

# Audio file

[HoTM episode 79.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, Vicky Atkinson and I are with retired elementary teacher, Blogger and author Pete Springer. Pete tells us a hilarious story about a volunteer job that devolved into the giggles, and we talked about how laughter is such a great unifier and connector. Sure, there are some things in life that need to be taken seriously, but is it OK to laugh even as we are trying to do a good job? Pete carries that forward into another story about a recent mad dash through the airport. In his version of planes, carts, and shuttle vans, he delightfully reminds us that we will eventually get to our destination, and it's better to go laughing. So please join us for this delightful episode that has Vicky and me in Giggles, and I know you will be chuckling right alongside us. I'm certain you'll enjoy the scenic and beautiful places we go when we share the power of story. We know you'll love it. Hi, Pete.

Pete Springer

Hi, Wynn. Hi, Vicky. Good. Really great to see you guys again.

Wynne Leon

Ditto, so excited that have you back because you always make us think and you make us laugh and you make us wrap things up in a in a nice wrapper of of family and learning and encouragement. It's just so. Much fun.

Pete Springer

Well, aren't you a smooth talker?

Wynne Leon

I'm just starting out, just getting warmed up. Do you have this great story about the time you were reading the newspaper to an audience?

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Pete Springer

Ohh yes so so I worked with some you know. I know people say this but I worked with the absolute best people in my career. I just have so many. Friends and people I respect and the to a testimony to that is that we still get together in retirement once a month for lunch. In fact, tomorrow's our day

and and you know, and and you sit around and you talk about all the things that are going on in your life. Well, actually.

Vicki Atkinson

Sherry.

Pete Springer

The beginning is usually recapping somebody's latest surgery or new body part, but.

Wynne Leon

OK. Yeah.

Pete Springer

But you know, and you're talking about grandchildren. And now I I get to be part of that conversation. But, you know, eventually it almost always turns into where somebody has a share, something about some child that we used to teach. But. Anyway, when when my friend Joan retired from teaching, she was still pretty young and she's always been a very giving person, and so she decided that she wanted to. Starter program for the blind people, low low vision, and so she. Rogram and I don't. I don't know all the particulars, but anyway, what basically happened is she got all this radio equipment and we read we I didn't really do that much of it until I retired. But sometimes in the summer she would. She, with a bunch of volunteers, would read the newspaper. Our our newspaper for it was actually an hour and a half. It was live radio, so and there were always two readers because maybe somebody has to go to the bathroom. Maybe you suddenly get you start coughing, but we.

Wynne Leon

Right.

Pete Springer

You know we would. Mark the newspaper up in advance so you would take turns. OK, this is gonna be your article. This is gonna be my article. And so lots of times, you know you would. We would. I know in the beginning. I I got the newspaper at home. I would actually read the newspaper in advance because I knew I, you know, you don't want to be sitting there reading live and then trying to say a word. And so I would like, look for challenging words or or.

Vicki Atkinson

Right. Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Yeah.

Pete Springer

Call it either. Let's say there was a local politician and I wasn't sure how to pronounce her name. I'm sure other people just went with it, but I'm, you know, I'm \*\*\*\* that way.

Vicki Atkinson

Mm-hmm.

Pete Springer

So I spent a lot of time. You know, I had a time. Anyway, I'd go into the studio and we'd, we'd have our session, read the, read the news and and after the first hour, then we would the last half hour we would read another newspaper, oftentimes or just newspapers.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Pete Springer

Put it in the area, but would only come out once a week or something. Well, there was this little community. The nearby called Blue Lake Blue Lake I I could. It's only got a few 100 people and I'm even surprised they have a newspaper. But anyway, so I'm reading as I did this a little more often. I got more comfortable and I I I wouldn't look at the paper. I had a time and just.

Wynne Leon

Right, no.

Pete Springer

You know, So what? You make a mistake and.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Pete Springer

Ohh I should also say well, you know as I'm on live radio so that we were on our very high frequency. I don't even know the particulars of how it worked, but people could TuneIn to our broadcast and this is their way of getting the news. So it was a really. What a wonderful. My idea anyway, so I'm reading along one day I'm reading the Blue Lake News and there's the crime report section and I'm sitting next to my good friend Brenda, who was one of the main volunteers. And and I begin to read this article.

Wynne Leon

Right.

Pete Springer

And it's so ridiculous. I I, you know, I can't hardly keep a straight face. And I it's it's the kind of thing where when you're with a friend and your friend starts giggling and then. You get a case of the good.

