

Live Stream with Susan D
@disorganized.religion on TikTok, recorded in 2023 using Tiktok Live
Transcript by Sarah TevisTownes with support from otter.ai
Full-length interview is available here: <https://youtu.be/kPbfxgm-yWg?si=JqOYSuoqCZWbD4-m>

Sarah

Here's our new Live series called Spilling Tea with Boomers where we interview our elders, which is funny because I don't think of you as very old but...

Susan

Well, I got some wrinkles and I got some crepey skin and I got the the funny frizzy fine hair—"going old hair."

Sarah

So she is legit. <laughter> She has shared with you the credentials. Alright, we've got somebody from Minneapolis, somebody from Pittsburgh. Very cool. So I'm going to interview Susan. And then you can also ask them some questions. After I get through a few questions. You can ask her questions that you have for someone who's lived 68 years, which I think is so cool. Susan, you can pass on any question you'd like. There are no wrong answers. And audience, if you'd like to jump in with your own answers, you are welcome to. If folks are rude in the chat, we do have a great moderator here with us today and they will be muted or blocked and just kicked out because we're here to have a lot of fun and we want to keep our community safe.

All right. This borrows heavily from the Colbert Questionnaire, but it's been adjusted for our guests, who is from Albuquerque, well... is from New Mexico. (Now Albuquerque New Mexico). And because she's a person of faith, some Jesusy stuff too. You ready? All right, ready to be known? Okay. First question. Red or green?

Susan

Green, green, green. Green Chile—green chile is great. That's, that's my favorite is green chile.

Sarah

Great. I am the same way. Do you all have a preference? Red or green? That's a question you asked.

No. In New Mexico, red or green chile. You're also from Bosnia. Oh, interesting. Two nationalities, Bosnian and Croatian passports. So we'll learn a little bit today.

Susan, what's something that you own that you should really throw away?

Susan

Well, there's this big pile of junk mail that I have not gotten rid of yet that I've, you know, there may be something important in there that I need to look at first. So it just piles up.

Sarah

Are you a coupon shopper?

Susan

Ah, no. But Paul takes things and he looks at the outside of the envelope. And he says, and I'm afraid he's gonna throw something away. That's important because he just looks at the outside of the envelope and determines whether it's junk mail that way or not. And sometimes there's a bill or a credit card or something in there and you don't want to throw that away.

<cut / transition screen>

Sarah

What is the scariest animal?

Susan

Well, to me somehow the scariest animal would be like a tiger. I love cats. But I'm allergic. I'm allergic to them. And so I like I like little kitty cats. But somehow the other side of them is a little bit scary. And so in the big form. They're scary.

Sarah

Great answer. Well, someone wants to know—we've asked your scariest animal, would you be willing to share your favorite animal? Theirs is the owl. Do you have a favorite animal?

Susan

Oh, I'd probably be a domestic cat. So so cute.

Sarah

I'm sad you're allergic.

Susan

Yeah. We used to have some in the house. And yeah, they're fun. love cats.

Sarah

Have you been to the cat cafe? Oh, you should not go to the cat cafe. It's dangerous if you're allergic.

<cut / transition>

Sarah

Alright, backpacking in the Gila in the summer—I know you're an avid backpacker, your dad was Forest Service. Tarp, tent or sleeping out under the stars?

Susan

Definitely a tarp. We used to take it and then of course the hunt for the camp spot was always to find the two trees the right distance apart that weren't too tall so they wouldn't get hit by lightning in the middle of the night. And then, and then my younger brother was a very restless sleeper and so my dad always cut a couple of big steaks from the trees you know that he put one on each end of the sleeping bag. And then he tied each end of the sleeping bag to the steaks so he wouldn't roll out from underneath the tent in the middle of the night if it rained.

Sarah

Hot Tip—if you're going camping in the Gila, make sure that you tie in, or get rained on. And somebody wants to know if you have a favorite Bible verse. I don't know if you can choose?

Susan

I like when the lawyers are questioning Jesus about what's, you know, what's the first commandment that you need to follow? And his reply is that you have to... you have to love God with everything you have. And then you have to love your neighbor as yourself. And to me those that sums up for me—that's the whole ball of wax right there. That's that's what it's all about.

