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PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Annestasis Podcast Episode 9 – A Calling & A Downsize Create a Purposeful Life

Podcast Description: As Steve and his beautiful wife resize their life and home with an almost empty nest, Steve makes choices about next steps. He hears a call and responds in faith to not only move, but also to take a complete departure from his former career in wealth management. Listen and prepare to be inspired by a life lived faithfully!

Podcast Transcript:

Stacey Sade: Hello, my friends. This is Stacey Saed and you are tuning in to the Annestasis podcast where we love to hear stories about transformation that happen after a relocation. That's our gig. That's what we like to talk about. And today I get the honor of talking to a dear friend that I have literally known since I was... I think I'm right when I say 14 or 15 years old. Maybe you were 14 and I was 15. I can't remember, but it's been a minute. I'm not 15 anymore. So it's been more than a while. This is Steve Frakia. And Steve Frakia is the executive director of a beautiful retreat center. Our queen, lady. Our lady, queen of peace. Queen of peace. It is a beautiful name and I stumble over it every time because I want to start with the word queen. I don't know why, but our lady, queen of peace, it's a retreat center in the Memphis mid south area. It's going to be very near the new blue oval, development that is coming to Memphis. We're all very excited about it. And Steve has taken on this new position, which is a little bit of a change. And I say that jokingly because Steve has pretty much been in the financial world up until now, dollars and cents, and now we're headed straight to spirituality and restful places.

Steve Frakia: That's right.

Stacey Sade: But anyway, we're going to talk to Steve Frakia, who is going to talk to us about how his life has changed after a relocation that he and his family have taken both professionally and personally. And, I just want to introduce everybody to Steve Frakia.

Steve Frakia: Thank you, Stacey. So I was thinking about that on the way over here is how long we've known each other, because a big part of all of this is about what I will call the tau. Tau, which is the last letter of the Hebrew Alphabet. And, part of this story goes back to my time in Assisi a year ago in learning about St. Francis, but also learning about the tau. And the tau is basically the journey.

Steve Frakia: It's God's providence and how he interjects people into lives. And it could be a number of years, like back in our teen years until now, when that kind of resurfaces and rebuilds. So all that is, ah, a big part of it.

Stacey Sade: Oh, I love that. I love that. Well, we're going to take a break for just a minute. And when we come back, Steve's going to talk to us about what his journey has been like to this new place and how it started with a, how a personal home move, was a piece of the puzzle. So when we come back, Steve Frakia, executive director of our lady queen of peace.

Stacey Sade: Okay, everybody, we're back. So, Steve, talk to me about what on earth started the process. Was it a move to a new house? I know you guys have just moved recently, or did the move happen after you decided to professionally take a new position?

Steve Frakia: So the move happened after.

Stacey Sade: Okay.

Steve Frakia: So the move happened after. And really, it happened as Kim and I kind of stood back earlier this year and said, you know, where are we with life? And these transitions of kids really is this major chapter. Katie's wrapping up her senior year at St. Agnes. At the time, Thomas was about to graduate and come back to Memphis. And Will is getting ready to be done. We really said, hey, we're both about to turn 55, and what do

we want to do next? we can't abandon our children, but we definitely..people will talk, but we definitely want..and they acknowledge and honor that as well. But it was a decision that, I think was really brought on by Kim going back to work. She is in her fourth year, currently, in counseling, at St. Agnes high School. And me saying, you know, I have been called to a vocation outside of the business world. Didn't know what it was at the time. But, all of that said, you know, as we look at transitioning to our next chapter, the physical house, and, where we've been for 1213 years, it served a great purpose. But it was time to say, okay, simplify, downsize a little bit, make sure the kids are still very comfortable when they come home. and just make that next step, to a more manageable, place as we progress on.

Stacey Sade: Right, right. I mean, you know, we do get to a stage where we're not entertaining as much. And when I say entertaining, I mean, 20 kids over for a swimming party, things like that.

Steve Frakia: Yeah, that's what led to it was our vocational shift at this stage of life, which said, okay, the house is definitely going to be a part of that equation. So that's where we began the process.

