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**Annie Jones:** [00:00:00] Welcome to From the Front Porch, a conversational podcast about books, small business, and life in the South.

*“I’ve learned better, over the years, what to share and with whom to share it. It is a delicate dance, learning to share in a way that is helpful and not harmful to the human spirit. We often learn our personal boundaries by misstep, saying too much and leaving a wound open for public consumption. So it’s scary to think about sharing, on the chance that it might go awry. [pause] But I believe it’s worth the risk.”*

- Laura Tremaine*, Share Your Stuff. I’ll Go First.*

I'm Annie Jones, owner of The Bookshelf, an independent bookstore in beautiful [00:01:00] downtown Thomasville, Georgia. And today I'm joined by author Laura Tremaine, whose new book *Share Your Stuff, I'll Go First* is perfect reading for Galentine's day. Laura is also the host of the podcast 10 Things To Tell You and her book's mission intertwines beautifully with her work there encouraging readers and listeners to open up and share their stories. Hi, Laura, welcome to the show.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:01:24] Annie, I'm so excited to be here. Thank you for letting me come on your show.

**Annie Jones:** [00:01:29] Well, I was thinking about every year at The Bookshelf, we normally do like a big fun Galentine's day party and RIP to parties. Like none of that is happening. And so I thought I want to do kind of a special podcast episode and you immediately came to mind because as of recording your book released yesterday, happy belated book birthday.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:01:52] Thank you. Thank you. It's very exciting.

**Annie Jones:** [00:01:55] It is just the perfect book, I think, for this particular season, but I want [00:02:00] to talk, this is as far as I know, and what I can tell from listening to your podcast, from following you for a long time on the internet, this is a dream come true. Like something you have dreamed about for years.

And I want to talk about what it has been like for this book to happen and to kind of get released into the world right during just the weirdest, most challenging season I can really remember for myself and I think for others as well. You're releasing it in the middle of this global pandemic that I think you and I both tentatively thought might be over right now. Like we talked about, Oh, could you come to the Bookshelf? Like, and here we are. You, especially in California, still kind of in your home. And so I wondered what has it been like for this dream to come true

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:02:44] right now? There've been so many things about this process even pre pandemic that have not been what I pictured when I was like a little girl telling everyone I was going to be an author. I think that I always thought I would [00:03:00] write fiction. Like I always pictured myself as like a Judy Bloom type. I mean, that was sort of my dream. And obviously this book is not that, it is a hybrid, like sort of self-help memoir. I never thought I would write that. I never ever thought I would have a book with polka dots on it.

What ? I never thought I would release the book in the middle of a global pandemic. Like truly every part of this has been a surprise, but I will say now that we're at the end of it, like when I was editing and going through sort of the growing pains of even writing the book, it felt hard and it felt more like this isn't what I pictured this. Isn't what I pictured now. That we're. On the other side of it and it's released and I'm so pleased with how the book turned out and I love the cover and I made myself have a, I just threw my own party at myself for my release date.

 Now that I'm on that side of it, [00:04:00] I feel like this isn't what I thought at all, but it's amazing. It's kind of like a life lesson. Like it sort of sucked while it was happening while it was unfolding but now that it has all unfolded, I feel like, okay, this was exactly what it was supposed to be, you know?

**Annie Jones:** [00:04:18] Yeah, which is often how life turns out, I think in the throws of some of these things, and you talk about some of these things in your book, like in the throws of it, you're scratching your head or you're left wondering what, why, what have I done?

Why am I doing this? And I have to say, I think Judy Bloom would approve. Like, I, I feel like she'd approve of your, of your vulnerability and your sharing of your stories. I totally think that's something one of her characters would do. So.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:04:43] I have a quick Judy bloom story. Can I tell it?

**Annie Jones:** [00:04:46] Please. Of course, here you are always welcome to share a Judy Bloom story here.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:04:52] Okay. Well, first of all, Judy Bloom was my favorite writer when I was a kid. I know that is not unique. My favorite Judy Bloom book was Starring Sally J Friedman as [00:05:00] Herself. I love the name Sally, like to this day, like when I go to Starbucks or Jamba juice or anything, and you have to give your name, I give my name is Sally like I love Judy bloom. I love that book.

 Well, she came to Los Angeles and did a signing for her one of her adult novels that she put out a few years ago. And it was a packed out, I mean, hundreds and hundreds of women, literally my age were there to talk to Judy Bloom because she did a signing after. And there was explicit instructions like from the Q and a moderator or whoever was sort of running the show.

There were very explicit instructions that when you asked your question from the crowd, there was a no gush policy. Like you were not allowed to tell Ms. Bloom how much you love her and how she changed her life and how she was your favorite author when you were a kid, you weren't, you could not do any of that.

You had to just ask her a question and then the same gush rule, no gush rule was true when you stood in line to have her sign, your book, you had like 20 seconds. It [00:06:00] was like a machine, you know, she would sign it, but. Well, I just, I broke the rule, Annie

When it was my turn with Judy bloom. I just was like, I'm going for it. I mean, I really respect that boundary. I live in Los Angeles where there's a lot of things that might seem weird to like the general public, but that really is put in place for a reason. And so I, I do have to say, I generally respect all those types of like celebrity boundaries, but I had 20 seconds and I said, I love you so much. And my favorite writer of all time, that's out. Like I did it fast. I didn't waste her time.

**Annie Jones:** [00:06:35] How did she respond?

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:06:38] What do you think she did? She was like thank you. Hearing it for decades, 40 years. She's been hearing this same person say, I love you. You changed my life. She was gracious, but I mean, she was like, you're next. Like, whatever.

**Annie Jones:** [00:06:56] Right. But still you got to do it. And I think that's what [00:07:00] matters.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:07:00] I did it, my friend, Oh gosh, I should post this on social media. My friend who was with me, she took a picture and I, the, my, the look on my face and the look on Judy's face and the NPS on the security guard space who was standing behind Ms. Bloom, it was classic.

