

# 012\_Episode 12\_Susan Cottrell Part 2 FINAL

Mon, 5/3 12:05AM 49:13

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

god, child, people, gay, love, afraid, cousin, lgbtq, parents, hear, person, question, relationship, scary, life, connor, church, talk, marry, kids



00:13

Welcome to Just breathe. The podcast focused on transforming the LGBTQ plus conversation and supporting you on your journey with your LGBTQ loved one. You are not



00:27

welcome to just breathe parenting your LGBTQ teen. My name is Heather Hester and I am excited to be with you to transform the conversation around loving and raising an LGBTQ child. Wherever you are on this journey. Right now, in this moment in time, you are not alone. So welcome back for part two of my interview with Susan Cottrell. I hope you're ready for more enlightening information and interesting insights. I don't want to make you wait any longer. So without further ado, the continuation of my interview with Susan Cottrell.



01:15

Yes, so my daughter is a musician, my younger. My, my youngest daughter came out as well. So we are in 245 of our kids identify as LGBTQ. And I always say when I'm speaking, I always say it's okay. It's okay. We love the straight ones too. And they always laugh because it puts you on the other foot. Right? So but our youngest daughter came out and she's a musician. And she was just nominated. She sang on a on an album, whether by Tyco Her name is saint sinner, her music name. And she was nominated for a Grammy. Grammy Stop it. Yeah. And my husband was one plus one. You know, she got a plus one.

Yeah, it's my husband. He was so it was he was the perfect person to take. He's been so good to her. supporting her we have supported her for so long, in her dream. And anyway, and they go to the Grammys, it's a it's an amazing event. And I just I have thought many times through this whole process, and when I've gotten to stay with her it or you know how cymbala I think What a tragedy, it would have been, if I had said, okay, church, Pastor, okay, I think you're right, I have to cut off community, I have to withhold community, and love and intimacy and approval and all the things a mother provides for my children, my two queer daughters, I have to do that. Okay. And, and look, first of all, she wouldn't be where she is without, and my other daughter either wouldn't have be flourished in their lives the way they are, if if their parents had diminished the relationship. But, but what what a thing I would have missed out on my gosh, Ryan's Sunday, I'm going to be an old lady. And I'm going to want to have a loving relationship with my children. And parents, we often act as though we are in control forever, not looking on the horizon and saying, you know, the bumper sticker be nice to your kids, they're going to choose your nursing home. You know, someday that she's going to be on the other foot. And I want to have a good relationship in those days, too. And I you know, I say that kind of tongue in cheek in it. It sounds like a selfless motivation. If it works, go ahead with it, but, but the truth is, I want this relationship with them. My entire life. I love them. Like any, you know, like, I can't even believe how much love capacity a human being has. Until they have children. And true. And, you know, you want to see the mama bear come out. Fight me over my kids. And you'll see it. Oh, yeah. And, and that's how we should feel. That's how God designed us to feel about our children to protect them to usher them into this into their time on planet Earth. And then they assure us out and it's a beautiful thing and we need that that continuity relationship. And and for me to throw a hissy fit and say, well, they're you know, I don't think you should date girls or you're not doing it the way or, or you know, one of you got a tattoo. I don't like that or you're not Going into church I approve of or any of that stuff. That's not mine to say, No, these are human beings with their own lives. And I am the Lucky, lucky, incredibly blessed person who ushered them into the world, and God to nurture them as human beings into adulthood. Right, I am not God, in place of God for them. The God that we that, that Jesus said, you got it all wrong about the one with a billion rules watching for you to step a toe how to plays, that is not our role. And we do that, because we think God does that. And we think it's our job to do it. And our religious institutions of this type, conditioned us to believe that and to do that, but it's not right. And it's not God, and it's not Jesus. And it's not the great leaders who really brought about beauty and love and God's love to all of us.



06:12

Right. I mean, that's, that's exactly it. And, and what, what beauty? Yeah, but we're so blessed to be around. Right. And to and to be a part of, yeah, and, and to, yes, it is scary.

Yeah. But it's, oh,



06:33

my God, a lot of good things are scary.



06:35

I love that said that said and I actually, I have this quote on my wall that says, you know, if it's scary, then it's something that I should do. You know, not not the scary where you're like, oh, alarm bells, I should be running in a dark alley that that's scary. But the scary you know, where? Who This is unfamiliar. This is uncomfortable.