Stacey Sade: Okay, so that was the beginning of the conversation. And once you guys. So you sat down, Kim is Steve's very lovely wife who we're mentioning and not saying her proper name. St. Agnes is a private catholic school in Memphis that I, actually attended at high school. And Kim is now the guidance counselor at. Just to give some background to our listeners, but here you guys are making these choices. And so the choice for vocation, the choice to downsize, that preceded your personal move, correct?

Steve Frakia: That's correct. So all that kind of was decisions number one and two. from there we said, yeah, you know what, this house is too much. We always talked about doing something once Katie got out of high school. so, you know, the timing just totally lined up, to begin to step through that.

Stacey Sade: Perfect. That is, that sounds so reasonable. So you guys are doing that and you're still, if I'm not mistaken, you still have the question mark about what your next, what the vocation will actually look like. Am I correct?

Steve Frakia: That's right. So, I guess a couple things. One is, once we decided to move on with the house and involved our realtor and started taking those steps, interestingly enough, we didn't want to wait to sell the house. We're like, we wanted, I guess the peace of mind of knowing where that would be. So we did go ahead and buy that next house. But yeah, a lot of that happened, say, in the first quarter of the year, March, April timeframe. but I knew I had a period of time with my former job while I transitioned. All that correctly. so nothing felt rushed or pushed. It was just a nice glide path of..I know I'm going to do this. I started back to school. I'm getting my masters at Franciscan University in Steubenville, in an area called catholic studies. I was about two and a half months into all of that, so just totally helping with this house move and Katie's, you know, last term at St. Agnes, really not knowing what the next, what that meant with vocation, other than, you know, hey, God, what is my highest and best use for you for the rest of my career?

Steve Frakia: And that's where it was when, this latest, our lady queen of peace thing came up.

Stacey Sade: That is so wonderful. What did it look like as far as moving the house? I mean, obviously bigger house, more stuff. What did that process look like? Did you guys cherry pick what you love? Did you, what did you do?

Steve Frakia: You know, we knew we wanted to be in Germantown still. we knew we did not want the two acres we were on or a pool. That was process of elimination. we knew we loved some of the spaces. it was easy to luckily we found a great, a great one in the enclave. the downsizing was primarily a furniture related discussion, or I'll say discussion, a furniture related task on Kim's end to get, you know, how does this room going to go into the new house? And it was almost a plug and play. It's almost like we'll take this whole set and stick it there. So, you know, from there was a matter of her deciding, hey, what is not going to be in the new house? Which was perfect, because down the road she ended up

putting together part of her office at St. Agnes with part of our furniture. And luckily, what I stumbled into at our lady queen of peace was a three bedroom house that was the original farmhouse that had basically been left to collect dust that we've now renovated and totally, brightened up. Now serves as a separate three bedroom retreat house for the whole complex, which now has a fair amount of our.

Stacey Sade: Old furniture in Ithoodae, which is so lovely to be able to repurpose and reuse, which is so much of what we talk about here. Tell me a little bit about the story about how our lady queen of peace popped up into your, you know, How did you even know that that was available? What was that process?

Steve Frakia: Yeah, you know, again, I'll always go back to God's providence and him just hearing that. And I thought it was going to be about a twelve to 15 month sabbatical. you know, just this period of like, okay, I've worked since I was, you know, you know, Raymond, I've worked ever since I was quite young. And probably it's a little illegal, but.

Stacey Sade: Hey, nobody's, nobody's judging, but, but this.

Steve Frakia: Was the perfect time. Again, kids, ages, Kim's transition, etcetera. I was going to take twelve to 15 months. I was going to focus on getting my masters, which I had since started. I was going to go walk the Camino de Santiago in Spain, which takes about 33 days of just straight walking. a number of those bucket list things in your mid fifties that just start attacking. And I've always been a, I don't want to say daily, but fairly multiple times throughout the week. I'll be going to daily mass, at the catholic church. And during this process I switched to the 615 daily mass am m every morning. And I was two, two and a half months into this. And just again, that prayer every day of. Hey, God, what is my highest and best use for you? And just looked at my phone. After mass and email from the diocese of the job opening, I knew about our lady queen of peace. It's been around for about 18 years, and there were a number of different retreats I'd been on. So, I would say it pre Covid before I'd really let that hit my radar about queen of peace. And they've been through some transitions and changes and things like that. but it just kind of like, sat with me and put the phone away. I said, no, you know, hey, God, we're taking a year, right?

