

## INTERVIEW WITH JUDGE TIM FALL ON FAIRNESS FOR VICTIMS OF ABUSE

*Hi. This is Natalie Hoffman of [Flyingfreenow.com](http://Flyingfreenow.com), and you're listening to the Flying Free Podcast, a support resource for women of faith looking for hope and healing from hidden emotional and spiritual abuse.*

NATALIE: Welcome to Episode 106 of the Flying Free Podcast. Today our guest is Tim Fall. He's a superior court judge in northern California. He also teaches judicial ethics to experienced judges throughout his state, and he's a writer. He's got a brand new book that is just out in which he writes about the pressures of being a judge and his battle with mental illness. I know Tim from his Facebook posts where he advocates for women and other marginalized members of society. Welcome to the podcast, Tim.

TIM: Thank you very much for having me here.

NATALIE: Let's start by having you share a little about why you, a male judge, have an interest in supporting and encouraging women in your profession as a judge and in the church and society in general. I want to know what the connection is, because we don't typically see men coming out in droves to support women or other marginalized members of society. What is the connection for you? What's the drive?

TIM: Like a lot of people my age who grew up in California, the experience of growing up through the civil rights movement and the women's lib movement was something that formed a lot of my attitude about people who are marginalized. Not that I knew what that phrase meant way back then, because I was just a kid. But it had a big impact on who I am and what I see and value around me.

Then, becoming a Christian in my early twenties, I would read the Bible, and it says a lot about people who are oppressed. Jesus, in His first recorded synagogue sermon, if you look at Luke 4, preaches on freeing the oppressed and helping people who are in need, people who are marginalized and cast out of society. I guess I came at it from both directions: my life experiences and my faith.

NATALIE: I'm curious to know then, as a judge... A lot of the women who listen to this podcast, most of them, are either living in abusive relationships, they are trying to get out of them, or they are already out. But many of the women have come in contact with the judicial system in the effort of trying to get divorced from an abusive spouse. It's a scary experience.

I'm sure there will be women listening to this episode who are anticipating being in court with their abuser, facing a judge, and having their whole future lie in the hands of a judge. I'm wondering if judges receive any kind of training to understand where these people are coming from, these people who are like the underdog, who are trying to get out of terrible situations and who may be used and powered-over by other people?

TIM: I don't know what happens with judicial education in other states, but in California we have mandatory education for judges who are going into the family law assignment that includes domestic violence education and domestic violence dynamics. Same thing in criminal law where we deal with crimes that are charged under what would be called domestic violence statutes or situations. There's a lot of education in that.

Generally, we also have education about implicit bias, microaggressions, bringing a fair appearance – not only the actual fairness of a courtroom but the appearance of fairness in courtrooms – to people who are coming in and may not really understand what is going on in the courtroom. So it's not just people who are in a domestic violence situations, necessarily. Those trainings have a much broader application.

NATALIE: Okay. Do you think California is an outlier that way? Or maybe you don't know?

TIM: I have no idea what other states do with their judicial education.

NATALIE: That seems amazing to me. My follow up question to that would be how can judges help if they are supposed to be unbiased and just be looking at... This is a common thing that happens. A woman will come and not necessarily have the paper proof or paper trail that I feel judges are looking for and needing.

Oftentimes because of that, in the equitable ruling, because there is no proof of anything and it's not a criminal case, they end up losing a lot of... Maybe things are equitable as far as financially (although sometimes that can go wonky too), but as far as custody of children and that kind of thing, it doesn't always go in their favor. How do judges even parse that out and be able to tell the difference, because everyone has the same story? The men are saying, "She..." Abusers will just accuse the woman of abusing them, so how do judges figure all of that out?

TIM: I don't know that I would say that having the paper trail is what judges look for or need. I make a lot of decisions in cases where it is just oral testimony that is leading to the decision, and both in criminal and in family law those decisions can often be a finding of domestic violence having occurred. I'll sometimes have cases that are not

necessarily custody. It could just be a restraining order that is being requested in a domestic violence situation.

We have a process in California to pursue what is called a Domestic Violence Restraining Order. A lot of times there is no paper trail. There are no texts. There are no voicemails left. I'm just listening to someone testify about what happened and then can make a finding based on that there was violence and that the restraining order is warranted. I don't know what other judges are doing in other states, but in California we are trained in how to evaluate the evidence and make the orders accordingly.

