

8/2/18

Week 31: WFL

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Anthony Evans

Sheila: Hi! Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I'm Sheila Walsh and this dude here is Randy Robison. I'm excited about today's show. Not often do we get a guest who not only writes some pretty profound things but has one of the most amazing voices that you will ever hear. I don't want to take up any more time. Please welcome with me Anthony Evans.

Anthony: Hey guys! How are you doing?

Randy: He has an amazing voice. He is "The Voice."

Sheila: Oh! I voted for you.

Randy: They named a show after him, *The Voice*.

Anthony: No! No they didn't.

[Laughter]

Sheila: Before we get into other stuff, what was that experience like of being on *The Voice*? Of having Christina Aguilera turn her chair to him and say, "I pick you."

Anthony: It was a very interesting situation. But when I had the opportunity to do the show, I initially felt guilty. Like I felt guilty for going outside of worship leading and what I was called to do. And my dad said, "Anthony, you are not salt of the shaker, you are salt of the earth. Now

go, don't compromise your faith, and go have a great time." And it brought in the scope of who I am as an artist, as a worship leader, as a believer. It reinforced in me that this is where I'm supposed to be. Like part of my time is supposed to be spent here. I don't have all of this information just for me.

Sheila: I think that's great. To learn that God is alive and well outside of the church as well as within our doors. Was it a scary experience or a stretching experience or both?

Anthony: It was stressful at times and stretching. I wouldn't say -- it wasn't scary because I came in kind of having -- I've been doing this already so I wasn't -- I was already doing it to a certain degree so it wasn't scary but it was stressful at times. And then it stretched me beyond what I normal --.

I remember sitting down with Christina Aguilera and my mentor, Jewel and she was like, "You sing so upward. Like you're very like upward."

I'm like, "Yeah, that's what worship leading is."

So it was stressful to have to try to flip everything that I knew and have moments where it was like listen to my voice. It was a different experience but it was good nonetheless.

Randy: You cover this and a whole lot more in your new book, *Unexpected Places*; right?

Sheila: It's so good!

Anthony: Yes. I cover quite a bit.

Randy: What were some of those *Unexpected Places*?

Anthony: Oh man! One of the major ways and major moments that God met me during a time of severe heartbreak was during a broken engagement. I talk about that later on in the book. I

remember initially starting to write it and being like, do I want to talk about all this? Do you know what I mean? Do I want to go this deep into my personal life? But that's the whole -- I wanted to base the book on authenticity, vulnerability and transparency; that was how I wanted to approach it.

But one of the ways God met me was in that place of being, I'm an artist, I'm super emotional. I look like a football player, some days I have the emotions of a ballerina -- whatever. You know what I mean? I'm okay with it at this point.

[Laughter]

But I had to go and lead worship a day after a broken engagement. Like get on the stage and sing about how faithful God is and how he is everlasting and will never fail you. And I remember feeling completely just failed in that moment. I said to the audience, I probably shouldn't have said this but I pulled the mike up to my mouth and was like, "I don't feel like doing this." I saw my road manager in the back of the room go... ?

[Laughter]

But I made a decision to worship in spite of the way that I felt, not because I'm so noble, because I was on the stage, had a microphone, it was time to do it. But I'd made the decision to worship in spite of the way that I felt and that was a place God met me on the -- that was my deepest, 'til this date, that's the deepest worship experience I've ever had. And that's an unexpected place that God is going to meet you is the day after that in such a deep way.

Randy: Are you suggesting that when you worship, when you don't feel like it, God will change the way that you feel?

Anthony: Yes. My dad always tells me... in that book you hear a lot of "Tony Evans says." You know what I mean? I tell people, I didn't plagiarize because I have the same name so it works out nicely.

[Laughter]

Yes, he says your feelings follow your feet. Move in the direction...

Sheila: One of the things that I love though when you share that experience about getting honest with the audience and saying, "Look, I don't feel like doing this but I'm going to do it" was how that impacted the audience. Because you know when we pretend on stage we invite the audience to pretend. When you get real on a platform, it somehow unlocks things in those who are listening as well.

Anthony: 100 percent! You're Sheila Walsh. You just say some powerful stuff. That's exactly what happens! As crazy as it is, Jewel said to me, going back to *The Voice*, she said, "Your audience can smell a rat. They can smell a rat." Whether you're in worship music, whether you're in Christendom, whatever, they can be like, "Hmm, there is something about this I'm not getting into." The audience that day, there wasn't a dry eye in the room. I'm sure some of them were thinking, we just came to worship. This is too much. But there was a lot of them, most of the audience was right there with me because in their own way, they could identify and they were going to worship in spite of the way they felt in that moment.