**Annie Jones:** [00:07:15] Can you imagine being Judy Bloom's security guard? I feel like there's a lot of stories there. That's quite the life. Well, I want to talk about the book kind of releasing into the world and you, you referenced kind of throwing your own party, like trying to yes, celebrate this momentous occasion, but obviously under circumstances that were different.

But what I really want to talk about is the joy I felt scrolling through my Instagram and I think we've all been there before, where you're scrolling through Instagram and the same, the same book pops up like over and over, right because somebody you know has released a book and you've seen it. But the joy with which your people celebrated with you was really touching yesterday, I thought.

And I wanted to know now that you're kind of the [00:08:00] day after, and I know you've still got stuff going on this week, but I wanted to know what it was like to be celebrated in that way and to be celebrated so well.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:08:08] Listen, it was, it was the joy of my life. Like I truly feel like it was one of the best days I will ever have, and I'll never have that day again, you know, I hope to release more books, but I'll never have that first dream come true, you know, launch day of my book. I'm almost going to cry talking about it. And I, it was like, it was, it was on par almost with my wedding day truly.

And my husband knows that I feel that way. So beautiful to have people be not only just sharing the book, which is, you know, kind of a social media obligation sometimes, but to be sharing it like so enthusiastically, and I'm going to say why I think that happened. It's not because I think the book is amazing.

Although I love the book and I hope people think the book is amazing, but I don't think that's the energy [00:09:00] behind the share. I. I think that what happened and I did not do this in a calculated way. I think this is partially because we're in a pandemic and Los Angeles has been in lockdown for a year. So it probably changed the way maybe I shared about the book launching and things.

But one of the messages that I kept getting from people all day yesterday was that they don't see grownups, women especially, being so excited for themselves. Like it is seen as like more of a virtue to be like, you know, very humble about it or to be like low key, like keep it cool. Yeah. Demure or to be, you know, it would be also acceptable to be very overwhelmed and run and hide.

And I don't mean that any of those things are inauthentic. You can be very authentically humble or authentically overwhelmed. Right. But we very rarely get to see [00:10:00] people just be like, I'm so excited for this thing that is happening to me. Like, we don't get examples of that. And in times in our life, when we do have it, I think a wedding is a good example of that. Often brides feel that way.

And so energetically. We also feel that way about brides, right? Like a lot of us get excited about weddings for this exact same reason. That's like a culturally acceptable thing to be excited about. When you have a baby, you might feel a lot of excitement, but like there's all these other factors.

You're tired, you're sore. You're, you know, you, don't sort of get balloons like I do, and like put on a fall dress. Like I just think that even though I didn't plan this and I don't even think this is my natural default, so I'm not like patting myself on the back in any way. I was shocked that people were like, we just don't get to see people celebrate themselves.

Sometimes we see people celebrate other people with enthusiasm. And I am proud of myself, I guess, for [00:11:00] being like, I'm excited about this and I'm not gonna, like, I'm not going to play it cool. I feel no level of cool about this. This is amazing. Yeah.

**Annie Jones:** [00:11:09] Yeah, absolutely. It will. And it was, I think the joy, I mean, I think you're absolutely right. We're in the middle of a pandemic. So a lot of us are hungry to, just for joy and for celebration and to get to observe it yesterday was infectious. Like it was it, I felt like. I felt genuinely happy for you and celebratory and the more I kind of scrolled through, or kind of tap through the stories or whatever, I just thought, gosh, this is so important.

Like why and why is that? Like, why is it so important to celebrate the women we love in this way and to celebrate ourselves in this way? Cause I think you're right. That's something really I hadn't thought about. I thought a lot about Leslie Knope let a lady celebrating ladies like that kind of thing. I think about that a lot.

Um, and I try to do that in my own friendships, but I had not thought about what you brought up, which is how do we, and why do [00:12:00] we celebrate ourselves? Why should we celebrate ourselves? It's a great gosh, I'm going to be thinking about that. I think.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:12:06] Especially because I've also seen. Um, women who maybe they feel a disappointment because nobody recognized a milestone birthday for them. You know, they don't have the type of spouse or family or whatever that's going to like throw them a big surprise 30th or you know, that kind of thing. And so then when you see that those occasions do happen for other people, you feel sad about it. I mean, that's completely human nature. I mean, that's fine.

You're like, well, nobody sort of celebrated me. I happen to be married to the most wonderful person that I've ever met. He is wonderful, but he is not a celebration planner. Like he is not. And so years ago, years ago, I mean over a decade ago, I learned to plan my own birthday situation. Now he sometimes, you know, we'll add some extra fun to it or something like that.

But like if I had left it [00:13:00] up to him to, um, Throw something big or launch something big or do what I see sometimes happens at other marriages. Like I would end up disappointed. And so I can't just make him make him be a party thrower. I have to be like, well, I'm a party thrower. And I know that you're going to love on me in a different way.

So if I want the party that I I'm responsible for my own party or not, I mean, you know, not everyone desires that, of course, but I just think that we wait for other people to celebrate us in the lady supporting ladies way, which is super important. And I want us to celebrate one another, but there is nothing virtual. There's nothing like virtuous or unvirtuous whatever about celebrating ourselves and saying, look, yeah, Yay me.

**Annie Jones:** [00:13:49] Well, I, it reminds me, so, interestingly, I don't know if you know this, but my, so my real birthday thought sell on your book birthday. And it had me thinking about 10 years ago, like I threw my [00:14:00] own 25th birthday because I thought 25, but like a milestone.

And so I threw my own birthday yesterday was a lot quieter, but I thought to myself, like, I'm so glad I had that memory of 10 years ago when I like you married the best guy I know, but he, by his nature is not maybe the most like party planning kind of guy. He's just not. And so I also, in my early years of marriage had to learn like, okay, if I want this, I need to ask for it.

