

# EPISODE 007:

# YOU WERE MADE FOR HARD THINGS

BY NANCY RAY

## Intro

Every once in a while, I will call my sister on the phone and say, “Sissy, I really need a pep-talk,” and sometimes she’ll call me and say the same thing. This actually happens more often than I’d really like to admit, probably on like a weekly basis and sometimes it just seems we physically stop and we can’t move forward in our lives until we hear someone speak some words of life to us. So that’s what I’m here for today. If you’re facing something really hard, I am here to tell you, you were made for hard things.

You’re listening to Work and Play with Nancy Ray, Episode 7.

Much of our daily lives can be divided into two categories: work and play. Simply put, that is where our life and our legacy take place. This is a podcast all about learning to work and play well, which leads to a healthy soul and a fulfilling life.

Let’s dive in.

## Content

I’m going to start this episode with stating something that is very obvious: *life is hard*. I don’t care how old you are, I don’t care what gender you are, I don’t care how much money you have, I don’t care what status you are, you’re going to experience hard things. It’s just part of life. But I’m also here to tell you: “You were made for hard things.” *You were made for hard things*. You were made to actually push through them and come out the other side a better person.

There have been several hard things I’ve walked through my life. I’m going to tell you just a couple of examples starting out, of some physical things, some mental hardships that I’ve faced so basically just illustrating there are hard things in our lives and there’ve been hard things in my life that I’ve overcome. I know there are hard things in your life probably today as you’re listening. But I’m here to tell you you were made to do those things.

## PHYSICAL HARDSHIPS IN MY LIFE

So one of the hardest things physically I’ve ever done is run a half marathon. I almost said

give birth because that's the actual hardest thing that I've ever done physically three times over. But before I had babies, definitely the hardest physical thing that I had done is run a half marathon. This is coming from a girl who was not athletic at all. So, pushing my body to do difficult things wasn't ever part of my normal upbringing or high school experience. I didn't compete in gymnastics or do anything physical like on a sports team. I was more of like the singing and dancing type. So yeah, when I decided to be a runner after college, it was definitely something that was new and I looked like a total grandma when I started. Not even kidding. I was hunched over. I was so winded and in the beginning of my training to do this half marathon that I just made up my mind to do, it was really hard at first, like walk around the block and I'm super winded. I would run a little bit and I just thought to myself, "There's no way. There is no way I can run a half marathon." I could not run a mile. I couldn't.

Slowly but surely, I followed a training plan and it came time for me to run the race. Race day came, and I tell you what, mentally, the night before it was so difficult to really think, "Can I actually do this?" Then the day of the race, it was a hot day. It was hard. It was really hard mentally just getting up, putting on my shoes, getting ready to go was really hard and started running and really, it wasn't super hard until about mile eight when the sun was beating down on me. Just miles eight all the way to the end of the half marathon were just brutal. I think it was in July. It was just hard. But I tell you what, at the end of that half marathon, I will never forget. I thought I was going to throw up, for one. So I made it through, thought I was going to throw up but we were actually at my old lake house that I used to go to all the time growing up and the first thing I did after running the half marathon was jump in the water and float on a raft in the cool lake for a few minutes, probably like 30 minutes actually. It felt amazing and I proved to myself, "Nancy, you can do hard things, like physical things that you've put the label on yourself that you could never ever do. You just did it," and I was so proud of myself and I was so sore for two days, but I was so proud of myself. Since then I had gone on, I've gone on to run two other half marathons, so I've totaled three half marathons that I've run, which for me is a big deal. I know some of who are listening, you're probably like, "I could run a half marathon this morning, like what's... you know, not a big deal." For me, it was a big deal. It was really hard.