Sarah

Excellent. What's something that people have faith should care more about?

Susan

Oh, they should care more about respecting each other.

Sarah

Anything they should care less about?

Susan

Yes, they should care less about whether theirs is the right religion or not. And whether they are right or not. I like the saying that instead of being right, you should be loving. And it's—do you want to be right? Or do you want to be loving? And it's like, I choose to be loving, but sometimes the emotion gets in the way. And I think I need to be right.

Sarah

Thank you for sharing that. Somebody wants to know, if you're willing to talk about this, what's helped you on your path to recovering from perfectionism?

Susan

One thing in particular, other than it's, it's a journey, and you go a step by step—the first thing is to be aware of when you're being a perfectionist and to learn to go easy on yourself, and that helps against the negative self talk. That's one of the hardest things—if you can catch yourself with a self-talk, when you're putting yourself down and say, “Whoa!” It's to question the self-talk. Is it important that I...is it really important that I do this perfectly?

Sarah

Yeah, and who's defining what perfect is anyway?

Susan

Well, and that's the other thing is to define, define perfect. There's a great book, Daniel Amen, has *The Magnificent Mind at Any Age*, and he has a great questionnaire in it on defining success. How do you define success? If you go through and define success, it really makes you think. And what I think about it, in particular is, as a parent—I'm worried about my own kids, you know, and you tend to define successes—how much money they have, or whether they can make it in this in this particular culture, and they can stand on their own two feet. And it's like, no, for me, what's really important is, are they kind to somebody else. It's, it's not the standards of our culture that matter. To me. It's, it's how kind you are to one another.

Sarah

Wisdom! Now, going from the past, looking to the future, what's something that you'd still like to learn how to do?

Susan

Well, I, I still want to continue to be less of a perfectionist, and I want to continue, you know, learn to be better at at at loving myself, as well as loving other people.

Sarah

So just keep working on that journey of loving?

Susan

To me, that's the transformation that it's all about.

Sarah

So if you could have a conversation with your teenage self, and give her a piece of advice, what would it be?

Susan

It would be to be to take it easy on yourself, to be kind to yourself. And that, that that you are enough, and you are worth something, because I did not feel that growing up.

Sarah

Yeah. I'm sorry, you didn't feel that growing up. But I'm glad you have compassion for your younger self.

<cut/transition>

So this is more of a question about your specific past. So if you could hop in a time machine and go back to your college days with the freedom to major in anything,

knowing what you would you knowing what you know now, would you still major in chemical engineering?

Susan

Oh, that was something that at the time, I could get a good-paying job in. And I was told that it didn't matter what my mother used to say, Oh, it doesn't matter what you do, as long as you do it well. And I was not taught to follow my passions. And I didn't even know what they were. I didn't even ask that question, I think, until I turned 50 about what it is I want. I was always pleasing other people.

So I'm really fascinated with neuroscience and the way people work and I really love to answer the question of why do we do the things we do?

<cut/transition>

Sarah

All right, this one is another sensory one. Susan, what is your favorite smell?

Susan

I think it's the the smell of rain.

Sarah

Oh, well. That's rather rare here!

Susan

Yeah, it is! It's a...it's a treat growing up in New Mexico. You know, I used to write poems about the beauty of rain and things like that, because it just doesn't happen very often. And so it's a treat. Of course, I have lived in Ohio and Tennessee, where it rains a lot, and people are unusually cheerful on the days when the sun does shine, you know,

Sarah

It's interesting. So do you think it's the variety? Or did you also love the smell of rain when you live in Tennessee?

Susan

Well, in Tennessee, it doesn't have the same smell.

Sarah

Ah. So the smell of rain in the desert specifically?

Susan

Yeah, it has to be full on—on dry things to have that smell somehow,

Sarah

Okay, this next one gets a little bit more theological, or at least metaphysical. What do you think happens when we die?

