing to share with the world, and so I think that's an important reminder. And then I think it's different for everyone. I think that that if it is affecting you in a negative way, then it's important to take some space from it or to be selective also with who you're following. It's like following people that you know, friends that make you feel uplifted, that are sharing great things.

I think that's important and I think it's specific to each person. But again, I think the comparison thing comes back to seeing the beauty in your own life and you knowing that no one is you, no one could ever be you, even if they wanted to. Who you are is amazing, and you were created on this earth at this time for a reason, for a purpose, and you were not meant to be anybody else, and no one's exempt from pain, so there's no one's life that you're seeing. Where they're, you know like maybe, whatever your perception is of them, they're going through stuff too, and it's important to recognize and remember.

0:27:36 - Stephanie

Oh, that's so helpful. Talk to me about like. Well, let me tell you, like, where this question comes from, and then I'd love to hear any insight you have into this. But I've had the you know, every once in a while for social media or for my website or for a book coming out or something like that. I do like a photo shoot and I don't do them honestly as often as I should, so I feel like my photos are kind of old because it's stressful though.

Same. But when I like, when I do it, I know how much time I spend like getting everything exactly right. I know how we picked the backgrounds, I know how many outfit changes I did, I know how, like, what awkward position I was in to like get that photo exactly right. I know how I feel getting the photos back Like I just know how much goes into this and I do it like occasionally, and so when I see photos on social media, it's easier for me to like imagine what the behind the scenes looked like, to get that image, and therefore I'm I'm less likely to be like oh, she really is just at coffee and just took a really cute like snapshot, but even still, like I, even though I know the behind the scenes, I still can be like oh well, that's what her she's at coffee right now, like even though, yeah, I know she probably scheduled that post a month ago, you know.

And so I just want to know like, are there any for you being in the entertainment industry? Can you give me like any other examples that can kind of like? You see this photo, but what's actually happening is this, or like any funny stories or anything like that, just to like poke some holes in it.

0:29:20 - Raquelle

Yeah, that's a great question. Yeah, I had the most amazing trip. This was part of our process filming for the documentary. We had a wonderful trip to Kenya where we just got to meet so many special people and, like anyone knows, when you're traveling overseas, sometimes you know there's certain precautions that you have to take. And I, on this trip to Kenya to take anti malaria pills, so with it we'd like we didn't get sick and I had a reaction to one of the pills, so we literally we landed in customs and I fainted in the airport. We're literally at customs and I fainted and I felt so sick and whatever I get there. And then later that I was fine the whole week on the trip. The last day I got a crazy bacterial infection. I was extremely, extremely ill.

So now people would look at my pictures from that trip, which I posted on my Instagram pictures from that trip, and it was wonderful and it was amazing. But something that I didn't share was that I fainted in the airport. I fell flat on my head. I will actually. Luckily, someone did catch me then, but but still it was scary and I and I got severely, severely ill. So that's an example of of something where you know, people just saw pictures, but that was something else that happened, that was behind the scenes of the photos. So, yeah, I mean, I could give you so many examples, but I think there's always something behind behind any picture. You know the documentary right, that was a seven year journey of a lot of things that you know. We shared 90 minutes of footage. There was a lot that went into that, a lot of years of friendship, a lot of years of of so many things. So I think that, like, yeah, that's one example for you.

0:31:18 - Stephanie

I'm so sorry about that. It was worth it. That's such a good example. I feel like every photo, there's something behind it, just like we talked about earlier with like every success, there are years behind it, and that's true for everybody. And for every high point you see in people's lives, there's also low points and there are struggles, and I feel like the more we can imagine that when we see a person you know there are all the quotes about like every you know, every person you meet is fighting an unseen battle, unseen battle or something like that. But it really is like if we can look at someone whenever we find ourselves kind of comparing our life to someone, being like they're the stuff that they're going through, maybe harder than what I'm going through I just can't like they just didn't take a picture of it you know, it's so true, and I've always said, too, also the truth about life right, we live in a broken world, so there's always going to be someone that has it better, there's always going to be someone that has it worse.

