

# Audio file

[HoTM episode 71.m4a](#)

## Transcript

Wynne Leon

Welcome to the sharing the heart of the matter podcast where we honor the storyteller in us all. I'm Wynne Leon and in this episode I'm with my co-host Vicki Atkinson. And we're talking about receiving unexpected feedback to our stories. I know I'm not alone in being surprised sometimes by how a story is received, we tell about an experience to a person or persons, and then are shocked at how it lands. We thought it was funny and they thought it was stupid. We thought it was deep and they only appreciated the surface. Whatever it is, it's out of our control, for better or worse. When our inner editor starts curating the content we share, we sometimes short circuit our ability to be fully seen, so Ricky and I talk about the healing effect of telling our stories, no matter how they land. Please join us and enjoy the scenic and beautiful places we go when we share the power of story. We know you'll love it. Hello, Wynn. Hi, Vicki.

Vicki Atkinson

Hi, how are?

Wynne Leon

You. I am great. How about you?

Vicki Atkinson

I'm good, I'm good. Our listeners have no idea what goes on behind the scenes in the pre-game. Right. Probably better. They just turn off before we even get started. Right. Right, right. We all the kitchen and back and forth. I think our technology. Yes. Right. And then just the general kind of good friends catching up, right, right. Ohh the podcast. Ohh yeah. And then, oh, late.

Wynne Leon

We're lucky if we get to that.

Vicki Atkinson

I know, I know, but I'm excited to talk to you today because like most of the things where we kind of like giggle and get excited, there's this note of recognition.

Wynne Leon

Hmm.

Vicki Atkinson

When we have these little baby epiphanies about something, and then, you know, we share, whether it's with each other or.

Wynne Leon

Right.

Vicki Atkinson

Or, you know, and the things we write. We love it when other people go. Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Me too. Right. So good. And. But you had an experience recently that was kind of like a just an innocuous thing, right? A random conversation. And then after the fact, your wheels were in motion.

Wynne Leon

They were. And you know, it's like when you think about buying a new car and then you see that car everywhere. You know how your attention when you pay attention to something. And recently we've been paying attention to storytelling. So you know how you start to pay attention to it. And then, as you say, we have these little mini epiphanies. Yeah. So let me. I'll tell you the story. I recently went for a walk with a longtime friend and colleague around a little lake that's in our neighborhood.

Speaker

Yep.

Wynne Leon

We've known each other for almost 15 years, but our past diverged when I had kids and she got a different job. So our conversation was the general story telling. You know, you do when you try to catch up, you know, I tell the story, she'd tell the story. And I had Cooper the dog with me. And she's a dog person, so I remember telling stories about the complexity and benefits of teaching kids to train a. Dog.

Vicki Atkinson

Hmm.

Wynne Leon

And then also about our series of puppy training classes where I showed up with my kids in tow, all of us, a little bedraggled on Saturday mornings. But we were there and, you know, just the back and forth, she was telling me about her life. And job and. As we neared the end of the walk, my friend turned to me and said. I see your posts. I see you making a lot of lemonade. And at first I was confused and and was she talking about that WordPress story where I wrote about Mr. D wanting to have a lemonade stand on a cold night? You know, was she talking about literal lemonade? But no, she was talking about Instagram, where I post pictures from. Hmm. Our everyday experiences. You know, like Cooper's stealing our stuff or miss O, Mr. D and me biking or roller skating or swinging. You know, whatever other silly stuff that we're doing that I can quip about. And her statement felt like a judgement lemonade. Like, have I been complaining? And I I don't think so. I genuinely love the life I have. It's a little, maybe a lot messy and hectic as a single parent of two kids and a puppy.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

My cat. But as I've often said, I chose this and the power of choice goes a long way. Yeah, but her statement about lemonade made me realize how vulnerable storytelling can be and how much we curate the stories we choose to tell.

Vicki Atkinson

Hmm.

Wynne Leon

So I was recently able to chaperone a field trip as Miss O and her fellow third graders each recorded this. At the Jack Straw Cultural Center in Seattle. And Miss O's teacher applied for a grant for the kids to work with this group because their mission is to keep art, culture and heritage vital through sound and the listen that Miss O's teacher was trying to teach these young people.

Speaker

Oh.

Wynne Leon

Is about how storytelling provides a window into our lives and lets us be seen. So each of the kids worked on writing a narrative about a family tradition and recorded it. They recorded it at the studio, then the Jack Straw. People produced the recordings, and they even let the kids pick like 3 sound effects for dramatic effect.

Speaker

Hmm.

Wynne Leon

Cute. Yeah, it was really cute. And it was a cool project where they got to choose, you know, a a story to share traditions that share.

Speaker

Mm-hmm.

