

## Audio file

### Transcript

Wynne Leon

Welcome. To the sharing the heart of the Matter podcast, where we honor the storyteller in us all. I'm Wynn Leon and in this episode, Vicki Atkinson and I are with Blogger and retired pre-K teacher Beth Kennedy. Beth tells us the story of an instant perspective moment in a chance encounter with an extremely friendly man. She is both buoyed and leveled. It's a funny and thoughtful story that is so true to best writing and her beautifully concise presentation. She allows the sparkle of the realizations to shine bright. So we talk about how we can get lost in our own worlds until something or someone breaks through and reminds us of the big picture. Naturally, our encounters with others ripple out. This is a great conversation and story with a fantastic writer and keen observer of life that will stick with you long after it's over. So I know you'll enjoy the scenic and beautiful places we go when we share the power of story. We know you'll love it.

Beth Kennedy

Hi, there. Hi. How are you? Good to see you today.

Wynne Leon

Good to see you. Vicki and I are so excited to be talking with you. And it's so much fun to meet our blogging friends.

Beth Kennedy

It's fun to be here and it does feel like I'm on The Tonight Show. Maybe the night's guest?

Vicki Atkinson

Ohh where is that Doc Severinsen guy when we need him? Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Sorry. Somebody's gonna have to come up with the money.

Beth Kennedy

There you go.

Wynne Leon

That's. Yeah. Well, yeah. Right. Well, that's yeah, we're gonna elect Beth to tell us the story. Yeah.

Beth Kennedy

OK, well my story kind of started by just an ordinary thing. It was close to the end of the school year. I was trying to get in all my last minute things. My final doctor appointment. I had to sneak out of school early. I'm a commuter. So I had. To zoom and get there, I did not want to be late and lose this appointment. So I got there. It was about 5 minutes late and so I tried to get everything out of my car, gather everything. I opened the front door, the back door took things out, closed the back door, closed the front door. Except that I noticed there was something wrong. My finger was in the door, no. It took a minute. And then I thought. Well. You know, kind of like your logic part of your brain kicks in and I thought, well, I should probably open that door and get my think. I don't know if I was in shock or just denial. So I opened it and I just walked in. And by the time I walked in there, it started throbbing and was changing colors. And so the nurse. He was also in EMT, he said. What are you here for? He said annual check up, but I think I just broke my finger on the way in in your parking lot. So he said, well, it's gonna be so. So anyway, I went through the whole and. Ohh pretty quick, but then my doctor said, well, you're gonna have to get X-rays. It turned into a long process. A few telehealth calls. I just fractured the tip. I got the splint and it was just because I was trying to hurry. I realized it made me slow down and not try to do everything here. I was trying to take the shortcut.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Beth Kennedy

And now I had a series of doctor appointments, so it was a good lesson. But then the lesson continued. I went not long after I went shopping, I was at Target, getting odds and ends. And, you know, I've been feeling sorry for myself about my finger for no reason.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Beth Kennedy

And just you. Know it's hard, it hurts or it's. Hard to do something with.

Vicki Atkinson

And Beth, can I ask which finger remind? Remind me.

Beth Kennedy

Pinky finger. Yeah, so really convenient if you have to break something, you know already. So. So I you know, whatever. It's just natural, I guess. So. I was in line and.

Vicki Atkinson

On your right or left hand and it's.

Beth Kennedy

The gentleman in front of me was there with his daughter and I noticed how friendly he was. He was talking to the store employee, checking him out, talking to his daughter. He was just one of those

guys that exudes like kindness and and good energy. And so I was just amazed by him and. Oddly, you know you should see that all the time, but you don't, and you know very exclusive, you know, so. I was just watching and I heard him say to the cashier. Well, I can't sign for that because my hand is injured. So bingo, I'm like, Oh my gosh, that's our connection is human. So both have these injuries, you know, and I can share that with him. So I said, you know, I have an injury too. It's going to be really hard for me to sign today. And he said what happened? And I explained my whole tale of well and starter was just watching and. So you said. I'm sorry that happened to you, you know, and I hope you feel really soon. I was just so kind. And. Then, he said. Well, what happened to you? And I noticed he picked up his hand. It was a giant like Paul Bunyan hand. Really. But. And it was wrapped. From the tip of his fingers all the way up. It was almost like a cast. It was wrapped in, wrapped and I started to hide my little Tinkerbell. There's Paul Bunyan, and it's a pinky. And he said, well, I was. Someone was trying to steal my girlfriend's car. I had to fight with him. And then he had a dog. And the dog attacked me. And so he was bitten. To you. And was in this fight and so immediately. I was humbled. I thought I have nothing to complain about. And here's this guy, you know, went through this major trauma. Mine was just in a hurry. Didn't notice my hand was in the door. You know I did it. Myself. And so it was so. Leveling it brought me back to. Earth very quickly. You know how you meet someone and your issues are not that big when you see.