06:57

Yeah, that's good. The scary that calls up the best of our courage, right? Yes.



07:04

Yeah, exactly. Right. And, and I just think, gosh, are we lucky to be moms in this?



07:10

Yeah. I mean, what would you do for your child? And we? And another thing is, people will say, well, you're just excusing it, because it's your child and like, you, first of all, zip your mouth. Unless you're going to ask me a question about this. You really don't have a right to tell me what I've done or, or do. But the truth is, I poured myself out in prayer, and begging God to make things clear to me, and God did make them clear. And I and I listened. But I, I toiled over this, and I read everything. And I fought to, to understand what I had internalized. And what does it mean, and what is God? What is the Holy Spirit? Who will lead us in all truth? really have to say to me about this? So will we say, Oh, I would die for my child? Okay, would you because that, that literally probably won't be called for. But would you die to your belief system, to your understanding, and instead, let God replace it with God's understanding? Well, these are my deeply held religious beliefs. I know. I know. But they're hurting your child. So that right there, they're hurting this community, and they're hurting you. And that right there says, okay, love God and love others and everything else also line up under that. So your deeply held beliefs aren't, aren't lining up under loving God and loving others. Well, I'm telling I do love them by telling them they're

going to hell. Now, that's how that's never demonstrated us love. Paul never even mentioned how just FYI. Okay, that should make us reconsider what we think about hell should net and Jesus only mentioned it. It was a literal thing. He was talking about a dump outside of the city called Ghana, and was translated as hell. Okay, well, that's worth noting, isn't it?



09:14

I mean, totally,



09:15

there's so much about all that. But I know



09:17

I'm just fascinated I, and I'm going right along here with you. so fascinating. And I love it. And I know everybody I know, everybody out there will be too this is just so wonderful. But I will I will keep moving. Otherwise, we're gonna have like a three hour interview. It's gonna be awesome. Um, but I i This next one is one that I've I've really thought so much about and prayed about and just spent a lot of time going through. So just a little background, you know, for you and for everybody out there. The summer right after Connor came out. We have my family has a family reunion. That's every other Summer, and they've been doing it for probably 50 years at this point. And, again, this is my mom's family, and they are all Church of God. And so at that point, the last reunion, Connor was out to me and to my husband, Steve, and to his sister Isabel, and a few a handful of friends, but nobody else nobody else knew. And so, during this reunion, a cousin of mine who is older than me, she's third cousin, I don't know, like third, fourth, how 12 times removed, I don't know how that works. But anyway, had kind of cornered me at one point and, and we have a couple of cousins who are out, and one attends several others do not. Anyway, she had a bee in her bonnet, and was just shredding these cousins, and saying things like, their mother was too overbearing, they are vile, the using the lovely lifestyle, you know, anyone who supports this lifestyle is equally damned. And you've written and talked about this so much about non affirming family members and non affirming friends? What is your advice on how we handle people like that in our lives? And you handle? because it tends to come at us very aggressively, right. And it's ugly, and hurtful. So how can we handle that, gracefully? Well,



11:35

I think it's important a couple of things to keep in mind before you even open your mouth. First of all, everything they're saying they learned, they internalized. And unless they are asking for your opinion, they probably won't hear it. So you can say a lot of things and get into the Scripture, you know, as scripture slugfest, and it won't go anywhere. So don't I would say, Don't waste your time. If people aren't actually asking you, because they don't. They they're not seeking to hear they're just seeking to speak. It doesn't mean don't say anything, it means don't expect to have a reasonable conversation. But I always like just take a step back and say, Wow, will remind me not to tell you anything. You know, anything intimate on my part, because I see how you talk about people. You know it because they're the ones who are really out of, they're the ones gossiping right now. So whatever the gay cousin is doing, this person is the one gossiping and slandering and bearing false witness. And so I like to keep it there. And say, you know, I, I'm not talking about the cousin right now. But I'm, I'm really intrigued by how you're speaking of them. And where you think that you get the permission to just trash our cousin. You know, that's where it needs to remain, not even the merits of the case. It's kind of like when you have a toddler, or a young child, and you argue with them. It's like, not that I have ever done that now. No.