And I'm like, you know, it's so simple. I'm I I. It's not like we have this massive audience, but I know I'm on live radio and I'm trying to keep it together. Well, I have to. I'll share the a little bit of the story cause that's yeah, that's what makes this. So I'm reading along and it it's about.

Vicki Atkinson

Right.

Pete Springer

It talks about this woman who called the police because someone passing by her house. Got on her riding lawn mower and started mowing the grass and I'm like I'm trying to picture the scene here and and and it's it goes on and on. It's just kind of elaborate story and how the how the woman asks the man to get off the mower.

Vicki Atkinson

How's your day?

Pete Springer

But he wouldn't get off her mower, and he continued to mow, and so she ends up eventually calling and calling the police. And you know, you can imagine that call into dispatch.

Wynne Leon

Right, right. Right. He's on my mower, right?

Pete Springer

And what that would have sounded like, well, I'm anyway I'm. I'm reading along and it's the whole thing is just comical, but I'm I'm reading along and, you know, and she gets a case of the giggles and she's not. She's not laughing out loud, but she's sitting right next to me. And and I could feel her shoulders start. And and finally it just as I in the middle of reading the article, I finally lost it and I, you know, I mean, I've been in situations like that before, but I've always been able to restrain myself. I start laughing out loud. She starts laughing out loud and then, you know, what do you do?

Vicki Atkinson

Hello.

Pete Springer

Where and you try to try to get it to. Heather and you apologize to your audience or whatever, but it's just one of those situations where Oh my God.

Vicki Atkinson

When you think about the person doing dispatch going OK, what do I do with this? Like, you know, theft of a lawn mower, unauthorized mowing? And I'm thinking really trespassing is probably the best they could get, right?

Pete Springer

Exactly. Exactly. And here you know I. Mean just somebody even get the idea. Think I'll off on this person's mower and start mowing their lawn.

Wynne Leon

Yeah, I hope he was doing stray lines, I mean. Ohh.

Vicki Atkinson

Oh, oh, we could be doing crop circles. Ohh yeah, I just my first thought when I read the piece, Pete and just I busted out laughing cuz. It's just so.

Pete Springer

Is this?

Vicki Atkinson

I'm. I was laughing before you. You even described it. You know, for our listeners. But the thing I couldn't get past was. It was kind of like a joyride, right? Yeah, yeah.

Pete Springer

Yeah, yeah, it there's this program was just so amazing. I she. I think she did this for like, 10 years Monday through Friday and lined up lots of people in the community to to, you know, because yeah, obviously we we have busy lives. You can't be doing it yourself every day and so and then you know, and it it grew because more and more people heard about it and learned about it. And so it was really a great way to interact.

Wynne Leon

Yeah, right.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Pete Springer

And one of the really, really cool things she did, she was she Joan, the one that started the program. She's into theater. She's into music. And so she, during our local theater productions. She had a like a benefit for the blind and so. During the show, I think she maybe during the maybe month or so that the show ran, she would. One night she would have. An event just for people with limited vision. And so it's like, well, how does that work? You're you're thinking, you know, they're going to the theater. Yeah. You can hear the actors, and I'm sure you can just, you know, make distinctions in their voices and everything.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Pete Springer

But I and and I would think you would be able to enjoy it. But the way the event started, I I thought that was really cool. She would get out there ahead of time and she would describe the setting to the audio. And so the audience was made-up of of people that were blind and people that weren't. But it was just very cool because you could kind of, you know, she just was very elaborate in her description and such that, you know, over here we have a a kitchen and she would describe it in in.

Vicki Atkinson

MHM. OK.

Wynne Leon

Yeah.

Pete Springer

Great detail. And and so. And you know I you while I'm watching the play, I'm also looking around because I'm curious how the this is being received and you know and I'd look to these faces of people that that aren't able to watch it and yet you can still see the joy on their faces.

Wynne Leon

Right, right.

Pete Springer

And and so. I don't know things like that when people. Give of themselves like that. I just think that those, yeah, they're not doing it to for any other reason than to be a good person and bring some joy into the world and and. I think those.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Pete Springer

Are the kind of things that I find most inspiring, because then it just like, wow, if they can do that, why can't I?

Wynne Leon

Right, yeah.

Pete Springer

You know, and so I I think my whole approach in retirement. It's been, you know, this is my time to give back. I have the time now and I and if I do it, then maybe I'll inspire somebody else just the way the others have done the same and it, you know, if we all adopted that kind of attitude of of.

Wynne Leon

OK.

Pete Springer

Looking out for each other, I just think, yeah, the world would be a better place.

