

ANNESTASIS

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Annestasis Podcast Episode 13 - Relocation Through Grief to Joyful New Abode

Podcast Description: Jo Anne was preparing to downsize with her spouse when the unimaginable happened. A fall proved catastrophic, and she needed to make the move alone. With the help of family, she moved to her first senior adult community residence. Join us as Jo Anne shares her process through a dark season of grief into a new space surrounded by beauty and friends.

Podcast Transcript:

Stacey Sade: Hello, friends. This is Stacey Saed, and you are listening to the Annestasis podcast where we talk about stories of life transformation through relocation. And I'm so glad that you're here. We have such a good host, I mean, such a good guest to listen to today. Such a lovely person. I met her because she was a client of Annestasis, and I can't wait to hear her story. We are going to be having a conversation with Joanne O'Brien. Scott, can you say hello, Joann, to the world?

Joanne O'Brien Scott: Good morning. Good to be here. And thank you for inviting me, Susie.

Stacey Sade: You're so welcome. What we are going to be talking about, Joanne is a lovely person. She's a mother. She's a nurse, a philanthropist. She's done so many things. Comments that we are going to talk about or the life story that we are going to talk about is what occurred through a move. I was there to get to witness one of your moves in life. There are probably more than one, but I would love to hear your perspective on it. So what we're going to do in just a minute, we're going to take a quick break, and then when we come back, I'm going to introduce you guys formally to Joanne O'Brien Scott. And she is going to talk about all the things that happened that has taken her life to a new level in the fourth quarter, and she's doing it beautifully. So we'll be back in just a few minutes.

Stacey Sade: Welcome back, everyone. Joanne, we are so honored to have you here and you are such a blessing to listen to. So can you talk to me about what it was that prompted you to downsize and move on? Your most recent move?

Joanne O'Brien Scott: Well, my very most recent move was the first week in November of 2023. Now, I needed a little prompting at that particular time. I had lost my husband unexpectedly. He had a very bad fall and passed away on October 6 of 2021. We were planning, and had our house on the market, but planning to move over to the Avenida on Wolf River in Germantown road. They had over 55 independent living there and my husband had had a number of falls. And I knew I was not going to be able to persuade him into going to an assisted living facility.

Stacey Sade: So you chose in that point, I'll stop you there. You chose a 55 plus apartment community that didn't necessarily have all the amenities for your husband's benefit.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: That is correct. But it had enough room in the two bedroom apartment that I chose, and it was on the first floor. And the problem was, I liked it there to a degree. But when I went out on my patio, I just looked at garages. It was all garages out there. It wasn't all the green part that I loved very much.

Stacey Sade: I see. And you were missing the view.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: Oh, I was missing the view. But it was a nice place. A very nice place. And just what I needed at that particular time in my life. And I made a couple of friends and got to know a lot more people. so I lived there for two years. But a year ago, exactly a year ago at this time, I started looking, at other facilities. Now, my husband and I had looked at different facilities, so we knew some of the ones in the Memphis area, which ones we would be interested in not. But they were building this beautiful new place called OPUS, off of Cherry Road, very close to the botanical gardens and the Dixon gallery. Now, I was a master gardener, and I dearly love the fact that I. Right by the botanic gardens. In fact, I've been over there several times. And just another note that I might not have said to Stacy too. My son is getting remarried the 20 October, and he is getting married at the botanical gardens. So that is another nice present for this new year.

Stacey Sade: That's so wonderful. So his wedding is April 20.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: April 20.

Stacey Sade: That's exciting.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: Yes.

Stacey Sade: Well, that takes you from being, at Avenida. And that from my understanding, correct me if I'm wrong, the move to Avenida was a significant move for you because it was a place to grieve. Am I correct in that?

Joanne O'Brien Scott: Oh, yes. It was very much a place to grieve. And I'm a fairly outgoing person. But during the time there with two large incidents in life happening, I wasn't really reclusive. But I was very careful about what I wanted to do and where I wanted to go because I'm big on going to grief group. In fact, I started one here locally over a church of the Holy Spirit and have been involved in several. But this was not, This was different. It just something was different about it. And I knew that. So I had to work on myself. And I'm still doing that because I certainly still miss my husband and my daughter.

Stacey Sade: Yes, I can see that. So you suffered a loss, of both your husband and a daughter at your time of Avenida. And you used what was a beautiful space to kind of take some time to heal. How was the downsize from a house to Avenida? How was that process?