Sheila: When I read that story it reminded me of Mary of Bethany taking her oil, her jar which was her future, probably worth like \$15 grand and breaking it and pouring it out on the feet of the savior. To me, you took your brokenness and poured it out and invited the audience. But one of the things when I started to read your book, I had a long flight back from Australia, 17 hours, so this was good reading, you start out by describing as a young boy what it was like to watch your dad preach in a huge stadium. What kind of impact did that have on you?

Anthony: It had a dual impact. Having my dad as a father is the greatest blessing, both of my parents, is just the greatest blessing ever. But to be 11, between 10-13, 14, were the huge Promise Keeper years. My dad would take us with him which was amazing but it was like stadium after stadium of listening to guys respond to the preaching of Tony Evans. I remember

sitting at Texas Stadium with my father, the audience is roaring because he is starting to do one of his great analogies where he can just spit out these -- I mean he is just a monster -- in a good way!

[Laughter]

I remember listening to the audience roar and my first thought was I can never be him. That was what I was thinking. He didn't know this because I was just kind of a quiet shy kid and my thought was I could never be him. I kind of, in the book, I talk about how I journeyed into my own, the realization of my own faith outside of that and how God had plans for me that was for me.

Randy: Thinking you could never be him is probably the best thing that ever happened to you. Because God said, "I didn't make you to be him."

Anthony: Exactly.

Sheila: You talk about moving to Nashville, because you think, well, move to Nashville, that's where all the Christian musicians are. This will be just amazing. We'll all love each other, we'll all love Jesus and experiencing it just a little differently than -- was that disillusioning for you?

Anthony: It was because I think I was naive to a certain degree. I had never, again, just been outside of this world here, in Dallas, and this is a Tony Evans kind of bubble and my environment was that. Yes, I was naive going into it. I was 25 so I wasn't like a dumb kid but kind of a dumb kid. Like excited to be here. This is great! And I wasn't aware of the things that kind of go on in some ways in the industry. It was very eye opening for me. Nashville, for me, was redefining what success is because I know now that you can have a hit song or whatever but then you cannot go write a check for peace after you have that "hit" moment in your life. So I had to redefine success and it is am I doing what I'm called to do? And am I at peace? Because you cannot go purchase it after you've gone and chased the American dream.

Randy: So your title, the title of your book is *Unexpected Places*. Did you have some expected places that you maybe didn't get to?

Anthony: You know, there are quite a few moments. Most of the *Unexpected Places* were because I didn't end up where I was expecting to be. So yes, there are tons of those moments where I thought I was going one direction and I ended up in a whole other one. A lot of that has been in Hollywood, actually.

Randy: You talk about God taking you in zigzags.

Anthony: Yes! You rarely get from point A to point B when you're a believer or in life in general. But when you're a believer and you've asked God for something, it is rare in my experience and I'm sure in ours if we talked about it, that you get there in a straight line. It is zigzags. But in every destination, every place you end up on that zigzag road, there is a lesson in that place. God promises that, that he is going to work all things together for our good and that he is going to finish what he started. But a lot of us think you started it and we're supposed to be going in a straight line and why aren't we going in a straight line? If you become okay with the zigzags, you will learn so much.

Randy: I think that happens a lot, especially younger and then the older you get because you're not old yet but you're older than you were.

Anthony: The makeup artist thought I was like almost 50.

Randy: Oh! We'll fire her later.

Anthony: I know! Right?

Sheila: She's gone!

[Laughter]

Anthony: Sorry. I didn't mean to tell on her on TV, my fault.

[Laughter]

Sheila: No! That's what we love about you. Honesty! Honesty!

Anthony: She was just talking.

Randy: We have to make nice because she is doing our makeup again. You're off the hook.

Sheila: Can I ask? Oh you're still on a question?

Randy: Whatever I was saying. The zigzags, the older you get, the more you can look back and you can go, oh I see what you were doing there, God. Oh, you taught me here. And the zigzags start to pay off.

Anthony: Exactly. I make sure that on those zigzag trails in life I put stones to be like remember what God did back there. It makes you more confident to step into the next thing. Absolutely!