0:32:21 - Raquelle

The key to living, I think, a peaceful, content life I don't want to even use the word happy, because I think happiness comes and goes and it's, you know, I think, a content and peaceful life is to be grateful for what you have and know that your life was meant specifically for you. But that doesn't mean that you know that we're any more deserving of anything good that happens

to us than anyone else. You know there's so much in this life that actually does not make sense and we'll never make sense, you know, until eternity. So that's, I think, an important thing to remember as well to just be really present in the moment, be really grateful, see everything as a gift, knowing that you know there really is. There really is. Yeah, there's a lot that just does not make sense, yeah yeah, there is.

0:33:18 - Stephanie

I want to go a little bit deeper into like seeing ourselves the way that God sees us, because I know that and seeking validation from him.

I know that you talked about, like, prayer and worship. How do we like or I guess what are some things that you have done or experienced to be able to like, figure out who God says you are, so that you can hold on to that? Because I know that there are a lot of women listening who are like I'd love to be really rooted in that I don't know how to, I don't know how to get there. I don't know what God thinks about me.

0:33:55 - Raquelle

It's been a journey for me, and I think everybody has different things that they struggle with, and so one for me that's been I don't know just been something that I've struggled on and off with has been in regard to appearance, so I felt very confident in my personality and whatever, and made friends easily, but that's been something that's been a struggle for me, specifically with dating, and I think there's a number of reasons for why that was. You know, it's interesting. It's like people can just say little things literally in like junior high or you could be so young, or high school or whatever grade school, and it really sticks with you and it shapes you, and I think that's another reminder of like we have to be so careful with our words because it takes a lot of time to undo that, and so it's something that I've grown in so much. I have come to, I think, a healthy place with it, but there's still our moments where I have doubts. That way, you know, if I'm on a date or I'm talking to someone, it's like, oh well, I don't feel like pretty enough or I could change this, and I know that that's not true.

But that's something that I've struggled with, right, so I think that it's continuing to replace those thoughts and I'll, literally I'll tell myself, like we're not going there, we're not doing that. That is not true. You are enough, exactly the way that you are, and so I think that what helps with prayer and worship and if someone doesn't know how to do that or access that, you just you can just put on a song, even and just you don't even have to say anything, you can just kind of be in that space and feel, think whatever you're thinking, and then I think eventually it's getting to a space where you're just like God, heal this in me. I don't want to feel this. It can literally be that simple. And then knowing, too, part of it is who you surround yourself with and the right people pull out the beauty in you, and and you know they do and I think that, yeah, I think that's a big part too.

0:36:00 - Stephanie

That is like the way that you explain that is so simple and I appreciate that so deeply because I think we just I don't know, I think we choose like really fancy, confusing work, Like we put a lot of

scaffolding around, something that really is like talking and listening and being quiet, you know, and I just that's a place I'm really in right now is like how do we just talk about this in like really simple, regular people words, because they just feel like it's so much more powerful that way and the idea of friends bringing out beauty in you is like I'm so with you. I've spent I spent most of my life under the weight or like kind of tied up by things that people said about me in middle school, you know, and it's like it's just that that's a time when people are, when we're growing up, as a time when people are like particularly careless with their words or meet like cruel with their words, because because we're just all trying to figure it out and we don't know better.

0:37:16 - Raquelle

But also we didn't even have tick tock or Instagram or any of these things that you imagine now. I know.

0:37:24 - Stephanie

No, I know no, like we didn't even we didn't have my space, I did not have my space, like that was my space was like high school.