Joanne O'Brien Scott: Well, Pat and I were getting ready for the move. And we just had to close on, the house. And we had labels like on all the pictures and everything that was going to go with us. So that way it was a little bit organized. But he had this very bad fall, which, is the cause of what his death was. But it was kind of dramatic and very, unusual, the way it happened. But, I've been going myself for some counseling. And, I look at the beauty of the way that he passed away. Because he passed away on, the Wednesday following the Friday incident. And he was..they have to take you to the trauma center when you have a head or neck injury. So we were there, and he was getting good care. But the

incident was, I mean, he just fell so hard and hit the back of his head in his spinal cord and all of that. So when the doctor called me to let me know that his condition was worsening, I knew we had done all that he would want us to do at that point. He was a very religious man. And he had what I call a beautiful death. And I think the way it happened was not too far off from what he would wish for. But I was able to witness him actually dying. And he took seven small breaths and never seemed to be any there never seemed to be any distress during those seven breaths. And everything was white and clean when he passed away. So I have a lovely, beautiful image of that. And I am so grateful to have that, because I realized not everybody would get that. But that's very, very important to me because it makes me look at death in an easier manner than before.

Stacey Sade: I love I love that philosophy, and I love that thought. So you have had a major life changing experience. And I know, because of what I do, you're not alone in that. A death of a spouse is usually a major life change. That will produce a fact. You know, we don't want the big house. We we want simpler things. You've been through a lot, and maintaining a home is a lot. And I know a lot of people will be inspired by your story of listening to that. And I just wanted to fast forward a little bit. You're in Avenida. You're not the joann that most people are used to, which is effervescent and lovely. And bubbly, but you're able, in a safe and beautiful space, to do some healing and growing. And I guess that's when we stepped in with our company. Am I correct that you had made a choice to go not only look at OPUS, but also some of your friends were there, correct?

Joanne O'Brien Scott: Yes, I had four friends, and we all know each other by varying degrees, but all of them are in their eighties and they're all active. So I have been going over there, like you said, Stacy and I had been looking around to watch OPUS grow. So I think I went maybe one or two too many times, because every time I would go one apartment that I liked, somebody else had already gotten. So I said to myself, after doing that two or three times, you better decide today what you want to do. And so it was so beautiful. The grounds are gorgeous over there, and everybody is so very, very nice. So I made the decision that I would go over there, and I would go over to pick out the one that I wanted, and nobody else at that point knew the one that I wanted. So I, called, called my son John has been so wonderful to me through the years, and he's always been here in

Memphis with me. My girls have lived out of town, so when Pat died, everybody came in. All my family members, they all came in and helped me so much with the move, because I was still kind of in shock. And the people that wanted to buy my house were so kind, and they were from, California. So I think they thought the prices were wonderful here, because I guess they are compared to California real estate.

Stacey Sade: Exactly. Yes, absolutely, absolutely.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: that went up. So anyway, so everybody helped me to move that time, including my son, who brought three of my four grandchildren that have been born and raised here over. And they had a job to do, and their job was to take all of my clothes on, hangers from the house in Cordova, the town over to the Avenida. So we did that. And after they got there, there's a pool outside. So after we got there and they moved all the clothes there, well, we all gathered around and held hands instead of prayer of Thanksgiving for the help that I got that day. So that was, you know, over two years ago. And so, you know, I got out, I have quite a few friends here in Memphis, and so I would see them in a, belong to you, like a book club and a curseo group from church, and, was with Madonna Circle for many years. But, towards the end of that two years at Avenida, I thought it was a time to move on. And so my age had moved on, and I thought OPUS certainly seemed like the right place to go, because they had now been open several months, and the night before I actually moved there, they had an open house party that was just fantastic and attracted a lot of people that were well known from the Memphis area. So I think they're very good on their marketing and getting all it put together. And so, so far, I have enjoyed very much being there, and it's good to know you can call on people that you know well.

Stacey Sade: Absolutely. Absolutely. Well, what happened when we came in in the fall was that you had made your decision, you had signed up, you got your apartment that you were ready for, and what you were hoping for is some help getting there. My experience with you was you downsized a little bit while you were at Avenida moving to OPUS, but it wasn't the major thing that was obviously happening when you moved from the house.

and we came in to pack you and get you moved and get you unpacked. From your perspective, what did that process feel like?

Joanne O'Brien Scott: Well, the interesting first part of it, I have to tell you all, because, I was on Germantown road one day, and I noticed this green band, green van, bright green and other colors along with it, and lots of white writing on it. Oh, I thought that was a very interesting kind of way to advertise. And, I mentioned this to my son because he had, torn his rotator cuff and was going to have to have surgery during this time period. So I knew physically he wasn't going to be able to help me with it. And he didn't want me to do it because he thought I might wind up with what he had if I started doing all the lifting. So I mentioned to John about this truck, this green and white one, and I don't know if he ever really heard me or not. And he asked me, called me, and asked me a couple days later could I be home on a Friday afternoon, because he had hired somebody to do this moving and packing and everything for me. So I said, yes, I can be there. So at the Avenida, there's a lobby. So I go out to meet. Who do I meet but Stacy of the green and white van? And I couldn't believe it. I thought, did John just not tell me about the green and white fan? Or was he even listening to what I was saying when I was talking to him?