Wynne Leon

Yeah.

Beth Kennedy

In this in this. Case it was technically really big, you know.

Speaker

So.

Beth Kennedy

And the thing was that was outstanding to me, was that he was still an extremely friendly, happy guy to everyone. You know he. Was a doting father, clearly and just kind to the person working and kind to me who had nothing compared to him. So when he said that to me, I hope. You heal soon. I was just stunned and I think I just said like you two or something really lame, but I just felt like he. Was, you know, those people that? Just appear in your life at certain times or certain moments. I felt like he was just. This person who came to show me you've got nothing to worry about. I'm so happy. And I had this major thing happy and we'll both be fine and we can still be kind people, you know? So it was just life changing in that moment.

Wynne Leon

That is so good and all. It turned it you. Just gotta you.

Beth Kennedy

Yeah, yes, yes.

Wynne Leon

Gotta you? Supplies and a great leveling moment all at.

Beth Kennedy

Harmony things happen at turn it.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Yeah. Oh, my gosh. Good things, right?

Beth Kennedy

Right. Perfect.

Vicki Atkinson

But I love what you said. About, you know, kind of the the humbling of it all you know, and sometimes the stupidest things that we do we do to ourselves because we're, you know, my dad often said to my mom that she didn't stay in her body enough. She moved too quickly, did too much, too fast. And I find myself doing that sometimes. And the and the older I get, the more I realize I'm a hazard to myself. So I love that. Well, your story that I mean you owned it right, you're on your way in for, you know, an annual physical check up meeting and you injure yourself on the way.

Beth Kennedy

Me right. I know. And they had a number of people ask me. Well, where did that happen? When I said just now here, you know? So that's like it's just you. Like you said, you're not aware of what your body in space is doing. Your minds rushing head. I literally at that point was already thinking about all the other things.

Wynne Leon

At the doctor? Yeah.

Beth Kennedy

I had to get done, you know, I'm just gonna get through this. Appointment. So it just. Meeting him and seeing and hearing what he endured and how he deals with life, it just put it all back in perspective very quickly for me.

Wynne Leon

Right. And perspective is such as good.

Vicki Atkinson

Beautiful.

Wynne Leon

Word for it because it. Yeah, I mean, you even did that in your story. When you talk about Paul Bunyan versus Tinkerbell injury, right. Right, yeah.

Beth Kennedy

Oh yeah.

Speaker

And I was.

Beth Kennedy

Equally telling my story with drama and you know the big house, the big top itself. Yeah, yeah.

Wynne Leon

Yes, yes, yeah. Yeah. Well, if it matters too, I mean it it, it does still throb, even if it's you that to slam the door.

Beth Kennedy

Right.

Wynne Leon

Eight and. Kind of funny that both both of your injuries had to do with cars.

Beth Kennedy

That's true. That's true. Yes, yes.

Vicki Atkinson

Cause yeah. Wow. Well, in just that reminder, you know, to to see beyond ourselves sometimes. And I think one of the things I appreciate about your story, Beth, is even though you were gritty, you know, into yourself, doing your target stuff, doing what you needed to do, probably trying to distract yourself.

Speaker

MHM.

Vicki Atkinson

Here was this man and a story in a situation that was the best possible distraction and a little, you know, gift on on top of, you know, the self soothing maybe that you were doing by taking care of some target business. But you had to, you know, pay attention and and you did. And look what you got. Mm-hmm. Wow. Well, I.

Wynne Leon

Right.

Beth Kennedy

Right, so I'm always drawn to kind people. Yeah. And out, you know, not everybody. You don't always know it. But when you do, it's just a a wonderful encounter.

Speaker

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Right. And. And that's another note from your story that I really loved, which is. It was noticing how kind he was to and friendly what he was to everyone and and how it should be more frequent. But it isn't.

Beth Kennedy

Right, right. Yeah.