Wynne Leon

A better place? Well, and I love. That you know as you're doing it, you you show us how it can be, you know the the the title of your piece about this is sometimes you just have to laugh. I mean, it's fun. It's not, you know, I'm doing my weekly penance. It's you know, I'm in here. I'm with my friend who's reading along Brenda and and we're laughing and and.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Spreading the laughter as well, yeah.

Pete Springer

Yes, yes, I mean and life is just filled with. So much so many funny moments, and sometimes they, you know, you might be in the middle of it and and you know, you're feeling agitated and angry. And but if. You look at. You look at a situation from a different perspective. Lots of times you can find the humor in it. I mean, even just the.

Vicki Atkinson

Right.

Pete Springer

I was talking about this traveling experience. We just went to this family, really. Union in Minnesota and it was aggravating, but at some point you just have to realize how comical this whole thing is. And you know, so we were, I, maybe I'll tell you a little bit about that. So here we are.

Wynne Leon

I guess.

Pete Springer

It was two days after that IIT event and flights we were flying Delta Airlines and flights. Were delayed and there were all kinds of people in the airport on standby. And so, you know, we were like, gosh, are we going to be able to make it to our reunion? And we had a series of three flights, and so we got up at like, 4:00 AM in the morning to catch our first 6:00 AM flight or something. And so the first flight goes from Oregon to Salt Lake City. Everything's going smooth. Ohh boy. We're in in good, great shape. We get on the plane in Salt Lake City and we think we're in good shape. We're right on time. And we're thinking, man, this is going better than we anticipated. Well. We're on the. Plane and the pilot comes on and. Says later we got the flight delay and. Then you know should be just a few minutes. We and then he. Elaborates and says so, well, we've got a couple bags that are on the plane that we need. To get off. OK, so you know, I guess I'm envisioning 10 minutes or something maybe 5 minutes later, we're still sitting there and.

Vicki Atkinson

Right. OK.

Pete Springer

My wife is starting to feel the the heat, you know? Get going. We're gonna be late. Well.

Vicki Atkinson

Oh.

Pete Springer

You know there there's.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, yeah.

Pete Springer

Nothing you can do. And so I'm. I'm, I'm. I'm feeling a little nervous too, but I'm trying to play it like, yeah, we got this whole thing under control and I and I think we do have it under control. And so I, you know, don't worry about it, honey. We're we're we're going to be fine. And and we would have been fine.

Vicki Atkinson

No.

Pete Springer

If something else didn't happen so we land, we, we we finally take off, we land in Minneapolis and. And we had another scheduled flight in. Well, our next flight was supposed to be an hour and a half an hour and a half hour and a half in between. And so we're, you know, Ding the bell rings, everybody stands up to get off the plane and they couldn't get the door of the plane open. And so, you know, again, again, it's one of these things you think well.

Wynne Leon

Ohh no.

Pete Springer

They do this every day. This can only. Take a a minute or two. Well, after 1/2 an hour goes by, then you start to like ohh my gosh. How long are we going to be or is this going to be one of these stories where they're you're here, you know, for half a day, how they gonna feed us? How are we gonna go to the bathroom? All those things are. Yeah. And entering your mind. But anyway, we finally get off and.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.



Pete Springer

And we look at the, you know, we check the app on our phones and because we know what gate we're supposed to be at, but we don't know what gate we're coming into. And so we get off the. We get off the plane and it's gate. We're at like gate a 48 and we need to be at gate F72 or something. Well, that means eight. You gotta go through all these sectors. The Minneapolis Airport is big. And so we start.

Vicki Atkinson

Of course. Yeah.

Pete Springer

Even though we're like, this is like we have no chance. But got to give it the old college striker.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, you do.

Pete Springer

And you know, we're not exactly youngsters here, but we're making good time. We're, you know. We're we're making jokes about entering the Senior Olympics and.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Pete Springer

By one of these carts comes by, you know, where people that you know, people that need a ride, cause it's far for them to walk.

Wynne Leon

Yeah, yeah.

Pete Springer

And I go into my, you know, flagging down routine. Ohh. The guy the guy stopped. The guy stops and I I'm like, you know, we're we're late. We got 5 minutes till our flights supposed to take off. Can you take us here? And and he wants to look at our phone to maybe probably make sure that I'm not some lunatic or something and he you know and he sees.

Vicki Atkinson

Over here.

Pete Springer

What gate? We're going to. So he says. Yeah, I can. I I'll try to get you there. So we take off and it's just it's. It's it was just so hilarious. By this point we're laughing because he's, you know, these these

cards that I've seen in the past. They usually have a horn on them or something. His either he wasn't using it or he didn't have one. And so all he's doing is like liking a video game.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Ohh.

Pete Springer

Whipping in and out and there's a lot of people there. Of course, being partly, I think because the IT.