I think another thing, and you mentioned it in the context of custody, in California, custody determinations are made based on what's in the best interest of the child. Going outside of domestic violence for a moment, let's say one spouse cheated on the other spouse. The aggrieved spouse, woman or man, comes to court and says, "He had an affair, so give me the kids and deny him all custody." That's not how we make custody decisions, based on who had an affair. We make custody decisions based on what's in the best interest of the kids. That affair may have been in a circumstance that does then touch upon what's in the best interest of the children. It may not.

Now let's get into domestic violence. For one person to say, "She had an affair," and then she says, "And he beat me," then we are talking about the affair not necessarily going to be seen by the judge as being of equal importance to the best interest of the kids as the domestic violence. In California, if there's a finding of domestic violence, then there's an automatic presumption that the perpetrator does not get custody.

NATALIE: Wow!

TIM: For the perpetrator to get custody rights, they need to somehow overcome that presumption with evidence that shows that they are still someone who should have some sort of custodial right because that would be in the best interest of the child. So the burden then shifts. Once domestic violence is found against the mom or the dad, then that parent bears the burden of proving that it is still in the best interest of the children for them to have some level of custody rights.

NATALIE: That's very fascinating. Maybe you can just give me your opinion. I come out of this very conservative background and upbringing. These were all the biased thoughts that were in my head, okay? California is just this flaming liberal state that wants to... It was all negative. All these beautiful, Bible-belt states were the ones that were the godly ones that cared about the people. They were flinging guns all over the place, but they were the ones that cared about people.

Coming out of all that, doing a bunch of deconstructions and trying to get my bearings on life, it feels like... Most of the women I work with come out of the Bible-belt. That is where there is rampant abuse going on. Those same people are running into so many roadblocks in the legal system trying to keep their kids safe, because the bias in those places seems to be (based on my talking with the women) more towards the male rather than the female, and it doesn't matter what the testimonies are. There is just this natural bias. Can you talk about that?

TIM: I would say that in California there is as much abuse going on, domestic violence going on, per capita as anywhere else, probably. But it's the cultural issues that you must overcome. If you're in a region where the patriarchy is strong, then when someone comes in with a domestic violence claim it may be a matter of, "Yes, he is guilty of domestic violence; however, the man is the head of the household, so we are not taking the children out of his life." That's a cultural issue. I'm not talking about legal matters right now, I'm just talking culturally. So how much support is that woman going to get in her community, church, social clubs, the kids' schools, whatever it might be?

Then you come out to a place like California where the patriarchy is not as strong. It's not that it's non-existent here, but it's not as strong. We don't have someone saying, "The man is the head of the family, and therefore we are going to culturally or socially still have a bias toward the man." There may be other biases that do still do that. There are a lot of things in the law that are baked in from centuries ago that we are still finding will have an effect on legal issues in lots of areas of the law. So it's not that cultural biases have no effect on how the law is administered in a place like California as opposed to Alabama, North Dakota, or Hawaii. I think that in California the likelihood of abuse is as high as anywhere else. I just think that how it is handled and viewed as a society might be different from some other parts of the country.

NATALIE: Okay, interesting. We've been talking about physical violence. I wonder if you can talk a bit about your experience with, or maybe even confusion with, seeing emotional abuse come into your courtroom. Those are the people that I'm working with: Christian women who are being emotionally and spiritually abused, manipulated, and controlled. That's a little more subtle, and it's difficult for people to understand it. It's difficult to figure out what's up, what's down, and who's telling the truth. Do you see that a lot in your courtroom? What do you do with cases like that?

TIM: I was talking about physical, emotional, and verbal abuse when I was talking about these various types of violence cases. I guess to me, I've been doing this for over two and a half decades now. I've been on the bench since 1995. I would say that the

violence or abuse, however it comes in, is almost never one-dimensional. Verbal abuse has a component of emotional abuse, emotional abuse has a component of verbal abuse, or physical abuse has a component of all these others as well. They all keep going together.

I think, at least in my training sessions on violence (domestic violence or any other type of violence), we don't look at it as, "Oh, that's physical violence, so that is different from something else." In fact, in a non-domestic relationship we have a statute that we sometimes refer to as "criminal threats statute" in California. It is considered a type of violence or serious felony, but it has no component of actually committing a physically violent act upon someone else. It is the words and the conveying of the threat of violence that is being punished.