13:34

But I've had Rob come in, when I was talking to the oldest one, he was two or four or something. And Rob will say, you really shouldn't get down to that level of conversation. I'm like, okay, duly noted. But in that scenario, to get down in the law, it is kind of, we might say, a two year old level, what they're saying, because it's something they just learn and regurgitated. That's what's right. And to say, you know, I don't I'm not here to talk about the other cousin, because they're, their life is not my business, unless I'm lifting them up. But I'm really intrigued by how you feel so free to talk about them. Wow. I, I'm, I'm amazed by that. I love the verse when Jesus says that, you know, the one who says, Oh, I thank God, I'm not like that other you know, other men. I am so righteous and pious. And the other one, you know, is saying, Oh, God, forgive me. For my situations, my sins. Okay. I, this person standing there as being that guy, right and say, Wow, I'm, I'm not as bold as you are to, to think that I have the answers for other people. Yeah. You just kind of do it in a way that kind of disarms them, that puts the spotlight right back on them in what they're doing, and This moment, because it's horrifying. If you look at it that way, you know, and and to sneak and come up with all kinds of things like, Oh my gosh, I love Joe, you know, the other cuz I, I love him i i'm sure not going to talk about him the way you are. But, you know, wow, I think I'm gonna go get some punch, you know?



15:18

Right right now that's so that is so good.



15:23

never talked to you about somebody else unless he was calling out what you were doing to that somebody else? He talked to the religious leaders about others because of their treatment of them. But he didn't tell you, you know, oh God, you're so and so it was such a derelict. Right? It did that. Moses didn't do that mama didn't do that. It's always about what what are what is God saying to you?



15:51

Right, that's so interesting. And also, I think kind of circles back to the What are you afraid of?



15:58

governance? What are you afraid of? And if somebody will be authentic enough, on that jumped in right there on you know, that's good. If somebody will be authentic enough where you can say even to that person, you know, what are you afraid of? How is this? What does this have to do with you? What are you afraid of about this? How does it affect your life? If so, and so's gay? You know, what, what are you afraid of? Really, it can be a very illuminating question if they're willing to be open.



16:29

Right. I think that's the that's the key point there. Right? Because that is a scary question. Yeah. If you're not ready for it, for sure.



16:38

I asked somebody, somebody a close relative, this was early in my journey on this. And she didn't agree with anything I'm saying. And I said, Is there any way that anything about this, you don't understand yet that maybe God has something to show you that you don't yet understand? What do you think she said? She said, No, no, no. Okay. Well, I'll, I'll get my latte to go. Right. And we'll see you later. Right.



17:08

You know, when I think that's a really hard thing to do, because we're also conditioned about family, right? So I think, especially when it's coming at us from family members, you know, it's easier when friends or neighbors say things and you're like, Okay, well, I don't need to talk to you anymore. Right. But when it's a family member, it's a different story, because we're very conditioned to think Well, we're related. blood related, right? Yeah. So it makes it a little bit trickier. But I think that's really important to your point is, you know, allowing, and giving ourselves the permission to say, Yeah, I choose my kid, and I choose God's love. And my kid and God's love are not jiving with this.



17:56

Right. And, you know, Yes, Mom, I love would love to have a relationship with you. And I hope we can do that. But if you're going to, if you're going to continue to say things about my child or to my child that are harmful, then I won't, I will not be around you, or they won't be around you. So you know it. I love you. I know, it's hard. I know what you're going through is hard. And you really were conditioned to believe this. And if, if this turns out if you turn out to be wrong about this, what else do you believe? That may be wrong? I know that scary mom, and I, I hurt for you, I feel for you. But that's my child. You know, of course, I'm gonna love and embrace them. And I won't let you say things that are harmful. What did I said that's harmful? Well, you're not, you're not hearing him. You're not believing what he's saying about himself. And you're trying to change them and you keep bringing, you know, scripture into it. And it's not helpful, you don't understand it's not helpful. So it's just, it returns them to their part. That's the thing that, that our Christian institutions that are not affirming have done wrong is given people permission to speak up and other to call people out. It's a call out culture, instead of calling in Jesus always called in. But instead we're calling out. And that's, it's no wonder everybody's all divided. So not not to let other family members call out your child. Because they don't understand the situation and so many, some of my relatives and I've talked to you about this. They don't even ask questions. I don't remember any of them. Saying, how is Annie? How is he doing? How's Hanna Instead, they're giving me their opinions. How do you? How did you get on this journey? How did you come? I mean, you were believed the evangelical stuff we did. How did you change so much? They don't ask that question. It's too scary. It'll end up dismantling things they don't want to dismantle. And so they, they're stuck just driving you back with their scriptures and their words and their, you know, belief system. They try, they try to hold you at bay doing that, but it's not the right thing. And if they, if they're not willing to hear another, you know, you've already heard their position you, you were in the, you know, that position they don't need. It's not equal time. It's like, well, I believe slavery is wrong because of this, but I, but it may be right because of the here's the slaves point of

view. But here's the slave owners, okay? slavery is not okay. And you bashing, my child is not okay. And you bashing this community is not okay, or trying to fix them or change and it's not. Okay. Now, if you have questions about it, I'm happy to talk about the journey. But I can't get but if that's not what you're here for, then, then let's not talk about this. Right. So.