Vicki Atkinson

OK.

Pete Springer

And and and you know. So we're like, again we're thinking we're never gonna make this. But, you know, at that point, we were, like literally laughing and. And then people would walk right in front of you aimlessly. They're not doing anything wrong. They're just. They're oblivious that this cart is racing.

Vicki Atkinson

Yes. Hello.

Pete Springer

Long they they have no idea. They're about that. How close they came to getting knocked down laughing, right, like, right out of cartoons or.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Pete Springer

Something.

Vicki Atkinson

Or I was gonna say mow down right mow down. Yeah. Continuing that theme. Yeah. Yeah.

Pete Springer

Is a better word. And. So we we we show up, we we show up, we get to the the gate and of course we're 5 minutes late and the planes that we can see the plane but.

Wynne Leon

Good one, piggy.

Pete Springer

They're not going. To open the door for us.

Wynne Leon

No.

Pete Springer

And so you know, I mean that stuff happens, right? It happens to everybody when you travel. But because we're going to.

Vicki Atkinson

Oh.

Pete Springer

Another little regional airport maybe, maybe a 50 minute flight, but you know 3 1/2 hour drive or something. So we look and you know, go up to the agent. The next flight happens in eight hours, right. And so we're like, oh, my gosh, are we really gonna hang out in the airport?

Vicki Atkinson

Right. Ohh.

Pete Springer

3-8 hours and so we start. You know, trying to. Decide what we're going to do and let's go rent a car. So we go to the car rental place and and you know, and this is again, everything is huge. I've never been in this airport before. You're you're asking people for directions wherever you go and and.

Vicki Atkinson

And it's the global outage. There are people everywhere, right? So it's just also confusion on top of confusion, right? Yeah. 9.

Wynne Leon

Yeah.

Pete Springer

Guys. Exactly. And they give you they give you like 9 directions. Well, I got lost on direction #2. Right, but OK, I'll just walk a few feet now. Somebody else. So we finally get to the car rental place and you know, we're filling out all the paperwork. We're doing the we think we're. We're OK. We got a car and then the agent says, well, you know, you have to return the the car back to this airport. Well, that kind of defeats the purpose. We're gonna drive 3 1/2 hours. You may not have to drive it.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Pete Springer

Back and we're flying out of the other city. So I was like, oh, this isn't gonna work. So. And then we ended up we, you know, we end up.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

Pete Springer

Looking at a bus as an option and then we finally found some some guy in a van and and suddenly we're in there with about, you know, 14 people and and all going on a three and a half hour ride to to Minneapolis. And so we ended up getting in about 11:30 that night. And no luggage or luggage didn't make it either, so it was just one thing after, but in the end it made made for a good story and and when we weren't upset, we were laughing so.

Vicki Atkinson

Was wondering about that right? Your luggage was who knows where.

Wynne Leon

That's great. I I love it cause you've you've brought us full circle. Like, as always, you've encouraged us to make this world a better place. You've encouraged us to laugh about miss us as they happen along the way. And just. Such a good Pete story.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, well, in, in the end, I think maybe one of the morals and this is a good one for me. Sometimes you've got to trust the guy in the van, right? Like, but you're. You're like hesitation, like reserve. You've probably worn that down so much. But whatever you might have thought at the beginning of your journey about getting in an obscure van with strangers, at that moment, you're like, yeah, that's a must idea over.

Pete Springer

No, I mean that. Right. I mean, so many days in life are kind of routine, right? One thing. That happens, that always happens, and then you have these days like this where, wow, I never thought I'd be doing this, but.

Vicki Atkinson

Wait.

Wynne Leon

Right, right.

Vicki Atkinson

Ohh Peter. So.

Wynne Leon

Funny, thank you so much for coming on. We love your stories. We love talking to you. Can't wait to hear what you're up to next.

Pete Springer

Yeah. Well, you guys keep spreading the joy because I, you know, I've watched enough of these podcasts that you don't. I don't always get to see all of them, but you do. You both have a very. You you have a talent for making. Creating ease for people to be here. In fact, today, you know, we had we had planned this and I actually forgot what we were even gonna talk about cause a while and I thought what does it matter? This is just talking like talking to a couple old friends and you don't there's no stress. And and you know, that's that really is a. Talent, some people. Have that ability to put people at ease and and both of you have that.

Wynne Leon

Ohh. But it does feel like we're old friends. My love, if you're bringing back that peak encouragement factor again. So thank you so. Much thank you.

Pete Springer

You're welcome. Thanks so much. Good to talk to you guys.

Vicki Atkinson

Thank. You too.

Wynne Leon

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