Stacey Sade: As the mother of two male children, I will say, it's probably, it was sure an accident. And what, Joanne is talking about is my vehicle, which is a jeep Liberty SUV, has got a full wrap on it. And to say it's shameless marketing would be an understatement. It is not shame. It is nothing. I mean, it is shameless marketing. it means that everything I need to tell someone on a billboard is written on the side of my car. So that is what we, as entrepreneurs, do. We. We put the word out there, and I'm so grateful we were able to be there, for you, and that was a perfect situation. Was it stressful for you? And speak freely. I know that, you know, the only.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: Part of it that was stressful for me is I'm a do be person, and I'm used to doing most everything for myself. And when you enter this part of your life, you have to begin to accept you cannot do everything by yourself. So that was psychologically, it was kind of hard for me. and psychologically, when my daughter passed away, her sisters and her daughter were the ones that had to go and be the doers. So I've just been learning to

take a back seat, and that's my role now. I no longer have to be the person that does every single thing. So with the move that I've had, that has been a teaching lesson for me to do that. And I will tell you how organized Stacy is. I had two bedrooms when I was at the Avenita. Well, she set up shop with two of her other workers. Call them by name, if you would.

Stacey Sade: I think on that position, we had Lauren, for sure. We had Cynthia and maybe Sharon. I may have had a team of four at some point.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: It could be because at one point, there were a few more people in there, so. I'm sure you did. But, it was so organized. And I had learned a little bit about organizational moving, because one of my friends that moved there, one of the five, I had been over to her house and noticed how her sister in law, who was in this business, but in Dallas, Texas, but she was there to help her, and I noticed how organized she was about doing this. So then when I met Stacy, well, she was even better. She was born.

Stacey Sade: Oh, wow. That's how praise.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: Very organized about. And nobody complained. They just did their work. And I'm sure they were tired, because, one of the ladies was in the closet, bless her.

Stacey Sade: We talk about that all the time.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: All the time she was in the closet, and she was trying to code color my clothes like I do, and I didn't even have to tell her that, but she was working with two closets full of clothes that she had to get into one closet, and that's why it took us so long. and I'll never forget that, because she was working so hard on it.

Stacey Sade: Oh, my gosh. That was such a great part about it. And I love the fact you mentioned a term, a do be person. And how lovely to acknowledge the fact that there are seasons for us on what we're able and willing and able to do and what we just can't do well anymore. And that, I believe, is why we're there for each other. We're, just not made to be independent all the time.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: No, we're not.

Stacey Sade: We're really not.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: But I, always feel lazy. That was. That's my old label I would put on myself if I didn't do most of the work myself. I would think that way. But now I think I'm a little bit past that. I think I'm a little more into acceptance than I was.

Stacey Sade: Oh, that is so beautiful. Well, we're gonna take a quick break here, and Joanne is gonna share with us what her life looks like now. She has moved beyond, living in an apartment. She has moved through some grief. I don't know that you ever get on the other side of grief, but you've moved. You have moved through, and I, can't wait to hear how fantastic everything is. And so you give us just a minute. We're gonna take a break here, and we're coming back with Joanne O'Brien. Scott, this is a journey. Let me take you on a, journey. There will still be this journey when.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: You leave this planet. Leave it in a better shape than you found it. And that's kind of how we live.

Stacey Sade: Watch the journey on the Kazukian network. Hello, everybody. Okay, we're back with Joanne O'Brien Scott, and what we are going to talk about for the rest of the time for this podcast is, tell us, what is life like now? You're talking about being in your eighties, and you are absolutely in no way, shape, or form slowing down under anybody's judgment. You have such a full life. Can you tell our listeners and our podcast people about what was produced by going through those really difficult seasons of life? What's your life like now? What are the things you enjoy doing?

Joanne O'Brien Scott: Well, first of all, the location was important to me. Uh-huh. And I wanted to be kind, of in the middle of the river in Germantown. And the opus fits that bill because it's such a good location there. I'm very happy with most things there. there's a few things that they're working on because it's a new facility, and whenever something new, you have to try it out and go through some growing pains. And they have some of that now, but they're very good to work with you because of that. And, I'm just very happy

with the overall picture and that I have those friends that live there. But one of the big things for, I've never been a card player. I just never took the time about it. But I'm going to learn how to play.

Stacey Sade: is it bridge or mahjong?

Joanne O'Brien Scott: Marjan? Yes, I'm going for my first Marjan lesson this week.