Yeah, damn, yes, yeah. So it's like it's a but it's a really particular time when we're really forming a lot of our identity and like we're kind of really we're like spongy to the words that people say about us and it's like particularly brutal for that reason. So I think in the years since I've started to be much more particular with who I surround myself with, knowing that I don't, I don't want to be around people that, either intentionally or unintentionally, make me feel small, and then also I do want to be around people who celebrate beauty, both in themselves and in me and in other people, because there are people like that that just feel like they're almost like a fence around you, like you can just grow into whatever you want to be and they're there cheering you on and oh, that's a great picture.

0:38:25 - Raquelle

Oh, that's a great picture. A fence around you. I love that. Yeah, the fence around you.

0:38:29 - Stephanie

That's so cool, like a little sapling or something. They have just like a little baby tree on the side of the road or something and they put a little fence around it so that it can grow and it doesn't get bumped. And but, yeah, I just when you said, friends, that like bring the beauty out of you. It's like we can do that for each other and and and we should. And if there are people in your life who who make you feel small, like you, don't, those don't have to be the people that you listen to. They just don't know Exactly. Talk to me about anxiety and stress, because I think that that's another thing that so many of us are carrying right now, and I know you talk about that in your book. So I'd love to hear, just like, any insights or takeaways that you can share with us.

0:39:17 - Raquelle

Yeah, Um, yeah, it's, it's a diff, it's a difficult one, um, because it really does. It's always existed. I think the times that we are in are so, um, there's a lot of anxiety and there's a lot of stress again around the world, and are just our day to day lives and, um, again, I think it comes back to you

have to be careful about what you're taking in from, from people in your life. You know what I mean, and when it is too much, you need to know when it's time to take space and you have to listen to your body.

Our bodies are actually great indicators as to what's going on and who's right for us, who's not even with and it doesn't mean you can just check out relationships, take work, work is work right. There's always going to be a certain level of stress and people skills that you have to use, but, but your body is speaking to you all the time. So when you get that pit in your stomach, that's consistently happening with certain situations you need to be able to remove, you know, remove certain things or take space from certain people or things, and so the way that I deal with it is I've I've tried more over time to pay attention to my body and how I'm feeling and when I need space. And then I go back to what I've been saying. I feel like I sound repetitive, but the prayer and prayer and worship thing of just like knowing when I need that alone time and just just kind of like fill, fill myself up.

0:40:51 - Stephanie

It's amazing how hard it is to listen to your body Like why that should be a really easy thing. It should be really easy to feel something and know what it means and respond. But it's not that easy.

0:41:05 - Raquelle

Yeah, no, it's not. You're right. So I think it's you're totally right. It's like getting to the root of it. It's like so that anxious feeling the way that I describe it when it comes, it's like a I don't know. For me, I I like kind of like tense up a little bit. I feel it in my stomach or I even feel a weird adrenaline where I'm like I just don't know what to do.

I feel you feel restless is the word and then I'm like okay, why am I feeling this way? What's the root of it? And oftentimes there's fear behind it. So what's the fear behind this? And is that real? Or is that my thoughts projecting? And if it's real, then you can deal with it. Maybe it's a conversation needs to have with someone saying hey, I'm feeling this way. Are these feelings accurate? How can we get through this? And if it's not, then it's just surrendering it. This hasn't happened. I like that saying. Someone said once like fear is false evidence appearing real, and I think a root of a lot of anxiety is fear and it's yeah, I don't even know if I've heard that quote.

0:42:11 - Stephanie

I was thinking of the idea that I don't know if it's fear or anxiety. It's basically just emptying today of joy. It's not actually producing anything. Someone's going to look this up and be like it was this stuff. I know I have that wrong, but you're rehearsing bad things that you think are going to happen and to imagine losing someone you love or getting rejected or something like that, imagining it over and over in your head and fearing it doesn't actually make it better when it happens. It just ruins the moment that you're actually in, and that's something like I feel like I was reminding myself of that yesterday.

0:42:52 - Raquelle

Yeah, it's so true.

0:42:56 - Stephanie

Talk to me just kind of as we're finishing up. Talk to me a little bit about joy. I love that your book is all about joy and about I don't know. I love sunshine is such a, like, important word for me. I love that word. And so what are some ways that we even, and maybe especially in moments in life and history that feel so dark like, talk to us about some ways that you've found to find some sunshine.