Wynne Leon

But it illustrated for me how often we pick and choose what we share. Yeah, yeah. Think of trekking to Everest space camp. And I was with an incredibly impressive group of climbers and guides, and if I had to pick one demographic of consistently good storytellers, it would be mountain climbers, because there's very little else to do on the long approaches. Yeah, but to tell stories and play cards.

Speaker

Yes.

Vicki Atkinson

Ah.

Wynne Leon

So they tell great stories and and you know, these people aren't typically braggadocio. So it's not about their great and victorious moments about the time the client climbed up the whole way with boots on the wrong feet. Owl or the terrible storms they had to hunker down in a drawer.

Vicki Atkinson

Mm-hmm.

Wynne Leon

Or you know who dropped a tentpole and had to go sliding down the mountains to after it? Yeah, but it's harder to tell the story about our losses. Yeah, I remember when I I didn't want to tell the story of how my marriage blew up. Beyond the few close friends that I told. But over time, whether it was to somebody had started dating, or even recently telling a light version to Miss O when she's asked, I must have told 100. Times. You know the story about how my business partner sat me out, you know, sat me down at lunch to tell me about my husband's infidelities and.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

And then, intuiting ensuing collapse of both the marriage and the business, and over time, telling that story, no matter what the reception was on the other end. Has bled it of its personal narrative. Hold on me.

Speaker

Mm-hmm.

Wynne Leon

So maybe I do make lemonade, but it's telling the story that squeezes out all the juice and it's sharing it. That adds the sweetness.

Vicki Atkinson

I mean, I I love every bit of that, but especially the way you brought it home, because the things sometimes. That are most painful that we want to shield ourselves from. Right. And the thought of sharing that with others. Sometimes the secret keeping or the withholding gives those things in our history so much more power. And you know, I think about my mom, who was, you know, a rampant secret keeper.

Wynne Leon

Yes. Right. MHM.

Vicki Atkinson

And I know that a lot of things contribute to her, to contributed to her decline, but most of all was giving the things that people probably would have given her grace and absolution. Poor. If she'd been brave enough to bring them into the light, right? Yeah. No, I feel that and whether it's making lemonade, you know, we're just, you know, speaking your truth.

Wynne Leon

Yeah. That's wow. Well, and I think you told me a story recently that, you know, you told something to someone. And and it's the it's the judgment sometimes that we hear in response that is unexpected.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Yeah, I I was with a friend. Be careful what I say, right? Yeah. You know who asked a question about something. And as I started to answer, she kind of shut me down and just said I read it in the blog. I know I've got it and I. Was. Like, I don't even know what you're asking me about exactly right, but then all of a sudden I'm cataloguing in my head. What have I written about lately? Did I? You know by association have I implicated someone? It's all that safeguarding and that, like teeter totter of.

Wynne Leon

Right.

Vicki Atkinson

Wanting to tell the truth, you know that authentic word that is everywhere but also wanting to be thoughtful, you know about living your life and speaking your mind, right? But not offending at the same time.

Wynne Leon

Yeah. MHM.

Vicki Atkinson

And but I think you know what you said about, you know, the woman that you were, you know, walking with. Yeah. If I was following you correctly, like, 15 years or so had passed, but she she was aware of your life. But while you were telling the story, I was curious, you know, she knew from things that you had shared a few things about your life. Did you in kind know anything about her life before she shared on your walk?

Wynne Leon

You know, we had. You know, a few conversations over the last. Six months. Mostly we've reconnected. So yeah, I I knew some of that. You know, that's what helped us reconnect and and

check in with where, where we were. Yeah. So I was wondering about that because there's that mutuality about disclosure. I'll give you a little more. Yeah, right. If I feel like we're coming close.

Vicki Atkinson

Her. But you know, when she made the lemonade comment? It's hard not not to take that and go ohh. I I made the best out of a what you perceived to be bad situation, right? Yeah. Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Right. Right, right. Yeah, maybe so and maybe that is what she thinks I, you know, tend to think of my life as a. Pretty happy place, but you know that's my feelings about it. And that doesn't mean that everybody else wants to carry the load on it.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, but it's funny how I think it's a a truth that for some of us, those moments register in in the moment. But we kind of sit with them a little bit after and then, you know, I love what?

Speaker

MM.

Vicki Atkinson

You've demonstrated here cause telling the story. Kind of bringing it outside of yourself. You make peace with it. You know it is what it is. Yeah, but it it also provides insight into the other person. If you think about it, it's then less about you, but more about where is she coming from? Yeah.

Speaker

Right.

Wynne Leon

Yeah, true. Absolutely. And you know, I'd say of, you know, you telling your mom's stories in in the book is sort of that same. Ability to tell a story and defang it from the power that it. It held.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, what a term. Deep Dang it. You should mention that one to Cooper don't get his bangs out of all kinds of things, but yeah, I I think when you kind of greasy enemy and you go wow, we're we're not that far apart, right? Or or I I see. Some of the pain or you know there's a back story to everything, but when you do that, it kind of takes some of the lymph out, right? Yeah.