Or I need to tell, I need to be explicit in what I'm looking for, what I want, because it's also not fair sometimes to our relationships to kind of put that on them. And so I think it is important to kind of yeah, celebrate yourself and to honor yourself. And I think then it allows other people to do the same.

Like it, it opens the door for them to do the same thing. Um, I want to talk about your friends specifically because we are thinking, at least I am something that redeemed Valentine's day for me a few years ago was Galentine's day. And this concept of [00:15:00] celebrating your friendships and honoring, um, the women in your life and in my case, and I wondered, what friends in your life made this book possible, made writing this book possible, publishing this book possible. And how do you honor and celebrate these relationships in your life?

 We've talked about maybe celebrating your accomplishments and celebrating this awesome thing that you created. How do you celebrate then the people, you know, and the relationships you have?

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:15:28] Well, I have, uh, numerous groups of friends that cheered me on in totally different ways. You know, I have childhood friends who have known, they know on a deeper level how much this has always been my dream. And so they are feeling that part of this process in, in a way that can't be replicated in any other friendship.

Right. And then I have my mom friends that they dropped some flowers by yesterday. And they're hilarious because they're, they don't work online. They don't do any [00:16:00] of the stuff that I do. Right. Podcasts, social media. They don't do any of that. And so to them, it's just like baffling that I wrote a book.

Like it is just like, so outside of their wheelhouse, but they're so proud of me, but in some ways they're cheering me on from like, they think it's amazing in a different way than I think it's amazing because it's sort of part of my work. Do you know what I mean? But that's encouraging. And then I also have, um, My work mastermind.

And this is something that I think your listeners might know some of the people in my mastermind. It's Jamie B. Golden, Kendra Adichie the lazy genius and Brie McCoy. So there's just four of us. It's very small. They are able to support me and cheer me on, in a way that is completely unique from those other two groups in that they know exactly what I'm thinking about.

Like they're, they're watching my Instagram, like from a statistic point of view, like, okay, now, you know what I mean? They're also understanding my [00:17:00] workload. They're also understanding like, Just like some of these work behind the scenes, things that my childhood friends or my mom friends absolutely don't even know what iota of.

And so I think that we bring to all of our relationships, like what is specific about that relationship and not all things have to be to take every single box. I don't need my childhood friends to understand anything about social media. They love a totally different Laura, but with my work friends, it is such a relief to me, unlike one of the hardest days of the pandemic to send a Voxer message to my work friends and be like, you know, can we just talk about like, Email newsletter strategy.

Like, you know, like I don't want to talk about politics or whatever, you know? I mean, like, I just need to talk to somebody about this work issue I'm dealing with. And we don't have to check in on one another's families or hearts or whatever we need to talk about this thing. Of [00:18:00] course, we love each other in a very deep level, but our friendship benefits from being kind of specific.

 And I think that that has been like a real lesson I've learned in my own life in the last few years, because I learned when we all learned to do friendship in elementary school or whatever that like besties or besties, and this looks like a certain way, like best friends have a relationship with our kids and understand our work and love our husbands, whatever that is just not true. You can have a work bestie who's never even met your kids, you know?

**Annie Jones:** [00:18:37] I love that you're talking about this because I don't think we talk about this a lot or enough. And I wonder if it's sometimes why we're a little bit like our hands feel tied when it comes to adult friendships and relationships, because we all learned.

Cause I learned what you learned, which is you've got like a best friend or a best group of friends and they're supposed to love everything about you. And I have childhood friends who really have [00:19:00] known me, you know, more than half of my life and I'm so grateful for them.

That's very different from a yeah, a mastermind group or the booksellers I know or the fellow entrepreneurs I know. Or even, I don't know the friends I made in my early, married years while they were in grad school or whatever. Like I think the older I get, yeah. The more I am grateful for kind of these different, I don't even want to call them teirs.

It's like these different groups who mean something different to different sides of you. I mean, you're, I'm the same person. Certainly. Um, that's one of my big, I always desired to be this authentic kind of same person, but certainly these different friend groups see a different part of me or a different side of me. And I think that should be valued and celebrated instead of maybe I think sometimes we feel a little tentative about it.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:19:48] I, I feel like it seems like we've been taught somewhere along the way that compartmentalizing in that way means that certain friendships aren't as valuable or aren't as deep. And that's just [00:20:00] not true.

Like jamie Golden and I have been work friends for many years and she knows things about me. She truly knows things about me that like my childhood friends maybe don't know, like in the way that my business brain works or the things that I'm insecure about in business or whatever. I've shared those with her specifically, let's say. And so that is still incredibly valuable to me, even though she doesn't like have any idea what my childhood look like looks like. Right.

**Annie Jones:** [00:20:34] I want to talk a little bit too and you referenced a couple of things like you referenced using Voxer or whatever, or your friends dropping by flowers. One thing that struck me, I was, I was kind of on a walk today thinking about what I wanted to talk with you about and ask you.

And I thought, gosh, I wonder what, because to me, some of this book really is about relationships and relationship building. And we're going to talk about what it means to just share your stuff on paper, like with yourself. [00:21:00] But there's also this encouragement in the book, I think, to share your stuff with the people you love and the people you trust.

And I'm wondering in a global pandemic, what does friendship look like for you right now? Like practically speaking, because I was on this walk thinking, man, I miss I'm super introverted, but I miss being with my people very much. And I have found like little workarounds that are pandemic appropriate, like going for a walk with a friend or you know, having a picnic outside, but friendship looks a lot different than it did a year ago.

And I feel like my friendships are evolving and changing based on who I can keep in touch with and be in touch with during these really weird months we're living. And so I wonder just from a practical standpoint, what do your relationships look like right now?