Going on a sabbatical. We're not jumping back into anything. I know I'm going to have some great stuff pop up, but I'm going to wait. And a week later, the same thing happens right after Tuesday morning mass. Look at my phone, and there's the job posting again. And so one thing leads to another. I'm in contact with some good friends at the diocese, and we're like kids in a candy store, brainstorming about what we can do to, really bring it to a spot where, our community can just enjoy the 140 acres and just beautiful spaces and all that it offers.

Stacey Sade: That's wonderful. So just to kind of, encapsulate kind of what we've talked about, there was, a conversation between you and your wife. You're thinking about realigning, period. No matter, you know, work related, purpose related, children related, you do decide to make a move, you choose a home. You're selling the old home, but you guys get to a new place. through that unpacking, you're still kind of what you had assumed was going to be a time to figure out next steps. And suddenly the door starts knocking electronically and you're like, huh? that's interesting. So what I want to talk about moving, forward, because there's so many things. I took a tour of this space and I'd be thrilled to give a commercial about it, but I want to talk about the rebirth into that space and what it. What I believe, is an energetic shift between relocation and the simplification that allows room for conversations about what is the next step, what is the next season. so I want to hear all about that. We're going to take a real quick break, and then we're going to come back and talk to Steve Frakia about his personal and professional move and what life looks like now. On the other side of it. Now that the boxes are unpacked, things are decided. So we'll be back in just a minute.

Steve Frakia: This is a journey. Let me take you on a journey. There will still be a journey when you leave this planet. Leave it in a better shape than you found it, right? And that's kind of how we live. Watch the journey on the Kazukian network.

Stacey Sade: Welcome back to the Anestasis podcast. I'm Stacey Saed. I'm here with Steve Frakia, the executive director of our lady queen of Peace Retreat center. And we're just unpacking his story of transformation through relocation. And we've kind of covered all the, things that you've done up to this point. What's life like now? What does it feel like

now for you guys? And what does it look like on a practical level? Can you see the trajectory, that happened?

Steve Frakia: You know, it's been a lot of fun. And, Kim and I were just talking over dinner this weekend about, wow, what a crazy 2023 it has been. obviously some. Just a number of changes. one of them being, my dad passing away and just this, going through that with my siblings in I Ann and just all of that and just now kind of going like, well, if we just get to August, this will happen. This just get to October. And, you know, it's interesting because on the one hand it's been very methodical, but on the other hand, you're like, wow. And this popped up. And that popped up. you know, it's really been, a great journey. But where it is now, as far as professionally, it's in a great spot. I couldn't be happier. just some things that I learned about, like the just have to have, have to do, promotions, marketing. I found a great graphic artist that she had just been on a retreat like three weeks before I started. her, name is Shannon Lowry and she does amazing work. But I look at, like, my early social media post where it's just me and clip art, you know, I'm laughing.

Stacey Sade: Because I know way too much about that.

Steve Frakia: And now I look at what she has developed and just the number of eyeballs and feet that are up there now because of, like, effective marketing is amazing. And I knew early on and I, and I told the bishop and our team, I was like, we have to have a signature event, in 2023. This place is too special. It's all about getting people there, and once you're there, you know about it. We had an event on November 4 called Camino a la Paz. So the way to peace, it kind of played off of my perceived Camino de Santiago that I was going to do. And if you ever study, the Camino, in Spain, they talk about being your camino. So no two Caminos are the same. My Camino got a dot, dot, dot. Wait a little while, but go have this Camino a la paz. This way to peace. We had 380 people for a first year thing that was basically built from scratch six weeks earlier with an amazing team at the Diocese of Memphis supporting every step of that. so totally achieved having something to market, having something to advertise. Getting people up there pivoted right away to a advent, retreat, where we had both the Friday night group and then a separate Saturday night

group. And that was really cool, because you saw a whole new set of faces of people that, came because it was only one night.

Steve Frakia: But they will be back for the two night retreats, and they will be back for our longer, like, week long silent retreat offerings and things like that. They've kind of broken the ice into what a retreat experience is like. Plus, we advertised really hard with Buster's butcher shop and Buster's liquors, and so everybody had a great time, in addition to some good spirituality over that night and morning format.