NATALIE: This is very encouraging to me. For the women listening who are looking at possibly being in court in the future, what would you tell them as far as...? I know they are scared. I never ended up having to go to court, but I was terrified that I was going to have to go and that I would have to try to explain my situation. I had been shut down by the church and by so many people, so to talk about my situation in front of a judge felt so intimidating to me. My brain would shut down just thinking about it.

So what would you say as a judge if you could talk to the women coming into your court who are coming from the background that these women are? What would you say to them to encourage them or to empower them in your courtroom?

TIM: I don't know that I would say anything to encourage or empower because that's not really my job. I would say to anybody coming into court, woman or man, on any type of case at all, do your best to be as prepared as possible. In our area, we have a law school that has a family law clinic which assists low-income people, including in domestic violence cases. But in every courthouse in California there is also...I shouldn't say every courthouse, because some counties have lots and lots of courthouses that don't even do family law cases. My point is that in every county there is a family law facilitator in the courthouse paid for by state funds who is there to advise people on their cases. They can do everything from tell you how to put together your paperwork with a request for a domestic violence restraining order or how to conduct a full-blown family law trial on custody and support.

I would tell people to take advantage of whatever the resources are to be fully prepared. I know you are primarily focused upon how women are going through all this. But I would also tell people (because I get criticism from men's rights advocates sometime) that most people who are in court on issues of domestic violence are

women as the victims, but there are also those cases where the men are the victims. So if you are looking at a judge and saying, "Finally, someone who is going to stand up for the women," no. It is, "Finally someone who is going to give me a fair hearing, because nobody has done that before."

If they come into my courtroom, what they are going to get is a fair hearing. They are not going to get someone who is an advocate standing up for their side. If you are looking for a judge to do that, then I think you are misunderstanding the judicial system, and you're probably hoping for something that would be a complete disaster. If judges listen to both sides and say, "Now I know who to be an advocate for, let me go beat up the other side for you..." That's not what we do. Nobody wants a judge to do that, do they? What if I thought that the man was right? Do the women want me to go beat up on the women? No. That's not our job.

Our job is to have a place where they can come in and know that they will be treated respectfully and fairly, that they will be given a full hearing, and that the decision that is made is one which is made without regard for which person is nicer, has more power, or anything like that. The decision is going to be made based on the evidence that is presented and the legal standards that apply.

One of my colleagues, who is long retired now but was one of the senior judges when I first came on, said, "You do family law and at the end of the hearing you have made one permanent enemy and one temporary friend. That temporary friend will become your permanent enemy as soon as you have another hearing and you end up ruling against them. Then you have two permanent enemies, and that's how family law goes." That's an exaggeration. I've had family law hearings where both sides have had some level of appreciation for how the hearing went. But you don't finish a family law hearing and have both sides say, "Boy, this was the best thing ever, judge. Thank you so much for that ruling because you just told me I only get my kids fifty percent of the time. You're the best."

NATALIE: Right. That's a great segue into a question that gets into what your book is about. What you've just described sounds like a profession where in general, people don't really like you that much. Does that have an effect on you? Does that play a role in your battle with anxiety, depression, and other things going on in your life?

TIM: Not in the courtroom. If you are in the courtroom hoping that by the end of the hearing people are going to like you, then don't be a judge.

NATALIE: Right.



TIM: That's just not going to happen, and that's not the goal. The goals are 1. What are the legal standings? 2. What findings would be made on the evidence presented? 3. How does that then lead to the decision? Legal standards would be something like, let's say in a criminal case where they have waived a jury and I'm the one determining guilty or not guilty, the legal standard is ultimately proof beyond a reasonable standard of doubt.

Then, I must make findings. Let's say it's a car theft case. There are a few findings that would have to be made beyond a reasonable standard of doubt before the person could be found guilty. So my findings would be, "Was the person driving a car belonging to another person with the intent to deprive the owner, temporarily or permanently, of the use of the car without the owner's permission?" I have to make all those findings.

If I make all those findings and they have been proved beyond a reasonable doubt, then I can make the ruling that the person is guilty. That's what a judge does. I don't think, "When I'm done, is everyone in the courtroom going to like me?" That's ridiculous. I don't care if they like me or not. I care that I've made the right findings and rulings along the way and applied the right legal standards. I guess that's part of it. The actual courtroom stuff – don't hope that people are going to like you at the end.