Susan

Well, there was a time I used to think I ought to know this. But I've decided it's okay that I don't know what's going to happen. And so I either think it's well, actually, what I think is that it's, it'll be something wonderful at transition that you know, I can't comprehend. And either that or you're just, you're just gone and your elements get recycled back in to other life forms.

Sarah

Thanks for sharing that. Now, we have a limited time here on Earth. But if...if you could just snap your fingers and make one thing in the world better today? What would it be?

Susan

It would be so to make it so everyone, everywhere would be kind to themselves and to each other.

Sarah

Hmm. Imagine!

Susan

Oh, yeah, exactly. Imagine.

Sarah

I know a lot of older people complain about aches and pains. But what's something that you enjoy about aging?

Susan

I enjoy having the time to think, to read and to think and just just have it quiet and be able to think deep thoughts.

Sarah

Well, I enjoy you thinking deep thoughts!

Can you describe the rest of your life in five words?

Susan

Yeah. Let's see. Continue to grow and learn.

Sarah

That's beautiful. That's beautiful! And Katie says, As an aging individual, do you find yourself having ageist thoughts?

Susan

Well, not not so much anymore. I...I tend to look at that as some of it—I look back at my own memories and think about how I was acting at that age and and think, Oh, well, they've got some things to learn. Yeah, I remember when I thought I had everything figured

out. And the longer I live, the more I know that I'll never have everything figured out. And I remember thinking all of these adults knew what was going on. And they were in control. And it's like, you find out they don't have a clue. They don't know what they're doing. Well, and I actually like to be around some younger people because I enjoy the energy and the vibes that... that yeah, young people put out and their wisdom is well, there's there's wisdom to be found in every age. And I find some of the probing questions that teenagers ask are just really make you think,

Sarah

Yes, amen to that. Amen to that! Have your lived experiences had an impact on your journey of faith?

Susan

Oh, yes, definitely. Well, and not and not just faith, but the whole journey. And if you look at life as a growth-expanding opportunity that you can learn things and like I was after high school, I was an exchange student in Germany. And I was 18. And I thought I pretty much knew how the world worked. And so having this experience of living with a different family learning a different language, it's like, Whoa, it shifted my whole perspective on the way I'd look at things and because of that experience that's helped me I love to look at different perspectives. And I like to try to imagine well, how would So and So think of this or how would I think of it that way? And that helps keep a person—helps keep me grounded. But it helps keep you growing. When you can look at things from from different points of view, you can find wisdom everywhere.

Sarah

Yeah. And... and Roger says that in his experience, people will surprise you. You know, people don't always do what they think they will. And maybe, you know, it sounds like that's true of your journey too.

Susan

Right. There are always surprises.

Sarah

Oh, always. And you learn from them?

Susan

Yeah. Absolutely, absolutely.

Sarah

I love your emphasis on learning and growth throughout. And I'm inspired that at 68 you're still excited about learning, not only sharing your wisdom and like educating the masses, but that you're talking about learning and continuing this journey. And that's really inspiring to me.

Susan

Oh, yeah. Well, I mean, it's like, I don't want to curl up. And I mean, there are days, you know, I do.

Sarah

We all have those days.

Susan

But it's like, it's, it's like, no, just because you're getting old and you're hurt in places. It doesn't mean you can't, you know, you just keep going up.

Sarah

Yeah! Thank you so much. Thank you for your time and coming all the way up here. And, you know, in the storm, and now we can all go out and enjoy the rain. I'm glad. I'm glad you were here. We had fun. I had fun, too. I don't know if you had fun, but we could debrief after but this was lovely. I feel like I got to know you a little bit better. And you shared some of your wisdom with the world. And I'm really thankful for that, that we have this platform that we can share it.

So we have thanks coming into the stream from our audience. It's 1am where you are? Oh, gosh, get to sleep! All right. Well, I'm gonna turn off the live but thank you so much. They said they couldn't click away. And Katie says thank you for sharing all of your stories. Thanks! And thanks for all of your great questions, everybody, and for your engagement. Thanks to Grace for moderating. It's been a lot of fun and good to see you and Roger and all the rest of the folks tuning in. We'll see you later! Bye!