Vicki Atkinson

Right, especially when there's nothing to gain, it's the the thing. And when it's right, that struck me to the the kindness just for the joy of being kind. There was nothing that he was gonna necessarily get out of that, but it was just his nature.

Beth Kennedy

Mm-hmm. Right. Yeah. And he could have been angry because of what happened to him. But instead, I sense that he's always like this. And it was just another thing.

Wynne Leon

Yeah.

Beth Kennedy

You know, even how it happened, he was trying to protect his girlfriend. You know her car. So, yeah. So it said a lot.

Wynne Leon

The the thing that I that captured me when I saw this story originally, which was was it about a year ago or?

Beth Kennedy

It was December.

Wynne Leon

December. OK. So yeah, about six months ago. But the way that you have this natural flow in that in your writing, I love it because you so easily and few and a few words just capture that thread of one thing to the other. I mean cause these things are sequential.

Beth Kennedy

Yeah.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Well, but they're they paint this bigger picture of perspective, of kindness, of friendliness. I mean, I just love the way that you do that. You just have that.

Vicki Atkinson

Uh-huh. Yeah.

Wynne Leon

That skill.

Beth Kennedy

So I'm a woman of a few words on paper. In person, not as much, but it just. I think that's the way life as it kind of flows like that everything flows together and is connected in some way. And I just. Feel like we were meant to meet that day and it was more to my benefit than his, you know. OK.

Wynne Leon

Well, I'm guessing that he probably really enjoyed the meeting as. Well.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, maybe you got.

Beth Kennedy

A laugh out of my story, even. You know, so.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, we're, we're just the consideration from you that you noticed him being himself, right? I think that that means a lot sometimes, yeah.

Speaker

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

MHM. Yeah, you know what? My I was telling my miss. So about my dad, who was a really friendly person and how it was fun to just surf in his wake because he would just he just had this way of opening up things as and you could just, you know, trail along behind him. And so I'm imagining that little girl.

Vicki Atkinson

Hmm.

Wynne Leon

His daughter, feeling that same way about the the opportunities and thus the good feeling that's created for you.

Beth Kennedy

Right, right. Yeah, it looks like this. Joy just emanated from him and everyone he encountered felt it.

Wynne Leon

Mm-hmm. The beautiful, beautiful town. Well, I gotta say, Beth, you you emanate a lot of joy yourself. Absolutely. Absolutely. To be it is, it is.

Beth Kennedy

Yeah. Never possible. Yeah, yeah.

Wynne Leon

No matter how we've injured her. No.

Beth Kennedy

That's right. That's right.

Wynne Leon

That's right.

Vicki Atkinson

Absolutely. And part of the the being is restoring and sharing and the regeneration of it. And umm, your your blogging and all that you share is is such a gift and your storytelling too, right?

Wynne Leon

Yeah, passing on the ripples. So now that you're retired, are you, do you have any big plans for the blog that are going?

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

To change or books or or.

Beth Kennedy

Yeah. Nope. I'm just gonna. Well, I don't know. I have a couple book ideas that I've always had kind of just sitting there. So maybe expand on those and then my blog I will see I'm going to keep doing the same thing for now. I'm telling my stories of what happens in life, and I think now being retired, I'm going to have completely different experiences although. I still have that same approach to life, so it doesn't matter if it's a young person or an older person. There will be adventures as my grandson told me once. When we go out on adventures, it usually ends up being a misadventure. But that's what fun. I think he meant it as.

Wynne Leon



Oh.

Beth Kennedy

Like an kind of compliment.

Wynne Leon

Mm-hmm.

Speaker

But.

Beth Kennedy

Because it was more fun, but it's never, and that's what he's saying. So.

Wynne Leon

Yeah, right. I think that sounds like a compliment to me. I think that sounds like a great way to to roll. Yeah, with what happens.

Beth Kennedy

That's how life is. Yeah, yeah. That's right.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, the misadventures are always more fun, right? They're always more fun, right? Yeah.

Wynne Leon

I feel like that just going on walks with my kids where, you know, we go to get ice cream or whatever and it ends up to be, you know, not a straight line. It's it just goes like this and then you go like that and then you.

Speaker

Hmm.

Wynne Leon

Make something over here or then you have to stop to look at a bug or you. Know whatever it is, it's.

Beth Kennedy

Yeah, shiny object.

Wynne Leon

More from him. Yeah, tiny object.