Stacey Sade: Absolutely. I love this because, this recording is happening in December of 2023, regardless of when you listen to it. So we're talking a lot about, reflecting over the years year prior and looking toward 2024, the new year. What I love is in a world that is, I think, without exception, very weary. It's such a nice opportunity to allow, respite in a fun atmosphere. I think that that's the fear of everyone, is that I do want to do a retreat, but I, like, don't want to sign my life away. And do I have to be quiet for 48 hours? It's nice to be able to offer people, appetizer portions.

Steve Frakia: And another way that we've really had some great traction with that, too, is getting the word out that we are there every day. So don't wait for us to schedule a planned retreat. And we. You can come use the place during the day. We're calling it daybreak at queen of peace. We just you and some girlfriends, or you by yourself. Bring your laptop if you want. Disconnect, reconnect, whatever you want to do. we have the separate three bedroom retreat house. Just come up and just enjoy it. Get a group and just stay at that house and just like disconnect. And remember what silence feels like after you listen to great podcasts. Remember on the way. Yeah, on the way. but it is so important in today's world, and that's whether it's bereavement, whether it's stress at work. Hey, employer, send your employees up here for this kind of break.

Steve Frakia: So many things where it's like, it's only 140 acres and it's only like four or 5 miles of hiking trails, and it has a disc golf course and it's just an amazing spot just to disconnect. And it's only 45 minutes from Memphis.

Stacey Sade: Yeah, that is so I, love that, you know, we even talked about. I would love to bring my company anastasis, because, as a growing company, you go from idea to throwing anything up against a wall that might be, you know, meaningful to, let's be intentional.

Steve Frakia: Now, the smartest folks right now that are using it are actually coming regularly, to do either a quarterly or a monthly.

Stacey Sade: Yeah.

Steve Frakia: A guy named D Auer at St. Anne's is one of my poster children for this because he got so much out of his first one, which is his seven or eight people in the conference room doing a, a day session where I like, cook them eggs and I cook them lunch, and I now have my signature soon to be famous peace breaker cheeseburger, that I make for him.

Stacey Sade: You heard it first here.

Steve Frakia: But that's, that's the, that's the concept. I mean, just get away and you're so much more effective and you kick yourself for not doing it earlier when you do get away and then take it one step further. Let's have a nice dinner the night before, and everybody get a great night's sleep at the retreat center, and then move into your meeting. So just a lot of opportunity for that.

Stacey Sade: I love that. I love that. And we've talked a lot about what that meant for you and your rebirth and this situation. I mean, clearly just, the scaling back and the redirection has produced in you a great deal of energy in a completely new area. Tell me about, Kim and the children. Has this move, this scale back, this simplification, has it affected them at all? Do they even notice it?

Steve Frakia: You know what's great is that Kim is having such a great time back in, quote, unquote, the workforce. Being the head of counseling at St. Agnes, she did three years at St. Louis grade school. she took off for 18 years as the kids grew. She is so knee deep into

her career right now in a great way that, you know, it is. It is awesome for her. you know, it's funny. Cause again, we're talking, you know, obviously this is the week where at Christmas, this is the week that the kids pile back in from college, and they're like, hey, where's the food in the fridge? And why aren't we doing this? Why aren't, you know, so they're, they're in a little more of a rude awakening period of, like, time for y'all to be adult in a little too. So it's fun because we get to kind of stand back and say, oh, forgot my wallet. Hey, Thomas, you might as well be buying us dinner anyway.

Stacey Sade: I like that. I love that. It's so good that they.

Steve Frakia: They're good. They're great kids. And, you know. Yeah, they were, they were packing boxes and cleaning out closets and unpacking boxes and, you know, I'm, I'm, I'm too cheap to, to hire out what I can do on my own, so.

Stacey Sade: Absolutely. Well, you've got these children labor. Did they start, like, throwing things away and wanting to get things away as well?

Steve Frakia: They did pretty good. they started getting, wow, it's been a while since I've cleaned out my closet. And. No, I know I'm never going to wear that, but I do want to keep this and this. So we had a lot more attic space at the old house. Now we have decent attic space, but they had to think, like, okay, am I going to put this in my room because my room's now smaller or, how's all that going to work? So they went through some good, good, processes of. And it was fun to see the things that we gave them over the years that we hoped they would be attached to, like a memorabilia, something, uh-huh. That they did actually keep.