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:21:45] It's so hard because Los Angeles was, you know, as much locked down as any major city in America. And so it was, it was really hard on my local friendships, the most, you know, long [00:22:00] distance friendships it's we already are in a rhythm of using Voxer or texting or going months without communicating.

And that's fine. But for my local friendships, especially my mom friends that I'm used to seeing several times a week at school staff or our kid activities or whatever. These are women I talked to multiple times a week and immediately a door slammed and you don't see those people, you know, for a year, I mean a full year and it has been crazy and it's been hard.

And at the beginning of the pandemic, there was a lot of panicked texts, you know, where there was a lot of texting. How do you feel about this? How are you handling this? A lot of that. Well, then as we sort of settled in for this long haul, I worry that some of those friendships faded away because we truly would go weeks and weeks without communicating.

Yeah. And, and hard things were happening. People were experiencing loss. People were experiencing, you know, financial issues, marital issues, like big things [00:23:00] in our life that we would all normally be showing up for, we are unable to. And so I was really like questioning at some point like, Oh no, is this the end of this friend group?

Or are we going to survive with, but as we're, you know, Starting to come out of this a little bit very, very slowly. I have two families that we've sort of created a pod with over the last few months where we see each other that has been enormously helpful because I truly went months without seeing another friend like face-to-face like months.

So now that we sort of made a little pod that has been helpful on a logical basis. And then as. As things are lessening or people are kind of coming out of their caves, if you will I do think this isn't exactly your question, but I'm gonna say it anyway. I do think that these friendships that were not like my deepest friendships, but totally [00:24:00] my my social circle.

Totally. My, my buds and my friends, we're just going to come out and be like, Let's just never talk about that again. That was, that was a weird year that we can just lift out of, you know, our, our friendship history and be like, let's just move forward. Like you handled it differently than I did. I'm sorry I ghosted you on text for two months.

Like we were all doing the best we could. We were all treading our own water. Yeah. Now let's just, you know, I think there should be a lot of, a lot of grace, a lot of forgiveness. There is some growing pains. I talked about this on my own pay on my own podcast about I had more than one friend come to me and say like, you're not being a good friend during this.

And it was a call-out that hurt, you know, that word. Um, I think they were right by the way, but it also was like, I I'm, so I tried to adjust some of my behavior. [00:25:00] And also, I think we have to just say, I truly can see that you were doing the best that you can, and none of this is personal and we're all just you know, going to have to try and find a way to move forward out of this without like sacrificing all of our relationships on the alter of a pandemic and a crazy election.

**Annie Jones:** [00:25:24] Yeah, I think muddling through is constantly the phrase. I go back to some of my, I adore my book club and my book club is a good example of they moved to zoom as we should have, and as makes a lot of sense, but my work has been, I don't even have a word for what entrepreneurship and small business ownership has been over the past year. And the thought of getting on zoom, even to gather with these women I love and to talk about books that we love, that has not been appealing to me at all.

And I feel like I've been a little bit MIA, but I'm confident that when things do maybe slowly [00:26:00] get back to what we are used to, I, I would like to think those relationships will still be there. It's just been a season where I have not maybe been able to be as present as I would've liked, but I also don't know what to do about that. Like, when I look at the things I've had to adjust or tweak, I just, I, I think that one did have to go a little bit.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:26:20] And You know what else?

I think that we can't and know what we know. So if you, in your friendship circle, if you feel like someone revealed a part of themselves, um, that doesn't align with, with you and how you felt about something. It's hard. Some of those things are going to be hard to come back from so I feel like I'm like reversing what I just said.

If we all need to move forward in grace, I also acknowledge that that is hard because you can't, un-know what you know, and we've had drama in our friendship groups, around people who weren't taking the pandemic seriously enough. Some people who were [00:27:00] so rigid in how they handled it, that it was detrimental to relationships. Like it's, we're all going to be untangling this stuff.

**Annie Jones:** [00:27:11] Yeah, it's messy. It's messy. And I think we've got to be comfortable with that or get comfortable with it. Um, okay. I want to pivot to the book a little bit more specifically. One of my very favorite things about this book is you have given readers such a gift by both kind of encouraging us to share our own stories while then also generously sharing yours.

Like you have practiced what you preach and I love this format that both has me reading your life stories, which are very thoughtful and interesting and funny and heartbreaking and tender. I love them. And then you've also really encouraged the reader to take these questions and answer them themselves, whether it's through journaling or through conversations with friends.

[00:28:00] And I'm just dying to know this. It feels so unusual as a bookseller. This feels like an unusual kind of book to get to sell. And I'm so curious where this kind of format idea came from, if this was, you said earlier that you had always thought you'd write fiction, and then this is kind of the book that came out. And I'm just wondering what made you decide on this sharing of yourself, but also encouraging and empowering and giving people the tools needed to share themselves.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:28:27] Well, I made it up because I didn't know how to do anything else.

**Annie Jones:** [00:28:33] Well, that's cause it doesn't exist like truly this is such a fun book to get to sell because I really don't know anything quite like it.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:28:40] Well, I didn't want to, to invent a genre. I really wanted to write something more intellectual than this polkadotted book. But like I truly in my heart. I would have loved to the, be the person who writes serious, [00:29:00] thoughtful essays. That is who I want to be. Turns out again, not who I know when I have tried to write in this like high-minded way and I read a ton, so I know what high-minded essays look like and feel like when I try to do that, I mean, it, is it disaster of Epic proportions.

I mean, it just doesn't even sound like me. And so I sold this book a little bit differently, quite a bit differently than it turned out. It wasn't, you know when I shopped this book, this was not the format. It was more, you know, traditional format and.I really had a hard time starting it. I mean, I texted my agent and was like, I don't know what I am doing.