Vicki Atkinson

All the shiny objects, right? Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Someone skins and knee. I mean, they're so many things happen. Yeah, just. You know follow the thread.

Beth Kennedy

Well, I think it's about being observant and noticing. Because it's so easy to literally walk through life or whatever without noticing and all these things are going.

Vicki Atkinson

On around you. Yeah. And do you 2 think when I'm when I'm listening to both of you, do you think some of that like common ground is?

Wynne Leon

Mm-hmm.

Vicki Atkinson

Proximity to children that just see, like joy and awe all around. And then slowly we chip that away as we get older. But I think both of you having that you know ability in your lives to be close to the younger ones, it maybe is a reminder don't let that get too far away from you.

Beth Kennedy

There are good examples of it, definitely teaching young children. My children are grown now. My grandchildren are getting there. So I think that.

Speaker

Yes.

Beth Kennedy

When I met the pre kindergarten, I just thought this is my tribe. They understand, right? Right. That every day I would say this is the best day ever. And I always tell.

Wynne Leon

Mm-hmm.

Beth Kennedy

Them that and. That's really how it is for me, like when I wake up, I wake up early in the morning. I'm excited. That's how they are, unless they're crappy. But I like that they're filled with wonder and curiosity and ask questions.

Vicki Atkinson

Wow. Yeah, and unabashedly like your student that wanted to go play in the snow. This is what I'm feeling.

Beth Kennedy

This is really boring right now, right? So yeah.

Wynne Leon

Yes. Yeah. Oh, my gosh. So good. Yeah. I and I, I couldn't agree with your answer more. Beth, I think it is that access to the wonder and curiosity. Yeah. I think that slows you down from just, you know, being on the To Do List. I'm going to get it done.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, right. Yeah. Yeah, right.

Beth Kennedy

Yeah.

Vicki Atkinson

The heck with the To Do List. Yes, heck with us, yes.

Speaker

Yes.

Wynne Leon

We were Mr. D was riding, you know, he's four years old. He was riding his bike down the bike lane, which in Seattle is a, you know, there's a lot of traffic going by and he stops and he goes, look, there's a beetle and I'm. I was running along and I'm like, where? Usually it's right there and you know I was expecting something that was a couple inches cuz he's seeing it from his bike. This thing was like an eighth of an.

Beth Kennedy

Right.

Wynne Leon

Inch. I'm like wow, that absolutely.

Beth Kennedy

Oh my gosh, I thought you were gonna say you were also getting slammed from behind because you stopped to look at the beetle. I'm glad that didn't happen. Right. Ohh right. Why have someone I have the kids for two years in my class and I have someone for two years that has told me. I always do all these fairy things with the kids and out in the woods.

Wynne Leon

With him. But.

Beth Kennedy

And use your. In two years, he said. I have to tell you something. And he said what? And he said theories are not real, they're not science. And they said, well, you know, if you believe everyone's different and he said, but they're not science. So again, I had this year, we're out in the woods. We're looking for the fairies. And he said. I have to tell you fairies are still not real little science. He's trying to help me like come back into the world. But you know, we just see the world differently.

Vicki Atkinson

And how old was this, this young man? Ohh my. Yeah.

Beth Kennedy

He's 4, he's 4.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Don't you wish you could, like, project in time and see him in? You know, 2025 years and see what he's up to? Yeah.

Beth Kennedy

Yeah. So you can have both, I think science and imagination so.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

M.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Agree. So true. Thank you so much, Beth. This was a delight. Absolutely.

Beth Kennedy

Pleasure to be here on the. Couch.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, we need someone doing drums, right? We need like, yeah.

Wynne Leon

We're gonna have to add that in later, but you know, and get a better couch since we.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. And maybe.

Speaker

My.

Beth Kennedy

Pension so yeah.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Or find a way to be all together. Like, virtually with to, like, I don't know. Mm-hmm. Use some sort of technology to pretend we're on a sofa, yeah.

Beth Kennedy

And when you get bored, just. Go out and roll. In the snow, although we're done.

Wynne Leon

Right. Mm-hmm. You're good.

Vicki Atkinson

Right. I like it. I might do that. Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Alright, well, here's our here's our attempt at the Johnny Carson show.

Vicki Atkinson

Did our best.

Beth Kennedy

Thank you for having me today as. A guest it really. Was a pleasure to meet you both. Thank you.

Wynne Leon

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