Sheila: Here's what I wanted to ask you. As I was reading this, I went from being in a small Baptist church in Scotland where my great, great grandfather made the communion table, this little bubble. And after seminary I worked with the B.B.C. in London. I hosted a live rock gospel show. I was the only Christian with 87 members of staff. It was actually one of the best things that God ever did because you don't even notice your light is getting dim if you're surrounded by other believers. But suddenly you find yourself in a place where your life has to speak louder than your words. Did you experience that in Hollywood?

Anthony: That's my whole experience in Hollywood. Is sitting down in my -- I'm talking to people, one that aren't church people. Christina Aguilera sat down with me in her house and said,

"Okay, so you're a worship leader. Now tell me what you do."

Sheila: Wow! How can you explain that?

Anthony: Exactly. I was using churchy words and all this stuff that I thought while I was talking to her, lamb that was slain sounds very cultish if you don't know what I'm talking about. Do you know what I mean?

Sheila: It's a dead animal, people!

Anthony: So my whole experience has been that. I've had to stand strong in my faith but also make it to where I can communicate to people who aren't from the same background I'm from. I've been able to share in a new and a fresh way not, in a place where you would never expect that.

Randy: That's great because recently you had the opportunity to do some theater kind of stuff; right? Tell me a little bit about what that is because I'm not a big theater guy but I also want to hear how you got the part. Because that's a zigzag; right?

Anthony: It is a big zigzag -- that was a crazy zigzag. Yeah. I recently had the opportunity to play the role of Beast in a live production of *Beauty and the Beast* for Disney. So a director -- and this was along with Zooey Deschanel was billed, Kelsey Grammer, I mean Rebel Wilson, Taye Diggs, that's the cast and me, and I'm the Christian singer that shows up at this. But it was crazy how it happened. Do you really want to hear it?

Randy: Yeah, I do.

Anthony: A friend of mine and her husband, I went on a trip with them and they said, "Anthony, you need to post more stuff of you singing."

I don't really do that because I think it is kind of weird to always be like, "Listen to my

voice!" -- on social media. It's just kind of weird.

Randy: You can get away with it. It would be weird if I did it.

Anthony: Long story short, I posted it, Hugh Jackman who is -- Hugh Jackman!

Randy: You posted what?

Anthony: I posted a video of me singing a song from the movie *The Greatest Showman* which is a great, great film. I sang a couple lines, Hugh Jackman reposted it like right after I put it up.

Randy: The star of the movie.

Anthony: Yeah! The star of the movie, you know Wolverine reposted it.

[Laughter]

Randy: Different movie.

Anthony: Yeah, different movie but people -- so anyway. The writers from the movie obviously saw it there.

Fast forward a couple of weeks and I'm at the gym. I'm never home on the weekends, was home that weekend and I got a text from the writer saying, "Hey, Anthony, are you in town?" Come to find out the girl who sings the song in the movie is sick and they're having a pre-Oscar party and they saw my version and said, "Can you come and sing it tonight at this Oscar party?"

The director for *Beauty and the Beast* was at the Oscar party and said, "Do you want to sing a song in *The Beauty and the Beast*?"

And I was like, "Sure! Whatever you need."

Then a press release comes out: "Anthony Evans is Beast in *Beauty and the Beast* with Kelsey Grammer and Taye Diggs."

So that's been my life. But it was a very unexpected place and it's a very fine example of being a preparation, the things that seem insignificant in our lives are God working, God will work them together for something that is very significant. So I've learned to not resent the moments where early in my career I was singing for ten people at whatever. You know what I mean? No, that is just as important as this because it leads to that.

Sheila: Those kind of things change you. I remember, I wanted to go to seminary in Glasgow so I could stay at home. And my mom, who raised three children by herself said, "No, I think you should go to London. You need to know the God that you trust will be with you wherever you go."

And it was one of the greatest gifts that my mom ever gave me because otherwise I would have stayed in this nice little, this is where I know God lives, until you understand that everywhere you go God is speaking. And people need to see a living example of people who -- who don't just do the language of the kingdom but live a life that as Peter said will raise questions. People want to say, "Why do you live the way you live?" So I thank God that he's placed you where he's placed you.

What are some of the fun things you have coming up?

Anthony: Oh well, this book is a very exciting thing; that's a whole different thing for me. When the publisher first called I thought they were trying to get to my dad or my sisters. I was like -- you don't want me.