 21:21

And I think that's really, thank you for saying all of that. Because that really is I think a lot of a lot of people find themselves in that position. And it's it's kind of a, you know, one of those positions that frees you for a little bit. Yeah. And you feel like, Okay, how do I handle this? Yeah. And

 21:42

well, and they stir up all your fears, and you're in right, and maybe I am wrong. Oh, my gosh, and maybe I'm going to hell, I mean, it that's how that's what the conditioning does. Yes. However, it that's how it keeps people subject to at all.

 21:59

Yes. And I think, you know, especially depending on where you are on this journey, right, you know, how new you are to it, or, you know, how open you are to, to learning everything? You know, all depends, it's all relative. But being comfortable with the fact that they will never ask, they don't want to know, and being okay with that. And that is not a reflection on you. Yes, that is there.

 22:30

No, has nothing to do with you. Correct. Nothing to do with you. So yeah, that

 22:38

that is the hard thing. One of one of the many. I think they also, it was I was wanting to talk a little bit about denial, but I really feel like talking about it talking about this is really, denial and fear are kind of sisters. Yes,



22:59

yes. Right. If I let this gay child out of this box, and face what's really going on? Who knows where that? No, no, no, you've got to get back in the box. That's why we do that.



23:12

Right? Yeah, because it's just too scary. It's too scary.



23:15

And too unfamiliar. For people who claim to have an intimate relationship with the creator of the universe. We live out of fear a whole lot.



23:26

Oh, goodness me do, you know, kind of extraordinary, it's



23:30

an extraordinary, it shows that we're not really, it's not really about God, it's about our church structure. Because if the God of the universe is climb up on my lap, and sit with me, and I'll rub your head, and I love you unconditionally, that should give us all the courage we ever need in our lives, ever, and we're afraid. Right? So and I think it's because we're trying to hold the system together. Because we don't really believe that God loves me. The way I am. We really don't you know, it's kind of like a look in the mirror. Yeah, I'm really good. I could lose 10 pounds. Doesn't every woman say that? Or, you know, oh my gosh, I'm getting gray hair. Like, it's this negativity against ourselves. And so how could God love me I have those bad thoughts. I'm whatever, and it's a misunderstanding of God is what it is. It's a misunderstanding of God. And it's a conditioned misunderstanding.



24:31

At a is Yeah. We have some work.



24:34

We have support.



24:37

That is part of the mission.



24:39

Yes. Yeah. Change this. Yes, people.



24:43

That's right. If I can change and Susan can change. Yeah,



24:47

everyone can change. Please, please try not to be afraid and go to the Holy Spirit and say what do you want to show me because what I'm doing is not working. I think my child is hurting by my response. And so what can I do? What do you want to show me? And listen. And if it's something positive, like love your child, you need to trust that you're hearing the Holy Spirit. I've never had a parent come back and say, yeah, God told me to throw my child out. I really haven't. It's their, it's their conditioned response. So go to the Holy Spirit and say, I need your help here and listen and, and set your beliefs at the door. While you do that, whatever beliefs you really need in your lap right now, the Holy Spirit will put them back in your lap. Okay? It's a very courageous thing to go with open hands with empty hands, and ask for an answer. And it can take some time, sometimes you'll hear crickets for a little while, because God is waiting for all that silt, sit to settle down to the bottom so that you can actually hear God's voice.



26:03

That is very true. All of the noise. There's so much noise. Yeah, right. And I have found, for me, just throwing that out there to this. Because I was really struggling with this, that I've taken to meditating, which is my, yeah, the one place that I can actually connect. Yes. And, and I find that when I'm sitting, you know, when I'm sitting at I'm very still and quiet. And not, you know, before I go to bed at night, because I always fall asleep. You know, so there's no, there's not gonna be talking done then. So it's that be that been very quiet and even get yourself in that time, you know, whether you're listening to music or something soft or whatever, that helps you clear your mind. And, and really be available to hear.