As you go through all this, there are a ton of other things that must happen. Maybe one attorney wants to put on evidence of prior auto thefts and the other attorney wants to keep them out. There are standards that would apply as to whether I would let that evidence in, and I have to follow those standards. Let's say the person has five convictions for auto theft, and I find that two of them are not fitting the standards closely enough to come in, but three of them fit squarely within the standards to come in. So I say, "I'm going to exclude these two and allow these three." Are they going to say, "The judge split the baby as best he could. We both love the judge"? Or is it more likely that one of them is going to say, "He should have kept out all five," and the other will say, "He should have kept in all five."

I don't care what they think. Frankly, if I get it wrong, there is a court of appeal that would be happy to tell me so. I figure, "I'm making rulings. Take me up on appeal if you don't like it." What really bugs me (and it's not a matter of whether or not they like me), I get a little peeved when attorneys might criticize a ruling to their colleagues. "I can't believe the judge made that ruling on the evidence." I think "Well, that's great. Did you take me up on appeal? No? Then what are you complaining about? It wasn't a big enough deal for you to do anything."

NATALIE: Speaking of attorneys, do you often see women or men representing

themselves? And in those cases, what is your thought on that? There are a lot of women who can't afford an attorney. People will ask me, "Is it okay to represent myself? What are my chances if I represent myself?" What would you say to that?

TIM: For example, our family law facilitator in our courthouse can equip someone quite well to represent themselves at a hearing in family law. But you also have to have the ability to pull things together. The old line about "Someone who acts as their own attorney has a fool for a client," I don't think that's true. It can be. There are some people who shouldn't go to law school and become attorneys, and they shouldn't act as their own attorney either. They just don't have the ability to do that. They need some help. Yet they still sometimes end up having to represent themselves.

That's where the judge... We have an ethical duty in California. It is written in the law; this is something we are required to do. We have an ethical duty to take the necessary steps to provide someone with the ability to present their case. So as a judge, if I had attorneys there, I would look at them and say, "You put on your witnesses, you ask them the questions, I'll make rulings at the end."

If I have two people who are representing themselves – it could be a family law case or a small claims case (in small claims you don't get to have an attorney in California), then I may look at them and say, "Why is it that you're asking me for a restraining order against this person? Tell me what happened," or "Why is it that you are suing this person for not paying you something? Tell me what happened." I kind of leave it open, but if they sound like they are fumbling through something, I am ethically obligated to try to get that information from them.

I might say, "Wait a moment. Are you now talking about a different incident, or are we still on the first date that you mentioned?" They may say, "Oh, I'm talking about a different one now." Then I'll say, "Are you done with the first date? Because I'd like to hear all that part right now. What happened on the first date you mentioned?" They'll say, "Oh yeah, there is one more thing from that." Okay, well, I'm not becoming their attorney and I'm not advocating things. I'm the finder of fact, and I will do that with both sides to try to get the information that I need to make a decision.

But I am ethically obligated to do that. It is written in our code of judicial regulations that I must take those types of steps to provide someone an opportunity to be heard fully. Like I say, it's not necessarily family law. It could be someone who is representing themselves in a criminal case, probate, whatever.

NATALIE: That is also encouraging. I hope the women listening are seeing that it's much



less scary than they may be... Here's the problem. Not knowing things is what is scary. If you understand things and know things, then you can... It's the unknown that is so frightening. Okay, I want to talk about your book now.

TIM: Okay.

NATALIE: Actually, let's talk about... Writers read. They do. You are a reader and a writer, so what are your recommendations? Who are the best female writers that you have found to be most helpful to you that you could recommend to my audience?

TIM: Jane Austen.

NATALIE: Boom!

TIM: Dorothy Sayers.

NATALIE: Can you give a brief sentence about why, one reason why you particularly like that author?

TIM: Sure. If you are hoping to understand how people relate to one another and how deeply that is felt inside of people, then read Jane Austen. Besides the fact that she is completely entertaining and at times such a hoot, read her stuff. People say, "Oh yeah. I've read 'Pride and Prejudice.'" But I'm thinking, "You have barely scratched the surface." Read all six novels and then go find her unpublished juvenilia that are available online. All the things that she wrote before she became published when she was still a teenager and a young woman – go find those things and read them. So Jane Austen.