Stacey Sade: Yeah.

Steve Frakia: And I'm still working looking for a few that they didn't keep. Maybe it's in a box. I hope it's not at goodwill, but if it is, I hope somebody's enjoying it.

Stacey Sade: Yeah, absolutely. You know, it touched on a memory, two years ago, maybe three, the first time I came and helped decorate for Christmas, when Anestasis was a

new company, say, two years ago, maybe one of the most fun things, one of the most fun pieces of it was when we decluttered Christmas. We brought down everything in the fracia household that had been a part of your celebrations for years. And, we put it all along your dining room table and I had Kim shop it like she was going to a store, and she had a lot to take. I mean, she took off a full carload full. And she was giddy about it. It was so fun to think of. Oh, my gosh. I really don't have to keep all this stuff.

Steve Frakia: Yeah.

Stacey Sade: And I said, that's the myth, m that's the myth that we drag this stuff down. We are not going to put it out in our house, and we're keeping it for Mimi or whatever, and it just doesn't even matter.

Steve Frakia: This round, you did a pretty good job with that, but you did leave too much.

Stacey Sade: Did I leave too much? The house was bigger.

Steve Frakia: This round was different because I felt, I kind of felt early on, like, I'm the one making the career change. I'm the one with some extra time. I'm the one. So I'll take care of this and that. And, I couldn't get her up into the attic. It was. Well, first of all, it was June, July, so it was kind of warm, but. So I was like, if you don't come up here, I'm just going to have to make decisions. And you know what happens when I make decisions. So, boy, I got rid of a lot of stuff. And so you did the second layer I've been holding. Yeah. And I've been holding my breath, but I don't think we've actually gone out and rebought a lot of Christmas stuff this year. So I think. I think that she, she has had a great time putting up what we have and what's been the most meaningful. So it's mostly been, like, silverware and dishes and stuff that she can't find that I really don't think I threw out, but she thinks I did.

Stacey Sade: Well, maybe, maybe not. Maybe they were gifted to a higher purpose. Who knows? Who knows?

Steve Frakia: Who knows?

Stacey Sade: Well, this has been a fun and, insightful conversation with you. I love hearing about lives changed. I love hearing about how we can get fresh new perspectives, especially spiritually, when we lighten our loads physically. It's not intuitive that smaller home, less stuff, more freedom, more brain space, more heart space to really do those things that we feel called to do. And yet it's as real as, you know. Yeah, it's very real.

Steve Frakia: Don't take this as, an expert opinion, but I will say that, I saw or listened to something right there at the end of last year, and they said, pick your, pick your key, virtue that you really want to focus on in this next year. And it was abandonment. I don't know why. I mean, well, I guess I know why, but it was abandonment. It was also this whole thought of detachment.

Steve Frakia: And so that really happened. And it's amazing, whether it's fasting or giving something up or giving something away, the abandonment and detachment, I, think God truly gives us to show us. Once you do that, it's so much more back in return that it's priceless.

Stacey Sade: 100%. I've played around and been using that, intermittent fasting over this year, and it's incredible. Incredible how much energy I have, which is, again, just. It's the same dynamic psychologically.

Steve Frakia: You know, you can do it, and you can also do without what you were thinking you couldn't do without.

Stacey Sade: Exactly 100%. Well, that's the takeaway. That is the takeaway that there is more life to be lived with less stuff, less food, less whatever it is that's holding us back. And for you, I know the catholic church at the. And also the community at large. I'm not Catholic by Brian, certainly community.

Steve Frakia: At large, for sure.

Stacey Sade: The community at large, just can benefit by what you are doing and the passion at our lady queen of peace. And so we're thankful, thankful for your time.

Steve Frakia: I'm glad you mentioned that, because it is about the community at large. We do have a lot of great catholic stuff, but I welcome all good people to come up.

Stacey Sade: Yeah, retreat is retreat is retreat. So that is lovely. Well, thank you for your time.

Steve Frakia: Thank you.

Stacey Sade: It's always good to visit with you.

Steve Frakia: I enjoyed it.

Stacey Sade: Yeah. And so, guys, you've been listening to the Anestasis podcast where we unpack life transformations through relocation. This is Stacey Saed. We will be back next time with another, thrilling and exciting guest, of course, with a beautiful story of transformation. Thank you for listening.