26:57

That's right.



26:58

And so there's no, I guess my point of telling you this is that there's no one right way. Yes. To do this. It's just Yeah, do it. Just do it.



27:08

Just do it. But But you know, but you have to be willing to step outside that constant tape, it's running in your head. Yes, it's gonna take, you know, a tape doesn't change, it keeps playing the same thing. I can play an album 100 times, it's always gonna say the same thing. Right? That tape in our head is gonna say the same thing until you step back from it, push pause on it, push stop on it. And, and seek a different tape. A different noise, sound whatever.



27:40

Right? That's exactly right. Yeah, my goodness. Well, moving on a little bit. I want to I want to switch to our kids, because I'm sure people have questions about kids. A few episodes ago, Connor and I collaborated to create a list for parents of what their teen wants them to know. Which was really fun and, and cotters. articulate, and he gives it to you straight. He's 19 years old. So there was some editing to be done. But it was, it was very much. It was so much fun, and really powerful, I think coming from Connor, who has struggled a lot with shame and depression. And that's even with our love and support. Yeah. So I love in your book, you have two chapters on what not to say to your kids, what not to say when they come out to you. And the two of them that I really, really like and that I'd love for you to talk a little bit about. Our it's a choice. And being gay is just like any other sin.



28:44

Yeah. Oh my gosh, yes. Those are so damaging. So if you're straight, listening to this, when did you choose to be straight? You didn't choose to be straight, you just were straight. And I know in our culture, default we do we default to straight. And so we think something else must have been a choice, but it's not a choice. Every gay person or LGBT person trans person that I've talked to, you know, the the, the universal reply is, oh my gosh, I discovered this about myself. I fought it. I didn't want this to be true. Of course they didn't

want it to be true. They know they live in a heteronormative world. Right now a world that favors being straight. They did not choose it. They what they chose to do is tick to tell you about it. That's what they chose to they chose to listen to what their heart was telling them. But when you know, when a boy is is five years old, and he knows it, you know if if a boy said I want to marry Claire everybody's saying, Oh, isn't that so sweet? He didn't know about sex yet. But he wants to marry the little girl in his class. And everybody's happy about that, like, they think it's cute. But if he says, I want to marry Josh, we panic and think he doesn't know what he's talking about. But it's the same thing. The attraction is the romantic attraction to that person. And, and things, flex we grow, we tend, you know, we understand ourselves better as we grow and all that stuff. But when it's there, it's there. And you're not going to change it. They didn't choose it. And the other thing you asked, being gay is just like any other. Yeah, it's not like any other sin. And and it's first of all, you're you're already concluding in that, that it's a sin. Right, you believe that? But that that's certainly up for debate, at the very least and, and your child is really trying to understand is it really a sin or not? So to say it's, it's a sin is, is damaging more than you realize? But it's not like any other sin, in that. You can't change it. So let's compare it to alcoholism, which is often compared to right, well, I'm not allowed to have, you know, alcohol, like be drunk all the time. Well, right. And if you stop getting drunk, first of all, you can stop getting drunk, that's within your power may be hard, you may have to go to a, but you can stop getting drunk. And when you do, your life gets better. Your family gets better, your relationships get better, you're able to hold down a job better, all of the things your your health gets better. Okay? So there's a positive outcome to that. If you're gay, you can't stop being gay. That's the first difference. And even if you push it into denial, your life gets worse. Your relate your self gets fractured, your relationship with others gets fractured. People are fighting against you trying to help you. Because they don't, they won't let you be who you are. And so it's this fracturing that happens. So stopping getting drunk will improve your life. If you're an alcoholic, denying your gay will make your life worse. It's all the difference in the whole world. It's the outcome. Yeah, I



32:28

love that analogy. I'm so glad you shared that I was hoping you would because and that's why, you know, there's so many every single one of them is so good. But I think these are two that we run up against a lot and are really important to