[Laughter]

I had a lot of that coming up and then I also get the privilege of producing and being at the

events with my dad and my sisters. So we get to do family on the road and get to take the ministry out on the road.

Randy: But now you're not just a son, you're like, I'm the dude from Hollywood. Listen to me.

Anthony: A little bit.

[Laughter]

Randy: The truth comes out.

Anthony: Dad, I'm Beast. Come on!

[Laughter]

Sheila: I'm a prince underneath this fur.

Anthony: Exactly!

Randy: One serious question for you. So we're sitting here and we're going okay, crazy stuff happening, singing career, Hollywood, Nashville, already a well-known established preacher's son, famous whatever she is these days, actress, author, speaker; right?

Anthony: Accidental actress.

Randy: But what about the person who is sitting at home who is like, I can't sing, my parents are not well known, I maybe wasn't even raised in a church, can God use me?

Anthony: To that person at home, God is so masterful at taking our messes, I'm going to actually talk to the person, you're right there. God is so masterful at taking our messes and making them into miracles. So taking what we have and multiplying it. It doesn't matter -- this

sounds so trite but it doesn't matter where you've come from or what you think he can do. He can do exceedingly above and beyond whatever you could ask or imagine. You don't have to start with anything with him. God is a master at taking what you have, wherever you have it and once you give it to him he will make it into something beautiful in very unexpected ways. That is the God that we serve.

Sheila: I love that! And one of the things that I love about the way that you write, I've read your dad's books. Your dad is a master at what he does and he writes one way but you write, there is like a melody on each page. You write very melodically. That's a really beautiful thing. Not everyone can write that way. You can almost hear the music in your words.

Anthony: That means so much coming from you. For y'all to say that I'm good at writing, that means a lot because I know you've been doing this for a while. So thank you very much. That was very intimidating for me to write with the lineage of my dad. But the publisher also mentioned that. She was like, there is a cadence, there is a pace here. You can see the resemblance of you in your dad but there is a whole different thing happening. So it's been encouraging. Again, stepping out into this unexpected place because me writing a book was not something that I thought I would do and God on the other side of it has done amazing things already and just moving beyond.

Randy: To me that's the lesson. You give God your life, your trust and you just step out and he takes you places you never ever dreamed you could be.

Sheila: One of the things that I wondered as I finished reading the book was if you could look back to that 11-year old boy standing at the side in the stadium listening to his dad, listening to the crowd, what would you say to him now?

Anthony: Oh man! I've never been asked that, Sheila. I would tell him that as vast and as big as this feels to you, God has a very specific purpose that is exactly the same. I don't mean a stadium of yelling people. I mean the impact that he has for you, in Hollywood when it's a conversation with one person can resound and echo just as loud as what's happening in this

stadium right now. I would tell him that. Yeah!

Sheila: That's beautiful! When you hear God's "yes" over your life no matter where the place is, that makes a huge impact.

Randy: It does. I would say to the people watching that just that one act of obedience can have reverberations around the world in ways you can't even imagine. And it doesn't necessarily have to be singing or speaking or writing, it can be as simple as giving. You can change the world by changing someone's world. I'm going to show you how. Would you take just a second to watch this with me and Sheila? Watch this!

On the mission field

Announcer: The love a mother has for her children can be seen in many ways as she cares for them. When they run and play it brings a smile to her face. But for Hengmum there are no smiles, only fading memories like these clothes that once belonged to her five children who died because of waterborne illnesses.

Open Captions:

>> I feel so sad because my children died and I can't see them again.

Announcer: Hengmum had seven children in all. Her fifth child died one and a half years ago but the pain is still with her.

Open Captions:

>> My baby got sick very fast with fever and diarrhea and then died. I feel so hopeless. I lost something very important to me. I tried everything to help my baby.

Announcer: When asked what she hoped for in the future for her two remaining children, Hengmum had a very simple request.

Open Captions:

>> If I had clean water it would be a joy and then my family might not get sick and die.

Announcer: We can help make Hengmum's plea become a reality by drilling a freshwater well. And by doing so, all the mothers in her village can experience the joy of having clean water for their children.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: It's not much to ask for really; is it? I can't imagine -- I can't imagine burying one child. The thought of burying five children is -- I can't even go there.