Like, I've never written long form like this, this is hard. I don't know how to do this. And so she said along with my editor at the publisher, they were like, [00:30:00] why don't you just write it like you talk, and then we can, we can intellectualize it if we want to, we can fluff it up. But why don't you just try. Why don't you just try what comes natural for the first pass?

So I started writing it, how I loosely script my own podcast, which is 10 Things To Tell You, I ask a question, then I explain the question, I talk more about what the question is, why the question matters and then I answer the question. So when I started doing that and I, and I script a lot of that on the show.

So when I started doing that, everything loosened up for me in how I wanted to share this story. And it really poured out when I was trying to make it something else, when I was trying to sound smarter when I was trying to, you know, be a different type of book or writer than I am. It was stilted. It felt, [00:31:00] it just wasn't good.

I just knew it wasn't good. When I did this, I still had to polish it up a lot in and shape it a little bit, but it just flowed in a much more natural way when I did what they tell you in like writing one-on-one, which is right the way you speak and then, and then clean that up and make it ready for print.

But. Yeah, I just, I didn't any, I was just being like, I don't know what I'm doing. This is, this is what I know how to do. This is what I do on my show every week. And what, and this is how I speak in real life actually is, is how the book turns out. And so I just did that. And then by the end of it, by the end of that whole process, I really did love it, but I did have to sort of shake off some ego around what I thought my first book would be and how I want it to be perceived.

And like, you know, there were some ego stuff that I for sure had to shed in order to be like, you know [00:32:00] what? This is, this is who I am. This is the message that I really want to impart. And this is, this is my sweet spot. I just have to acknowledge it.

**Annie Jones:** [00:32:11] Well, I think it really behooves you. Like, I think it's going to be this great gift because. It is so unusual. Like it is so different from what I see. I like you, I read a lot. Um, I am grateful for essay collections and for short stories and for high-minded nonfiction, like I'm grateful for it all, but I also really loved getting to, I felt like I got to know you in one way or another, by reading the book and also truly, I have been reading it more slowly than I typically read even an essay collection because every few pages I'm kind of stopping, asking myself the questions that you're answering. Like I'm asking them of myself, I'm thinking, Oh, how can I bring this up in my, in my relationships?

And I, I love that. Like, I think it's so different. And as somebody [00:33:00] who sells books for a living, I think that's great. Like, I think this will be a fun sell because it's so unlike the typical book we stock in our humor memoir section, even though I love the books in our humor memoir section, I just think this is different. And I don't know. I think, I think that's a good thing.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:33:18] Wow. Thank you for saying that. I do appreciate that. I, I was a little nervous. We're only on like day two of this thing being out, but I was hoping people would get it, you know, that they would understand what I was doing. So to hear from you that you did, and from some of the early people who are posting reviews and stuff, it is nice to know like, okay, It's might not be high-minded, but people understand what's happening here and they're connecting to it.

**Annie Jones:** [00:33:43] Well, and I think it's important. We've talked about it releasing during a pandemic, and that's not what anybody planned, perhaps not what you would have picked for yourself, but I do think we're at this really pivotal moment in regards to what relationships look like and what relationships look like on the internet and the things that we're [00:34:00] processing, whether it's allowed with our friend groups or, you know, quietly to ourselves.

So I think it's really a timely book too. One of my favorite things that I have seen on Instagram or on the internet in the last 10 or so months has been your constant insistence and encouragement to document what is happening, to document this cultural moment. And I am a decent journaler. Like I have journaled off and on for years for decades, I have all of them kept in my closet and some of them were like third grade, you know, Dear diary, see you tomorrow.

And then I never come back, but I love so I love it. And I love looking back to see what past Ana thought of things and reading your encouragement on the internet. I remember like on inauguration day, I thought I need to journal this. Laura said to, and I think it's a good idea. Like I need to remember this kind of milestone moment and what I was thinking and what I was feeling.

And I love that encouragement and I [00:35:00] wondered if, how, how writing has kind of helped you process last year and also when you were writing this book. I, I think that's one of the lessons you're kind of imparting to us without beating us over the head with it is you're really encouraging us that our stories matter.

And, and whether you share them with someone or whether you just put it in your journal for only your eyes to ever see, there's something so powerful in putting words, words to paper, as imperfect as they may be. Can we talk about that a little bit.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:35:28] Well, I think we all hear that adage, like your story matters. We hear that a lot, but like, what does that mean? You know, unless you're already a speaker or a writer or some kind of professional communicator to the average person, your story matters is, is, is vague. I mean, what does that mean? And so I have tried to firstly, dispel the myth of what journaling is, [00:36:00] because I think a lot of people think journaling is only dear diary. Here are my feelings and depending on your personality type or what you want to get out of it, your journal does not have to be about your feelings at all. It doesn't have to be kept forever in a locked trunk with, you know, old dried flowers. It doesn't have to be any of these things that we think journaling is.

You can journal your feelings by all means. I certainly do, but you can also journal work stuff as a brain dump, you can journal in incomplete sentences. You can journal in bullet points. Um, you said the inauguration, so we can use that. People can look at the inauguration and depending on how you feel, which might be a million ways you might just want to write down here is, um, Here's what I'm observing.

Here's what I'm hearing on social media. Here's what the mood is in my house. Here's what the mood is and the [00:37:00] community, you can do your feelings, any kind of thing where you're just sort of documenting. I mean, we could do a whole episode on journaling because I've been encouraging people to document, but you can also use it as a way to figure out how you feel or think about something and those types of pieces of paper you might throw away.

 They're not kept in a beautiful cloth covered journal. You are just writing your way to clarity. And so I have, I do all of those things, everything I just listed. I do all of them. I do bullet notes. I do documentation. I do a lot of feelings. Um, if I don't know how I feel about something, I like, I'm trying to make a decision. I do this intuition journaling where I write the question at the top, like, do I accept this business opportunity or not kind of thing? And then I will just write whatever comes to mind.