Dorothy Sayers because she deeply goes into social issues that are timeless, and she does it in the context of mystery writing. I'm thinking of the Lord Peter Wimsey novels, for example, where in "Gaudy Night," which is just about smack in the middle of the series, she focuses on a women's college in the Oxford University system. The issues of women, women's rights, women in education, women as intellectual leaders, women as social leaders – she writes this story that touches on all this without preaching, "Oh, hey. I'm going to do a women's lib novel." She didn't, but that's what the book tackles. So I'd say both of them.

If you're looking for people who are writing now, I strongly suggest reading Aimee Byrd. She's got five books out by now, I think. Her first one was "Housewife Theologian," which was also the name of her blog way back when. Her most recent one is... I think

“Recovering From Biblical Manhood and Womanhood” is the title. I could be off a little bit. Aimee is not an egalitarian, but she is a friend of mine. She and I have talked about this at length. She writes theologically, doctrinally, and scripturally about the importance of men and women having deep and strong relationships with each other. For example, her most recent book goes at the concept of pursuing biblical manhood and pursuing biblical womanhood. She essentially says, “For crying out loud. The Bible says we pursue Christ.” She wrote an entire book about that.

NATALIE: That’s incredible.

TIM: It’s really good. But if someone is going to say, “Hey, Tim recommended this book and I read it. She’s not egalitarian.” Well no, she’s not, but her writing is so strong. She is very, very good at communicating this. So I would say Aimee Byrd is where you go. I’m also looking forward to Valerie Hobbs – Dr. Hobbs. She has a book on language; she’s a linguist. She has a book on language in scripture that is coming out next year, and I am so itching to get ahold of it because I love words, I love language, and I love looking at linguistics when it’s dumbed down enough to where I can understand it. I don’t think she’s going to dumb anything down. It’s going to be challenging. She is writing it, I think, for the non-academic market even though she is an academic herself. I’m really looking forward to that book from Valerie Hobbs, and I would also tell people to read Aimee Byrd.

NATALIE: Okay. I need to have both of those women on here.

TIM: Absolutely, and have them on together because they are friends. They know each other.

NATALIE: On my word, that would be so much fun. I’m totally going to do that.

TIM: Aimee is in Maryland and Valerie is in England, so you’ll have to coordinate your timelines.

NATALIE: Okay, this is good. So those are the things that you read. Or some of the things. I’m sure you read a million other things.

TIM: I read a lot of cozy mysteries. That’s what I spend most of my time on.

NATALIE: Do you like Louise Penny, or is it Penny Louise? I can’t remember. Or you don’t know either one?

TIM: I've not read her, but I do read Catriona McPherson, who writes the "Dandy Gilver" mysteries. Another one I recently have been reading is Frances Brody, who does the "Kate Shackleton" mysteries.

NATALIE: Oh, yes! I've not read them, but I know what you're talking about.

TIM: Then there is the author who writes the "Her Royal Spyness" mystery series.

NATALIE: That's a clever title.

TIM: It's about a very minor, like 35th in line for the throne minor, member of the royalty who is penniless and cast out on her own to fend for herself when her father, the Duke, goes penniless and then dies. So she's off on her own and she solves mysteries around the world. That's great. I've really enjoyed those. So yes, I read the cozy mysteries. I just ordered a couple of books that are going to be a little more serious. One that should be delivered today is "The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes." Then I also ordered Esau McCaulley's "Reading While Black," and that's going to come to me in a few days.

NATALIE: Those are timely books too, for our time.

TIM: Oh yeah.

NATALIE: So let's talk about your book now. Tell everyone what it's called and what it's about.

TIM: Because you've teased them by mentioning it like three times already.

NATALIE: I know! And we never quite get there. Let's go there now.

TIM: "Running for Judge: Campaigning on the Trail of Despair, Deliverance, and Overwhelming Success." That's the name. What else do you want to know?

NATALIE: Tell them what it's about. I touched on it a bit because I mentioned that you struggled with mental illness, so they are probably all thinking in the back of their minds... Here's the thing. A lot of these women are very familiar with that. They are familiar with it in their own lives. They are familiar with it in their children's lives. They are familiar with other kinds of mental illness in their husband's lives and in their families of origin. I feel like it's a recent breakthrough that we are finally talking about it, getting help for it, and whatever.