Speaker

Hmm.

Wynne Leon

Right, it's. But you, as you always say, you flip fear to love.

Vicki Atkinson

Do I say that, huh? Yeah, yeah, yeah. And it doesn't work in all situations. But I think, you know, we talk a lot about intention, and I think the story that you told and also I think it's apropos of how we choose to live our lives, cause it it just is, you know, we we look for good.

Wynne Leon

Nope. MMM.

Vicki Atkinson

And and it's not always there, right? But you know, you look past the behavior to try and understand without judgment, and I think that's the other thing that really comes through that.

Wynne Leon

Yeah.

Vicki Atkinson

Words matter. You know and and something as innocuous as, you know, making lemonade, making the best of it. You know, I think we have to be careful what we say and how we say it.

Wynne Leon

Right. Yeah. Yeah and. I think for me, if I'm at peace with where I'm at, then the words don't sting as much. I mean, I think then you can go, you know, move on and go. Oh, well, that was interesting comment, but it did make me think about, hey, yeah. When you're telling a story, you are putting it out there.

Speaker

Mm-hmm.

Wynne Leon

MHM. Yeah. For other people's perceptions. And that's I think that's what holds us back so often is whether or not we've thought about it. We hold back on, well, you know. I'm thinking about the mountain comedy stories. You know, they there isn't the time they you don't hear about the time that where you know. One person held up the whole group and had to be evacuated. They don't tell. We don't tell those stories about ourselves. They are. We we we're. We're curating that. Impression that other people might have on us, but as you said, that keeps the makes the stories way more powerful than they need to be. Often we carry more about those negative stories than anybody else.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Right. And I think people are tuned in, I think a little bit more for the stories of the overcoming. The perseverance you know, because that's how we learn from one another.

Wynne Leon

Mm-hmm.

Vicki Atkinson

And I think you know sometimes you and I have been accused of always staying on the sunny side of. The street, right? Not always, but I mean it's a choice. We prefer, you know, to be in the sun. I know what the other side looks like. And it's not that the pain and the trauma, the misfortune and the disappointment, is not known to us. But I choose not to linger there. Yeah. Choose not.

Wynne Leon

Yeah. OK. Yes. Right, but also not to let it have its power either. I mean right, the the the dark side of the street holds power when we don't when we, you know, actively avoid going there. So I think like.

Vicki Atkinson

Absolutely. Yeah.

Wynne Leon

There's a there's a balance, you know. Acknowledging that it's there, just like you just said, acknowledging that it's it's there, but we don't have to either. Neither linger nor.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, yeah. Me of that Rumi guesthouse poem. Ohh yeah, what I'm talking about. I I do. I ran across it the other day when I was. Looking for something else? Mm-hmm. Is.

Wynne Leon

Being human is a guest house. Every morning a new arrival, a joy, a depression, a meanness. Some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor welcome and entertain them all, even if there are a crowd of sorrows who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture. Still, treat each guest honorably, he may be clearing you out for some new delight. The dark shot thought the shame, the malice. Meet them at the door laughing and invite them in. Be grateful for whoever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from beyond. Yeah, yeah, it's so good. It is. It's it's, you know, I remember the 1st. Time. I heard that poem. Nope, not me. I don't want to have. I'm going to pick and choose. But life has taught me that that that's right on you. Just let people let them in. You keep the keep the back door open.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Not moving.

Vicki Atkinson

Like a shotgun house, right? And you go without. You're going to see. Yeah. Nothing to see here. Just keep on going.

Wynne Leon

But not to resist and and provide that, yeah.



Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. No, I think it's it's a perfect way to kind of summarize, you know, the goodness in your story and and also I think the power and when you feel comfortable talking about it right thing about it getting it outside, you know of ourselves and you know as you said so beautifully, then the things that are pesky have very little.

Wynne Leon

Yeah. Right.

Vicki Atkinson

Power. It was just a thing that passed through.

Wynne Leon

Yeah, it it was just a thing.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to air my thing. The vulnerability of story to share that with you. It's always it always feels safe and well received when you hold our stories in in. Oh.

Vicki Atkinson

Your hand. Thank you, Ben. And we're grateful to listeners. That, you know, we're tuning in as we're playing with stories, yeah.

Wynne Leon

We are.

Vicki Atkinson

Thank you. Thank you.

Wynne Leon

Thank you for listening. Our music is composed for sharing the heart of the matter by the exquisitely talented duo of Jack Canfora and Rob Koenig for show notes and more great inspiration, please visit our site at [sharingtheheartofthe.Matter.com](http://sharingtheheartofthe.Matter.com).