 Now I [00:38:00] might write, Oh, my son is being loud, outside the door. Okay. That's not answering the question. I'm just writing, writing, writing, writing. And I tell you what Annie, when I do that for I'll do it for 10 minutes, whatever, all my different feelings on this pros and cons, whatever something will something will bubble itself up and I will realize, okay. Okay. But when it's tangled in my head or when I'm trying to be really rational instead of listening to intuition, or when I'm leaning too hard on intuition and sort of losing a little bit of reason, it's too hard to untangle that on our own, we need tools.

And one of our easiest, most accessible tools is a pen and paper and just write it down. And I don't even remember what your original question was cause I gave such a speech on that, but I really feel like strongly that people dismiss journaling as a teenage girl [00:39:00] eyeroll, and I've been trying all year, especially it's been easier in the pandemic and it even is in regular life to really explain what I mean by getting your feelings out because everyone's having so many. Um, so that's why I've been beating that drum this year is for all everything I just said. Well,

**Annie Jones:** [00:39:20] I, I, like I said, I have found it to be so valuable and I've, I mean, I guess the share your story idea is one that has come naturally to me because I'm a reader because I love to write. And so it has always kind of come naturally. But this year in particular, I think I have thought to myself, gosh, so much is happening. If I don't write it down, I will never, I will never remember what it was like to be in the throes of anxiety, over making decisions that felt in some cases, life or death, like, or decisions for my business that weighed especially heavily or things that we were processing on the news.

Like I have found it to be valuable. And I, I think about, I think it's Flannery O'Connor who said she wrote to know how [00:40:00] she felt or to know what she thought. And that has always been one of my number one way is to process as a highly introverted person, as a highly private person. I often write to know what I think about something or to know how to make a decision or to know what decision to make.

And one of the quotes from your book that I loved was. Was the struggle of how to share what to share and with whom to share it, then I'll use the inauguration day as an example, like I had journaled and written a bunch of different things out. I had copied down pieces of Amanda Gorman's beautiful poem.

Like I kind of laid out how I was thinking and feeling and, and then I took a portion of what I was thinking and feeling and, you know, did what a lot of us do, I think, which is posted it to Instagram. And, but I did not share all of what I was thinking or feeling like I shared what I felt would be most valuable or what I felt would be most appropriate.

And I wondered how have you decided kind of what to share and with [00:41:00] whom to share it? I think that's kind of the phrasing you use in the book. And how has the answer to that question maybe changed in different seasons of your life? How do you decide in a world where yeah. You have kind of different friend groups and different pieces of yourself that you are sharing with people, but you also exist on the internet. I think that is a constant struggle for me is like, what do I share in my close-knit relationships and then what am I comfortable sharing on the internet? How do you share, what do you share and with whom do you share it?

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:41:29] Well, I've had to figure it out for myself with just total trial and error over the years cause I've been doing this for a long time and one consideration that you didn't mention, but I know that you must think about is as a small business owner, you also have to think about your customers, your community, your business reputation. I mean, there is a lot of layers to, you know, either taking a risk in what you share or playing it too safe.

I mean, you're really balancing on a tight rope that I just want to acknowledge that [00:42:00] you, you know, that really matters. It really does. Yeah. So there's a lot of things to think about when you're deciding what to share or not. And when I started sharing on the internet primarily, it was on a mommy blog.

Well, mommy blogs were first of all, very popular. And secondly, I had a baby and then I had a second baby. The baby years are very easy to share. You know, baby problems are universal, sleeping, breastfeeding. I mean, all the things like you can share your experience of new motherhood, even if you are really, you know, raw in how you share it, it's universal.

And it doesn't really put, except in special circumstances, it doesn't really put anyone at risk to have shared new motherhoodness. And that's where I started. Well, of course, as your children get [00:43:00] older, People are more careful about what they're protecting, you know, what kind of struggles that they share. And I think that a lot of us learn whether you have a platform or whether it's just on your personal pages, like a lot of life you sometimes learn by misstep. So yeah. Maybe you share, and then you either get some feedback that tells you that, that wasn't received the way you wanted it to.

**Annie Jones:** [00:43:28] Yes.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:43:29] Or you just well and yourself, like an hour after you posted or something like, you know, I I'm spinning on this a little bit. I'm going to take it down. And I think that's common and I think that's fine. Now, if you are getting feedback from people who are trying to silence you, that is a completely different reaction, at least it has been for me, I received that differently than if someone is like, maybe with truly good intentions being like, I think maybe you [00:44:00] don't, you're not realizing how this is coming off or something like that, you know?

Yeah, but for me it was just a series of either missteps or the other side of this is, and I feel like a lot of us experienced this in 2020 particularly, well, maybe even over the last four or five years, they also didn't feel, or we also didn't feel good about our silences. So it's easy to choose, you know, I'm not going to share this because I have a small business, because I have family that feel differently than I do, because my mommy group judges people who overshare on the internet. Whatever reasons that we like legit think, you know, what the, the path of least resistance is to not share and then you just can't look at yourself in the mirror at your silence.

That is really important and I just used a bunch of online on examples. Of course, the book, my book and everything I'm talking about does not, it's not just about online. It's often about in our real life, but the same, [00:45:00] everything I just said holds true in real life too. You can get feedback to your face about when you said too much, you can be silent at a dinner party where someone has said something quite agregious and it's just easier to, you know, not cause drama at this lovely party, but then you go home and you're kicking yourself.

 Like I cannot believe I didn't stand up for what I believe in and my silence at that party is leaves me complicit. People probably think that I believe something differently than I do, and I really don't want that. So I think it's trial and error between saying too much and staying silent where we find, when it matters to us when we find, when it's going to put a relationship at risk and when that, when that's worth it and when it's not, and you know, mis steps suck, ask me how I know.