But yours is a bit of a spin because you're a judge. People tend to look at people like that and think, "You must have your life all together." You've even said, "When I'm in my courtroom, this is my courtroom." In the back of my mind I was thinking, "Surely it must have some kind of effect on you?" You read all those stories and are responsible for all those lives. So talk about it.

TIM: I wrote the book about my reelection campaign back in 2008. As I said a few minutes ago, I became a judge in 1995. The book talks about how I received a judicial appointment and then immediately had an election come around. In California, you can be appointed to fill out an unexpired term, say if a judge retires or gets elevated before their term is up. The governor then appoints somebody to fill out the term. That happened to me in 1995. I had to run for reelection in 1996 and then in 2002, 2008, 2014, and 2020. We have six-year terms.

The only time someone decided to run against me was in 2008. I'd been on the bench for thirteen years, and somebody wanted to take my job away from me. That was a huge source of stress because I had no background in campaigning or politics or anything like that. It affected me physically and mentally. My body and my brain chemistry both were thrown off. I ended up coming down with pneumonia a few weeks into the campaign and with what was told to me as a "generalized anxiety disorder diagnosis with depressive episodes." Then I went on medication with anti-anxiety meds. I went on medication for my pneumonia, my infection.

That was the story of the book: what it's like to be a judge, what it's like to be challenged and run a reelection, and what it's like when all this brings on mental and physical health impairments. You mentioned how people must be saying, "You must have it all together because you're a judge." But really, so many people deal with mental illness. I put in the book that the statistic is essentially one in four people will have anxiety, depression, or both at some point in their life, if not just as a lifelong situation.

NATALIE: I would think it would be even more than that. Maybe I just know a bunch of... Maybe everyone in my life has problems.

TIM: Right. The stress of going through that brought all this on for me, the physical and mental issues. But they are all medical issues. One of the reasons I wrote the book is because people who say, "I don't have mental illness, and I don't know anybody who does," they are wrong. They may themselves not have mental illness, but they certainly know someone who does. It's one in four. Sure, that's a broad average, but let's say you know one hundred people. (Everybody knows more than that.) Are you saying that you don't know twenty-five, twenty, or fifteen? Maybe I know forty who are mentally ill, and

you only know fifteen. But it's one hundred people. Somebody in there is mentally ill. I'm not talking about bipolar and schizophrenia and a whole bunch of other things. I'm just talking about anxiety and depression, let alone all the others who have other types of mental illnesses.

So I wrote the book to take the stigma off talking about mental illness, especially from someone who is not only an elected official, but I'm also a constitutional officer of the state of California with statewide jurisdiction. I am writing about having a mental health diagnosis. I think it's important that people see that even those who are the officials in the state, helping to run the government, are also dealing not only with mental illness perhaps, but are able to do their job extremely well. I don't mean to pat myself on the back by saying I do my job extremely well. I'm just saying that I do know how to do my job, and I do it well. I'm an effective judge. I've been doing this for a long time. I train other judges in how to be effective judges. The mental health issues, that diagnosis, did not disqualify me from being able to get the job done.

NATALIE: Right. I think that opens the conversation for other leaders in government and in all spheres of society. Just because you're a leader doesn't mean that you're not human.

TIM: Can you imagine if people talked about their pastors and one of them said, "My pastor preached on mental health issues last week." And then someone else said, "Really? My pastor was just talking about her battles with mental health and how that affects her." Having those conversations normalized and not like, "Your pastor has a mental health diagnosis? You better take her out of the pulpit. He better not be preaching anymore."

NATALIE: It's like popping a zit. You've got to get the stuff out and expose it so that the healing can come.

TIM: You know, judges being identified as zits, I'm going to start using that in my training classes.

NATALIE: As I said that I was thinking, "Natalie, shut your mouth! What are you saying?"

TIM: I liked it. It reminds me of John Belushi's part in the food fight in "Animal House."

NATALIE: Someone is going to know what you are talking about. I'm afraid I didn't see that one.

TIM: You had to have been a high school or college kid back in the 1980s or so.

NATALIE: I was! I graduated in 1985. But remember, I was in the conservative... I grew up in the Bill Gothard thing, so we didn't watch things like "Animal House."

TIM: Yeah, no movies. And if you're dancing, make sure there's enough room for the Holy Spirit between you and your partner.