32:46

in the end. The other thing is, I'll hear a man say, you know, well, I can't have affairs, I have to, I have to restrain myself. I can't just have affairs. And so son, you can't have you know,

you can't have ever marry a man. You're like, Okay, first of all, I can just see his wife sitting and saying, Oh, really? So you would have affairs if it weren't against the rules? Right? Good to know. We'll talk about that later. Right. Okay. Secondly, that's like a homeless, that's like me walking down the street. And there's a homeless man there who has no resources. And I say, you know, I just have the one apartment. It's not very big. It's just, it's an apartment, I have to pay rent every month. And, you know, I'd love to have a house in France, but I don't have that. We're really in the same boat. He's like, You're an idiot, right? We're not in the same boat. How about I take your apartment, and you'd be on the street and tell me we're in the same boat. Right? It's the same thing. I just have the one wife that I can't have sex with other people that I as I would like to. And you know, you I'm just asking you to be celibate for the rest of your life. Which doesn't just mean you can't have sex, it means you can't have intimacy, you can't have partnership. You can't have action, that connection to to wake up in the morning with and say, oh, let's do that thing today. Okay, great. Wow. You know, you know, what are we going to do about the kid just this, this connection you have with a partner? And and the command is to love God and love others? Well, how can you love others? If you're terrified that you're going to fall in love and do the wrong thing? You really isolates you? So it's completely completely completely different?



34:38

Yeah. Thank you for saying You're welcome. apples and oranges



34:42

and apples and, you know, light posts. You're right.



34:47

Not even to fruits. Yes.



34:48

Not even to fruits. Yeah.



34:53

Oh, my goodness. Okay. Well, my last one. My last question is a big one. But I think I think

one that again, I think, kids, especially LGBTQ teenagers out there, and I think, probably specifically teenagers because that that tends to be the really angsty group and thoughtful group. But since coming out three years ago, Connor has become very anti anything Christianity. And he is currently saying that he is agnostic. And at first, when he would say this, I would just internally freak out, like, I've become very, very good at him telling me things and being like, Alright, on the inside, I'm actually like, freaking out. And so, after a time, I realized, well, of course, he's saying this, he's mad at God for creating this this way. Like he's trying to figure this out. And he is going through a process right now to try to figure out what I mean. So this is, I guess my question for you is, what advice do you give kids who are in this place? And who are just really struggling with their with their faith? Or if they even want to have a faith? Because Oh, my gosh, I'm so mad right now.



36:13

Yes. So I, I know that is probably the scariest thing for for a lot of parents is what about their faith? That's the question I had to what does this mean about her faith? And what does it mean about our faith? It's a, it's a big question. But you, I invite you as parents, to take a breath, and to relax, and to say, Okay, this is their relationship with God. And it may, it won't look like I think it ought to look or like mine looks, it's different, we have to understand they have been devastated by what they've been told, God thinks of them. And even if you didn't say it as parent, they heard it, they got it in the culture, if they were in any kind of church, or religious, you know, institution, they got that message, it's in our culture everywhere. And so you you would do be wise to just sit and let it go, and let them do what is in their heart to do, and let God revealed God's self to arch to your child, and not try to say, well, don't don't get away from God don't, what they're doing is they're detoxing, from a lot of hurt. And they're trying to understand what this really means they're seeking to be authentic. And they're seeking an authentic relationship with who God really is not who the church has told them God is because God is not who the church has told them God is. So give them all the time they need. And then the meanwhile, you would probably really benefit by letting yourself be detoxed from what you've been told about God, and say, okay, God, I'm haven't really told you this, because I'm not really allowed to, but I'm really angry. I'm angry at how my son's been treated, I'm actually angry that he's gay, that she's lesbian, that he's transgender, I'm angry, that you let this happen, because I did all these things to follow you. And our unspoken deal was he would protect me from any bad situations. And, and you didn't keep up with your end of the bargain. I know, I'm not allowed to say that as a Christian, or as a faithful religious person. But I'm going to be authentic with you be as authentic as your child has been in your own relationship, not with your, I mean, this is you and God. Right. Right. And, and let that and let God show you what's true about God. God has all the time in the world, and where we want everything to be together now. But we can let God show God's truth to us in due

time, and it will be much more satisfying. You didn't learn algebra in kindergarten, you had to build up to it. And God wants to show you truth about who God really is. But it has to be the the cup has to be emptied out of the other stuff first, before God can pull up pour in something new and refreshing to you. But don't be afraid of that process. God is eternal, right? And so we don't have to be afraid that my religion religious institution of origin is is not fitting for me right now. Oh my gosh, that means God is not real. No, it doesn't. It means your manmade Institute is faulty, right just to try to, to not be afraid that your child is going in a different direction agnostic means I don't know. And that's a right arrow place to be for a child who has been abused by their understanding of God. And and even if they say I'm an atheist, I don't believe in God, that's okay. God is not offended by that. You know, God, God believes in your child. So then you don't need to worry about that. But give it time and let it be and let your relationship morph transform the way it's, you're on this path for it to do and, and meet up again down the road way down the road, with your child about it and see where you are, then it will be really damaging if you try to hold them to the concept of God, you're afraid they're getting away from all you'll do is really frustrate them and drive them farther away, you will drive them farther away.