**Annie Jones:** [00:45:53] That's what I was going to say is yes. I like I'm nodding my head and saying yes, because I absolutely agree. And then there's [00:46:00] also a part of me where my palms are sweaty and I'm like, Oh gosh, but what she's describing is so hard. It's so hard. I mean, and, and, and messy, I think being willing to misstep is hard, especially if you're a recovering perfectionist, which I kind of identify, like, if you're somebody who, or maybe even it's not so much perfectionism, but it's wanting so badly to please the people you love or the people that you feel have been entrusted to you.

I think that often carries its own burden and toll. So I absolutely agree. And I also acknowledge and recognize, but gosh, it is hard whether you're dealing with in-person relationships and conversations or you exist on the internet and you're sharing stories and feelings and thoughts there like, I think it's equally hard, both places.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:46:49] I will also say, um, it doesn't have to be, I feel like I just said the scariest worst part about, about the misstepping you can practice [00:47:00] this without coming out and like taking world's greatest stand. That really is going to like you know, be awkward at a party or be operating your social media feed. You don't have to do that.

You don't have to come out blazing. You can practice this with baby steps. You can just share a little bit and, and see how that feels in your spirit and see how that's received. Does that feel good to you? Especially like in your, you know, your groups, your mom groups, your book clubs, w whatever, you're a part of.

You might just share a little bit. And then, then at the next meeting or the next gathering, you just share a little bit more and I think you'll kind of find your space without making like a crazy misstep, because what I've also found, not to just be true with people with platforms, but what I found in real life, and this is actually amazing and beautiful.

And I don't write about this in the book because I feel like I've just sort of understood this maybe even in the last six months of our [00:48:00] world, but I genuinely believe that when you share yourself in baby steps or in big proclamations, the more you share yourself and it is true to yourself, even if it was scary.

It is vulnerable in the immediate and you were like, you want to hide and like, Oh my God, that was so scary. But in a bigger picture way, like even an hour later, a day later, if it was a true share, even if people reacted weirdly. It is actually a confidence builder. It's doing the opposite of what you think.

You think that this vulnerability is going to beat you down and you're going to have a vulnerability hangover and you're going to have all these things. And maybe you do in this really short term, but I am convinced that in the longterm, you are actually building confidence. You are being closer to who you really want to like who you really want to be in the world. You are building that up instead of how we talk about vulnerability is kind of a [00:49:00] beat down sort of, and it's not that.

**Annie Jones:** [00:49:03] It's giving you stamina. Like I, I think at least in my own life, I feel like, and I don't know that this, this sometimes has a negative connotation, but I feel like it's thickening your skin a little bit. Like it's, I don't know. It's prepping you for both more sharing and maybe not more sharing, but knowing who you are.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:49:21] Yeah. And being centered in who you are, learning more about who you are and feeling good about the words that you say and the stands that you're taking and all of this, the more that you do that, I feel like relationships are better. You know, a strong person in a relationship is better than a person who isn't quite sure who they are. And we all go through phases where we are unsure of who we are so sometimes that's just part of your process. But I have found, as I found my voice over the years, like through blogging through podcasting, through sort of putting myself out there, the more sure I get in who I [00:50:00] am, everything in my life becomes elevated.

I get better business opportunities. I have better friendships. I feel like the work I'm putting out is better. Like this is truly a process of growth and I do not hear people talk about growth. In this way very often. And for me, this process of finding myself, I didn't wake up and have I've arrived. I know who I am all done. It has been figuring out who I am and that has made me stronger in all these other ways too.

**Annie Jones:** [00:50:34] Yeah, absolutely. I feel like I could keep talking to you forever. It's almost like the most wonderful therapy session so thank you. Thank you so much. Um, but I do have like lightning round questions that we always kind of end with on the podcast.

And so I thought I would kind of ease us into that area. The first is pretty simple. What is a, and I know you're an avid reader. I [00:51:00] have followed your book recommendations for years. What is a classic book you've never read, but you wish you had?

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:51:06] You're going to die. I have never read *Little Women*.

**Annie Jones:** [00:51:12] Oh my little, my little heart, little women loving heart.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:51:16] So many people, people love it. I also don't have a desire to, don't be mad.

**Annie Jones:** [00:51:21] No, you know what? I was actually going to tell you, I don't know that you should, like, because the more women or men for that matter, I know who read little women in adulthood. I just don't think it rings as true. And I could be wrong about that.

Maybe other people feel differently, but I think Little Women was written for children. And if you missed it, I think there is a simplicity to it that I'm not sure, totally translates to an adult to an adult reading it. I could, I could be wrong about that. I never want to deter anyone from enjoying the March family, but I kind of think you don't have to. You don't have to, you don't have to [00:52:00] read, you don't have to read anything if you don't want to. So yeah, no pressure for me, but, but I,

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:52:04] And also isn't it sweet, you know, I do not do sweet. Yeah,

**Annie Jones:** [00:52:09] Right? Yeah. That's I think part of, of it, right. It's kind of this simple, I mean, there's so much depth to it, but it is this kind of simple, sweet moralistic tale. And in adulthood, I think we are much more willing even as a kid to some extent, but I was a very, very sweet, pure little eight year old when I first read it. And so I think as an adult who is more accustomed now to the messiness of life, I just, I think little women could potentially fall flat for that reader for sure. Okay.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:52:38] Good.

**Annie Jones:** [00:52:40] So you don't have to read it. Don't worry about it. Okay. You're a podcaster. I think from following you, you are also an avid podcast listener. What podcasts are your current favorites right now? What do you find yourself gravitating toward?

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:52:54] Well, you know, Podcasts listening has been hard even for the podcasters in the past [00:53:00] a year, because I'm no longer in my car every day like I used to be. I'm no longer alone in my home every day like I used to be where I would put on a podcast to clean the kitchen or whatever.