NATALIE: Oh my goodness! For those of you listening and you want to follow Tim on Facebook... There's probably a million Tim Falls. How are they going to find you on Facebook? Well, I'll put a link in the show notes. I forgot that I have show notes. I'm going to let you talk now, and I'm going to be quiet.

TIM: For Facebook and Twitter, I'm sure if you just put in the search bar "Tim Fall," you'll eventually stumble upon which one is mine. I have a blog, timfall.com, which has all those connections on the contact page. I also have a YouTube channel, because I post two-minute videos every day. [Tim's Facebook, YouTube channel, and blog are no longer available.]

NATALIE: Every day?

TIM: Yeah.

NATALIE: Wow! That is commitment.

TIM: They are unscripted. Some of them are really good, and some are just like, "Wow. What did Tim say that for?" But I still put them out. It doesn't matter. I try to be encouraging, or sometimes I'm being topical. I might talk about things going on in my life, or more often talking about how things might affect other people. I started doing these two-minute videos last March. The first one I did was an effort to encourage people just as we were going into the pandemic. It was so well-received that I did another one the next morning. Then, I did another. Then, I just kept doing them.

NATALIE: That's amazing. COVID-19 has had such an impact in positive ways in so many areas. For those of you listening, I will put all of this in the show notes with links. But I will say this: Tim has been kind of serious in this podcast.

TIM: I have? Wait a second!

NATALIE: I think you've been pretty serious. But on Facebook, he's funny and also really



smart. What better combination can you have than funny and smart? Maybe this is just my imagination, but I think of a judge as talking way above everyone else. Tim is not like that. When I found out he was a judge, I thought, "What?!" I guess I didn't know what you did. You were just Tim Fall.

TIM: "Whatever does this guy do to make any money?" People from my book too... I should point out that even though my memoir is a memoir of a judicial reelection and talking about mental health issues, there are some pretty funny stories in there as well. If people are looking for insights on what it's like to be a judge, if they want to hear some funny stories, if they want some serious stuff, it's all in there. It's a quick read, too. Or you can do it on audiobook. Go to Audible and it's there.

NATALIE: Are you reading? Do you read it?

TIM: It's my voice. That's me.

NATALIE: Love it.

TIM: So if my voice has been grating on your nerves, folks...

NATALIE: Then don't get the Audible version.

TIM: "If she'd just make him shut up," then please get the paperback.

NATALIE: I think you have a great voice, and it is totally easy to listen to. I would totally get the audio version.

TIM: You can also get it on Kindle if you want an eBook version as well. There's that. My wife says that my voice puts her to sleep, so.

NATALIE: That's a good thing. That's a really good thing!

TIM: It's something we have to be careful about if we are praying together at night, that we don't do it while we are already yawning our heads off.

NATALIE: Right. I don't think you've put anyone to sleep in this podcast episode. I want to thank you so much for giving us some of your time. I wish you the best on your book, and I will definitely put links to the different versions of the book in the show notes as well. Those of you listening can head over to [flyingfreenow.com/106](http://flyingfreenow.com/106), and you will find the show notes for this episode. Thanks again, Tim.

TIM: Can I mention a discount for people who might be looking for my book?

NATALIE: Absolutely.

TIM: If you don't like to shop Amazon (a lot of people don't), go to the publisher's web page, Wipfandstock.com, and search for "Running for Judge." At checkout, use the code JUDGE40 and it will give you 40% off the list price.

NATALIE: Wow! Are those all caps or all lowercase?

TIM: All caps JUDGE and then the number 40. Squish it all together with no spaces.

NATALIE: I will put that link in as well. Did you send me that link or do I need to get that from you?

TIM: It's quite possible that I did, but I will send it to you.

NATALIE: No matter what, all you listening, I will make sure that link is included, and I will put the password in there too in case you forget – JUDGE40. Is that because you are forty years old? Just kidding. People have probably already done the math when you mentioned the 80s.

TIM: I will point out... Here's a spoiler for the book. Yes, I was thirty-five when I became a judge.

NATALIE: Wow, that is so young.

TIM: Yes, it is.

NATALIE: My goodness. Do they even know what they are doing at age thirty-five?

TIM: You know, I'm sixty and I don't know what I'm doing. So what are you talking about?

NATALIE: That's true. Good point. Well, I think that's a wrap. Until next time, fly free.