0:43:26 - Raquelle

Well, I love that scripture that says the joy of the Lord is my strength and I think that that we, if we have joy in our heart and we have an abundance of it it's to be shared. And I think that joy and sunshine can look like so many different things. It can be calling a friend and checking in, it can be even just having a fun night. I had a dinner the other night with a group of girls and we were just everybody was connecting and chatting and everyone texted after just being like I was so excited, so great, it was so fun. It wasn't anything extraordinary, it was like we just we had a meal and we had a fun night together, sat by the fire till late.

I think that that joy, joy is a way that we can show up to situations and and it can even have the power to change your room. You know you could walk into a space and to work into something and it's a negative atmosphere and you show up kind and and loving, and even in the midst of hard times and and that is contagious and people need that and so if you have an abundance of it to give, share it, and I think it can look a million different ways.

0:44:36 - Stephanie

I think by sharing it to it like multiplies. You know it does.

0:44:40 - Raquelle

And I think it's, it's smiling, it's like doing just a little. It's your presence, it's what you're bringing to the table and sometimes to even if I'm in a bad mood or I'm upset about something, I have to tell myself, like we're you know, cut it out, that's, we're not doing that, you know. Like we're you know, leave that in the car.

0:44:59 - Stephanie

I love that you. I love the way that you talk to yourself.

0:45:02 - Raquelle

Like, I feel like I do this. I feel like I do the same thing.

0:45:05 - Stephanie

It's so like, listen, we're not going to do this, we're going to, we're not going to go there, and it's like it's kind, but it's it's firm. You know, like I really I really like that. Yeah, Raquelle, do you have any like just last encouragement to share with our listeners? Just anything that comes to mind? I'd love to hear it.

0:45:27 - Raquelle

Oh well, my encouragement would be anyone that's listening to your podcast is someone that obviously cares to build a life that is full of the things that we've been talking about hope and joy and and community and so I would just encourage them that, like you know, keep doing what you're doing, keep listening to stuff like this, see yourself as the beautiful, amazing individual that you are and like yes, we are in very difficult, you know hard times in the world, but we are also alive and here on earth at this time for a reason and for a purpose, and it's no accident, and so you are meant to show up in your day to day life, filled up with the love of God, so that you can go out and share that with others and be a good friend and show up to your work.

Well, take the next right step. If you don't even know what that is sometimes, just say like yes to anything that feels somewhat, you know, peaceful to you, and it will redirect you into where you're meant to be going. And just keep going, don't give up, and and you'll look back one day and you'll be like wow, it all made sense and all weave together, all the dots connect and yeah.

0:46:39 - Stephanie

I love that you are. You are sunshine. I'm so glad that I got to meet you and thank you so much for making the time to be on the show. Thank you so much.

0:46:48 - Raquelle

I appreciate you. You guys isn't, Raquelle, amazing?

0:46:54 - Stephanie

I just love her and I love this conversation and I'm so glad I got to share with you. One thing I wanted to mention quickly is I know we talked about a lot in today's episode, so if you want to find the links to any of those things, all you have to do is go to my website. It's girlsnightpodcast.com, and for every episode we have a blog post with the show notes. All the links will be there for everything we talk about, including all of Raquelle's contact info so you can follow her and so that you all can be friends.

The other thing I wanted to mention is, if you haven't had a chance yet, it would mean so much to me if you would take just a second to leave us a rating and a review on iTunes. We've gotten so many amazing five star reviews from y'all and you've left the sweetest comments. I can't tell you how much that means to me and also it helps out the podcast more than you can imagine. So if you haven't yet, please take just one quick second to leave us a rating and a review. Thanks so much. Alright, friends, that's all we have for today, but we'll be back next week with another episode of Girls Night and, trust me, you are going to love this one. We'll see you then.