I do not have those moments anymore. Um, I listened to some of our favorites, of course, the Popcast, the Lazy Genius. I love my friends shows I when I really just want to sort of like, I don't know, real pleasure for me is Kate Kennedy show be there in five. Do you know that show? Yeah, I do. I love that. And then when I want to sort of like have feelings, I listened to Heavyweight, I will bawl my eyes out at Heavyweight. Do you listen to that show?

**Annie Jones:** [00:53:44] That is a good show. Like that is, that is some, Oh, that's some of the best storytelling. It's so good.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:53:50] It is so good. So like most people, I have different shows for different moods.

**Annie Jones:** [00:53:57] Yeah. Okay. I'm dying to know the [00:54:00] answer to this question, because again, you really are such an avid reader and you read pretty widely. Like, I feel like you read across a lot of different genres. What are you reading right now? What's got your attention right now?

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:54:09] Okay. You won't believe this while you might be because book launch, but this is in the last, um, you know, since 2021 started is the least I have read, I mean, in I guess I want to say a decade. I don't know. I mean, I just have had a really hard time reading. I had a hard time reading during the pandemic in general, but I could always read non-fiction always.

 And so I struggled with novels a bit in 2020, but I, I still read as many books as usual. Um, just a little way, a little bit differently. Well, in the last six, eight weeks, I, I just can not concentrate. My mind is absolutely full to the brim. But I did start, I'm going to mention this one, even though I just started it. So, you know, I'm not sure how it's going to go, but I, I tried a bunch of different things. There's [00:55:00] some things on my list I'm super, super excited to read.

And I tried them and I was like, Nope, I'm just not able to give this the attention I want to give it. So I tried a bunch of things, put them down. The only thing that has held my attention, I started a few days ago and it is *Five Wives* by Joan Thomas.

**Annie Jones:** [00:55:16] Okay. Tell me more.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:55:18] Okay. So this book was recommended to me by Sarah Bessey on 10 things to Tell You. She had it on her favorites list on a book episode last summer so, you know, eight months ago or whatever. And at the time it wasn't available in the US yet. And, but I put it on my list and I think I ended up buying it on Kindle. This is a fictionalized version of the five Christian missionaries who were murdered, Elizabeth Elliot's husband. And, um, am I speaking any language you understand?

**Annie Jones:** [00:55:50] Yes. Yeah. Elizabeth Elliott was and her husband,

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:55:53] Jim.

Jim. Jim. Yes. So actually the blurb is Five Wives is the fictionalized account of the real life [00:56:00] women who were left behind and their struggles with grief, with doubt, with doubt and with each other, as they continue to pursue their evangelicalism mission in the face of the explosion of fame that followed their husbands deaths. There, their husbands deaths were in some circles perceived as like martyrdom and some circles can, you know, perceived as like really, really dumb thing they attempted and died as missionaries.

 So this is, I mean, from what I understand, it is like, Barely fictionalized like, I feel like it is really about these five wives and so Sarah Bessey had super, super recommended it and that piqued my interest. But then I don't know, it was just sitting on my Kindle and I'd tried all these other things. So I finally gave it a go. I haven't finished it. So please take this with salt.

**Annie Jones:** [00:56:50] No, I'm, I'm intrigued. Well, I, this is why I love asking this question because it totally runs the gamut, the answers. And I had not heard of this book, so I'm mentally [00:57:00] taking note and I think. Anything that holds our attention right now does feel ever so slightly miraculous.

Like I have not been launching a book into the world, but I have also had a hard time in 2021. Like, it just feels like my, yeah my attention span is not kind of what I am accustomed to it being, I would much rather curl up and watch an episode of TV or something like that, but not even good TV, honestly, just, I don't know.

I have felt a little bit all over the place since, um, since the holidays really. So I like. Well hearing about anything that has kind of captured our attention in a time where it's really hard to capture our attention.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:57:37] Yeah, this is what's doing it for me. I don't know. I'll report back when I finish.

**Annie Jones:** [00:57:41] Please do. Uh, okay, Laura, I, again, don't want to keep you any longer, but I do want to give you a chance to kind of let people know aside from Share Your Stuff, I'll Go Girst, which they can buy from the Bookshelf or their other local independent bookseller. Where can people find you? What are you working on right now? I'm kind of [00:58:00] curious. Like, do we have another larger mean book in the works, what's happening? Where can we find you?

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:58:05] Well, I'll answer that quickly. This is a two book contract, so I am already spinning on another book that will be due by the end of the year. So I need to get cracking on that. Working on that.

I do have my weekly show podcast called 10 Things To Tell You where I ask a lot of these questions, a lot of these things that we're talking about, and then I answered them for myself. Sometimes they're solo shows, sometimes they're conversations, but that's a weekly place you can find me. I'm on Instagram every day @ Laura.Tremaine.

That's my favorite place too. Share all the things. And you know, if you are just looking for a website, 10 Things To Tell You, the number 10ThingsToTellYou.com, will just take you to the book, the show and my socials. Yay.

**Annie Jones:** [00:58:50] Thank you, Laura. This has been delightful. I so appreciate you joining me.

**Laura Tremaine:** [00:58:55] I've loved this conversation so [00:59:00] much, Annie.

**Annie Jones:** [00:59:09] From the Front Porch is a weekly podcast production of The Bookshelf, an independent bookstore in South Georgia. You can follow The Bookshelf’s daily happenings on Instagram at @bookshelftville, and all the books from today’s episode can be purchased online through our store website, www.bookshelfthomasville.com.

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Special thanks to Dylan and his team at Studio D Production for sound and editing and for our theme music, which sets the perfect warm and friendly tone for our Thursday conversations.

This week, I’m reading *How the One-Armed Sister Sweeps Her House* by Cherie Jones.

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We’re so grateful for you, and we look forward to meeting back here next week.