Like I mentioned, definitely the hardest thing that I've ever done physically was give birth to my children and I was really afraid of the whole thing. I was terrified of motherhood. I am probably going to talk about that in a podcast episode eventually. But yeah, I just was terrified of getting pregnant. I was really scared of having babies. I was scared of what it was going to do to my body and I was really terrified of being sick all the time. I have this fear of throwing up and getting sick and I just was not looking forward to the whole thing, um terrified of giving birth, just so scared. I was hoping to do it unmedicated and that's a whole other story. But literally I ended up doing three unmedicated births and let me tell you, that was physically the hardest thing I have ever done three times over, for sure. But, pulling that baby up onto my chest every single time with my two girls and my little boy, there is nothing like that reward at the end of it. Literally, all I could say after going through childbirth is, "I was made for this." I just was kind of taken on a ride and my body did its thing and I held that baby and was like,

“Holy cow, God made my body to do this really hard thing and I did it.” It’s just the craziest, the craziest experience, but really cool to know on the other side like I was made to do hard things, really hard physical things.

I debated about whether or not to share this in the podcast because it seems a little bit trite, but honestly, tonight I’m so tired. The time I’m recording this podcast, it’s 11 PM and this is when my energy just tanks and I should have managed my time a little better today, but I did not get the recording done during work hours, like I was hoping to. Lots of other things came up and so here I am. The kids are in bed. I really, if I’m honest, I just wanted to go to bed tonight. I laughed when I kind of realized I’m supposed to record the episode that’s called you were made to do hard things and I want to go to sleep and I just ... I kind of got the dose of encouragement or motivation I needed just from the title of this and I’m hoping that it will do the same thing for you, just to say out loud like, “I’m made for hard things. I can do something hard when I’m tired or when I’m sick. I can do something hard when I don’t think that it’s possible.” You were made to do it.

## MENTAL HARSHIPS IN MY LIFE

I think some of the hard things we actually encounter more often than those physical things that I just shared with you that I’ve walked through in my life really are mental hard things. Like I said in the beginning, I have to call my sister and be like, “Hey, I need a pep talk. I need you to speak some life to me right now” because there’s like a mental block that happens, and you can just be having a hard day and be kind of in a weird funk about your day and you just feel like you can’t get through the next hour without having someone talk to you a little like, “Hey, you’ve got this. Hey, here, make a plan. Take a step outside. Just take a few deep breaths of air. Get back to it. You can do this. You’ve got this.” So that’s what I’m here for today.

Some other mental things that I kind of bump up into is not just when I’m tired or I feel frustrated in my day because nothing’s going the way I had planned, but I think the thing that takes up the most mental energy for me is relationship drama. So if there is a relationship that is not going well or maybe I’m in an argument or something’s not totally right with someone, I mentally can’t, I can’t get going. I feel like my whole world is on pause, especially when it comes to my marriage and my husband. If we’re ever in an argument or I can tell I’m frustrated at him or he’s frustrated at me, I feel like all ... It’s just hard. It’s hard. I don’t want to have the conversation. It’s hard to address it and I don’t want to go there.

Or even if someone on my team isn’t really happy with me about something or isn’t getting what she needs from me or from someone else on the team and yes I have an amazing team, but yes, absolutely we have problems that we have to work through all the time because we’re humans and that’s what good teams do. We talk through things and we work through things because problems come and life is hard, but when we face those relationship problems, it’s hard. It’s hard to say, “Hey, yeah, I’m going to actually bring this thing up and have this really hard conversation and risk you being even more mad at me because I want to fix it.” That’s a really hard thing to do, but it’s worth it. Every time I say, “Okay, let’s do this. I need to bring

something up with you and this isn't going to be fun, but let's talk this through." On the other side of that is reconciliation in those relationships and it's that peace of mind that my mind clutter is freed up— that space that I just spin my wheels on. What are they thinking? What's going on? Why do I feel this way? Why am I so down today? All of that is freed up when I just face the hard thing and have the hard conversation and don't run from it. Everything that I've said today is some things are physically hard, mentally hard. You can fill in the blank there. Hard things in life can come in all shapes and sizes and I know there's a lot of hard things I faced in my life that I'm just leaving out, a lot of the really heavy stuff. I'm just not going to go there today for the sake of keeping this concise and relatable, but when something is off, when something is hard, we have some choices. We have to make up our mind to embrace the hard thing or we can run from it.