Stacey Sade: I love that. I mean, I've never played it, but I hear it's spectacular.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: Yeah. I don't know too much about it, that's why I'm going to do it, but I have heard so many people, talk about it, so I thought, well, that's the new thing that I'm going to try out, because you'll meet more people and learn who's there and all that sort of thing. And so I'm getting ready to do that. And I have a very lovely apartment that's in an end unit on the second floor of the apartments over at OPUS. OPUS has apartments, but they also have cottages over there. And, I think they have a lot more married couples that live in the cottages and probably a lot more single people. but I know some of both cottages and of the apartments, so you can choose what you want. And, it's just beautiful. I'm waiting for the spring to come because I'll be on the second floor and I don't have to look at garages anymore. I can look at growing, things and see people walking and wave high and all that. But, I'm pretty big on decorating. That's always been something that's important to me. And because I moved in November, Christmas decorating came along first. So what I'm doing right now, I'm m going through all of my paperwork, and I'm doing what we call our society calls putting your house in order, so that when it's my time to go, I won't have my children saying, oh my gosh, I don't know where to start, oh, she didn't live in an order. I'm trying to do that right now. I'm taking a few weeks to do that. And while I'm doing that, I'm reminiscing, and I'm thinking mostly about all the happy times in my life. And I was married earlier to Mel O'Brien, who was an architect in Memphis. And Stacy is what? Cousins. Uh-huh. Cousins, to Christopher Speltz, who I adore. And Christopher Speltz is a younger person, and Mel was his mentor, during his schooling, for architect. And Christopher and his wife, they're just great. And so are all the elder relatives that I know

and love. That, includes patent Mike Speltz and Cheryl and Charlie Etherly. And Charlie is the uncle of Stacy.

Stacey Sade: I know. I think that that, and it happens in Memphis all the time, but it's amazing how you can meet a stranger and then have so much in common. And that certainly is our story. The more we talked to him, the more we realized, oh, my gosh, we know so many of the same people, which is, you know, it speaks to the fact, that we want to become family. In my world, if someone does not have family that is able to help them during a time of move, we want to become the nieces or the daughters or whatever it is, we want to become family. The more connection that you and I have, the more trust is available, and it becomes an easier process for everyone. But I hear you, enjoying new hobbies.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: New hobbies, right.

Stacey Sade: Meeting, new friends. And while you are giving your family the biggest gift of all, which is going through your paperwork and getting things set aside, I cannot applaud you more than that. It is such an important thing to do. You are also enjoying the opportunity to reminisce.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: Yes.

Stacey Sade: And remember the stories. And that's a beautiful, beautiful, thing to do and be able to enjoy. And I hear when you're saying that nature is such an important part, I think for all of us, we need to know, what is it that we love? What is it that what makes us happy and fulfills us? And you certainly have a handle on that. Well, I am thrilled that we had this conversation. Have I missed anything in your story that you would like to share with our listeners today?

Joanne O'Brien Scott: I have one thing, because the word grief keeps, coming up when you've lost people, and with each loss, you have some sort of grief. And I think people, they need to take their time, allow it to happen, try not to rush it. I think I was trying to rush it, and there is no such thing as rushing it, because you're going to be holding it inside. And

we know from experience it's much better to have a good friend or a good group to talk with, where you can feel like you can, express yourself and the moods and things that you are feeling so you do not have to feel so alone.

Stacey Sade: M that is. That's gonna mean a lot to a lot of people. And, I think those are very, very wise words. It's a huge piece of the puzzle. We talk about moving as if it is, you know, I said, I've said before, like calling a plumber or an electrician, that's not the case. We are literally helping people move from one space to the next. And also their emotional state, their spiritual state, all of the above is wrapped up in the things that they have, that we have. So, thank you for touching on that grief piece. It is certainly an important part of the conversation. Even if someone hasn't lost a loved one, the grieving of leaving one place and moving to another is real.

Stacey Sade: And we need to just acknowledge it and let people have those feelings. So, Joanne, as always, it is a pleasure to visit with you. It is a joy to be with you at any and all times. And I thank you for sharing your story. I know what you are doing and accomplishing will inspire others to do the same.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: Thank you, Susie.

Stacey Sade: My pleasure. Well, that concludes this episode of the Anestasis podcast, where we have listened and loved the story of Joanne O'Brien. Scott, I'm so sorry you guys can't see her because she's dressed to the nines and she's a lovely human being, but you're just gonna have to trust me.

Joanne O'Brien Scott: She's dressed as a valentine.

Stacey Sade: She's dressed as a valentine. We're recording this in February. Thank you guys for listening. We are so grateful that you're here. You can find us on our website, annestasis.com, or in all the places that social media, takes place. Thank you.