41:03

I used to love Love, love love pizza. And then I worked in college, I worked at pizza places where you could have all the pizza you want, you know all that all the time. And I got where I didn't eat pizza for, I don't know, 10 years not voluntarily. Let that was the only thing there. Well, now I really like pizza again. But it took a long time. And and there's nothing wrong with pizza. But I had had too much too often. And I needed a break. And they've had too much of God shoved down their throat by their their church institution. And their upbringing. And so you have to let them unfold.



41:42

They'll find makes a ton of sense. They I love that. Thank you. Thank you very much. Because I think that just the visual of that is, is great of them being able to detox everything right? They've got to just



41:57

Yeah, but if heard of all that is really in a real God and you don't have to be afraid. Right? It's in the institution, then yeah, you're you're going to be afraid because they're not coming back to the institution. Yeah, no. Yeah. And they just they don't they're not

welcome there. They don't belong there. Well, that's it.



42:14

Yeah. It is hurtful to be there. And that's, that is. That's it. But I think helpful advice to for us as parents to detox all of that, right? Yes.



42:23

Yeah. Yeah. And I found that and I've heard this in our group from so many other parents. I have found that I am much more loving now. more compassionate, more tender hearted, more inclusive. I see people the way I didn't see people before. And I'm way less judgmental. I would never have said I was judgmental. I was judgmental. The church grooms that in us. And and I had to really step back and and let God work something different in me and I, I love who I am so much more now than who I was back then. Oh my gosh. And I'm freer. It's for freedom, that crisis that is free. Galatians five one tells us. I am so much freer now than I ever was. Yeah.



43:17

I that's absolutely. I mean, that's exactly right. And it's so beautifully put. And I think, you know, so important for people to really hear that, because that's exactly what it is. It allows us to be who we are authentically meant to be. Who we were created to be in this world. Yes. And, you know, for whatever amount of time occurred before. That was not who we truly are. And so yes, this this shift in this growth is scary. It's uncomfortable, but it's really beautiful.



43:57

going off to kindergarten. So Ryan, college, it was your first job. So it was getting married. What are those things?



44:06

That's exactly it. Yeah. That's it. It's part of life. That's right, right. We're growing and changing.



44:13

Word is unknown. That's all correct. Yeah. My second year of college you like oh, you know, you're showing the newbies around.



44:21

Bring it on? Exactly, exactly. Oh, my gosh. Well, we're gonna we're gonna end with one of my favorite quotes of yours, which is an everybody should have this pinned up on their bulletin board. Real love accepts people for who they are with room for who they may become. And I love that addition and it and it speaks so well to the beautiful work that you are doing and that you and Rob are doing. And I really just want to know how can we as a community, help you with your mission and your frayed hearts Mission



45:02

just send people send people my way, send them to [friedhearts.org](http://friedhearts.org) send them the TED Talk to watch because it really touches a deep place and people get it done. And, you know, invite them to get mine on gay, or the parents course online and, and to go and to get in our parents groups, our moms groups and our dads group, we have a special trans group also for moms and trans kids. But get in the groups and get support. But you know, have them connect with me and email me to get in the group and email me to get the book on hell. It's I didn't write it a friend wrote it. But okay, powerful. So yeah, and, and find understanding, you know, we're in this together on this journey. And I, I hear your heart, love for your child and, and, you know, just don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. All the angels that appeared to humans in the Bible always said, Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. It's okay. It's okay. And I will write to you Don't be afraid. This is good. This is not outside God's plan. This is part of God's plan. Yes, yeah. It is and daughter, part of God's plan. Don't, don't be afraid.



46:19

Thank you. Very beautiful place to end and I I just am so grateful for all of your time today and for being here with me and with all of us. I hope you all enjoy these two episodes with Susan. It is my sincerest desire to bring you guests and information that answers questions, encourages new ones and lightens you educates you, brings you peace and most of all,



46:51

reminds you



46:52

that you are not alone. Until next time