I think of the number of times I said with my own life, "Lord, I wish I could do something more for you." Maybe that's something you've said yourself but you know in scripture where Jesus said, "Whenever you did it for the least of these, you did it for me." The thought that when you and I actually put our faith into action and do something, that we could be an answer to the prayers of a mom like that.

I've had the privilege, it's kind of severe mercy of kneeling down with some of these moms and praying for their children by name, praying that they'll be able to hold on for life. You and I can change this. It is not a lot. We can make a difference. God has given us so much and so little can -- maybe you think, well, I don't have a ton.

Do you remember how Jesus in the huge crowd of people noticed a widow putting in like just two little mites? And he says, "What she has done is more than everybody." God knows how much you have. And if you don't have a ton, and you're able to give a little, we'll join it together with ours and together we'll answer the prayers of these moms who just want clean water for their children.

Randy: When you're standing there next to one of these waterholes and you're not just seeing the film on the water but you're smelling it and you know that this is all there is, you just think, this has got to change.

The good news is we can change it. That's what we're doing. You can change it. It's a big problem but it's not too big when we all come together and we just do something. We can give clean drinking water to people around the world. Our goal this year is over 400 wells in over 15 nations. That will take us to a lifetime of drilling. We'll pass our 6,000th well. We can do this because we know we've done it. We can tell you it works because we've seen it work in the past. It just takes us coming together. One well costs \$4,800 on average. Can you provide one well? If you can, I would encourage you to do it. Go online, pick up the phone and do it. For a lot of people, that's a lot of money. I understand. But you can partner with other viewers. \$48 will provide water for a lifetime for ten people.

So will you go to the phones? Will you go online? Make the best gift you can. Just do

something. Be a part. We've got some nice gifts for you that we'd like to send to you just to remind you of your participation in giving Water for LIFE. Sheila, we're making a difference.

Sheila: I've been in these villages, Cambodia, Angola. And one day I'm in a village where there is no clean water and the children are silent and I've been in a village the next day with a water well and the way kids should be. Together you and I can change the world.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Today a mother living in extreme poverty will do the unthinkable: give her children dirty, diseased-filled water that she knows could kill them. With no other choice, what's a mother to do?

With your help, clean water is on the way. *Mission: Water for Life* provides a new beginning for thousands of children and their families; a bright future with better health.

With your gift today you can help drill 400 water wells in remote villages in 15 nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for five people. A gift of \$48 will help provide for ten. \$72 will provide for 15 people. And \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With your gift we'll send you *The Miracles of Christ; What Living Beyond Impossible Looks Like*. Filled with scriptures, prayers, and stories of Jesus' miraculous power, James Robison adds insight about how to walk in faith and live beyond the impossible.

With your gift of \$100 or more, request the Morning and Evening coffee mug set. Each mug features beautiful artwork and scripture from Psalm 92:2, a wonderful reminder of God's faithfulness each day.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people, or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well. And you may request the beautiful "Bridge of Faith" framed canvas print by Thomas Kinkade.

Please call, write or make your gift online!

End of clip

On the mission field

Ralph: These people have never had clean water to drink. We have heard stories of burying

family members, children -- just through the decades it's brought death. Today all that changes. We're going to have beautiful, clean water coming up from the ground. We're going to establish a brand-new well in this village, not just for this family but it's going to serve about 300 families.

[Cheering]

Ralph: *LIFE Outreach* this year will have drilled our 6,000th well in 2018. We want to celebrate that for sure and we have -- serving over six million people. But I want to remind all of our viewers, there are still over 700 million people around the world who don't have access to clean drinking water. So please stay in the fight. Keep giving, we'll keep going.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much. And if the lines are busy, please keep trying. And when you call and give a gift we want to send you *Unexpected Places*. I get to read a lot of books and I love it but I highly recommend this book. If you've ever felt like you've started off and you don't know where you're going, this book will be like kind of like a light through the forest. I really recommend it.

Randy: Do it! Get the book when you give today.

And you're going to miss something right now, I'm sorry! But Anthony is going to sing for us here in the studio. But you can catch it if you go to our YouTube channel:

YouTube.com/*LIFETodayTV* or if you have a Roku, download the *LIFE Today* Roku channel and you can see Anthony. The rest of you get to see him now! Do you want to hear him sing?

[Cheers & Applause]

We're looking forward it. Appreciate you being here man! Appreciate you watching. Join us

every day on *LIFE Today*.

Sheila: See you next time!