Theodore Roosevelt said, "*Nothing worth having comes easy.*" I'm sure you've heard that before, nothing worth having comes easy and that's just simply true. If you think about the health of your body, for instance. Can you just lay around and eat potato chips and drink milkshakes all day and have a healthy body? No. Is a healthy body worth having? Absolutely, but it doesn't come easy. You have to work for it. You have to feed it nutritious food. You have to exercise and it's just a very easy example, but I mean you think about marriage, a marriage is absolutely worth having, but it doesn't come easy to anybody, to any couple, but it's worth fighting for.

Challenges in our life and hardships are just inevitable. Hard things happen every day. But here's the deal, when you're faced with something difficult, you have two choices: You can look at the hard thing and say, "I was made for this. Let's do this." and you can overcome it, or you can let that hard thing overcome you and you can let it consume your mind and body and life really.

James 1:2-4 says, "*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, when you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*"

Basically it's saying here, "Hey, the trials are coming." They're coming and this is your call right now. Consider it pure joy when they come, because you know what? It's going to test your faith and it's going to produce perseverance. Going back to that quote, are those things worth having? Absolutely. Does that come easy? No. But your faith will be built up. You will be able to persevere and then it says, "Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." So think about some things that are hard in your life right now and ask yourself, is it worth it?

## THE COWS & THE BUFFALO

Okay, I'm going to tell you a little story about some cows and some buffalo, so hang with me. If cows are out grazing in a field and a storm comes up over the horizon, they see the storm

and they start to get a little bit skittish and they're running around and as the storm comes, they start to run away. This is a natural instinct of an animal to run away from danger and so they start to run and as they're running, the storm is coming, the storm actually overcomes them, they keep running and the storm then is traveling with them through the field and they're getting exhausted and tired and frustrated and they're wearing themselves out because they're trying to run from the storm, but the storm is actually over them and traveling with them.

So what do buffalo do when they see the storm? Well, they look up and see the storm coming right at them in this field and they charge directly into it. They stay together, no fear. They say, "This really hard thing is coming at us. Here we go," and they charge directly into the storm. And what happens? It's intense. It's crazy. But the storm passes over them much more quickly so they minimize the time of how difficult it is. They minimize their frustration and they come out the other side so much faster than the cows who were running along with the storm being completely worn out by it.

Isn't this so true of us? We see the storm coming and we see this hard thing and we want to just run from it and what we end up doing is we exhaust ourselves in the meantime. We really prolong it when we don't face it head on. So my encouragement to you today is to be a buffalo. Don't run in fear. I want you to charge directly into the hard thing that's facing you because you were made for it. You were made for hard things. You can do it. You can run straight into it and come out stronger with more perseverance, producing the faith and maturity, becoming complete and lacking in nothing. So here's my pep talk for you, okay? You ready? You are capable of more than you think. We all are. I know I am. The only limitations of what we can or can't do or can or can't handle comes from our own minds. So today, lift those limitations off by rolling up your sleeves and doing the hard thing in front of you. You can handle it. You can run into the storm. Be the buffalo.

Thanks for listening to Episode 7 of Work and Play with Nancy Ray.

I'd love to close this episode with a quote from Theodore Roosevelt,

*"Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty. I've never in my life envied a human being who led an easy life. I have indeed a great many people who led difficult lives and led them well."*

I hope this episode has encouraged you to embrace the hard things in your life, knowing that what's on the other side is always worth it. You can find me at [nancyray.com](http://nancyray.com) or follow me @nancyray on Instagram or Facebook almost daily.

Thanks for listening and I'll see you next time.