

Transcript

Wynne Leon

Welcome to the Sharing the Heart of the Matter podcast, where we celebrate the Storyteller in us all. I'm Wynne Leon and in this episode I'm with my co-host Vicki Atkinson and we are sharing a cup of tea. We bring in one of my favorite quotes about tea from Mark Nepo. He likens tea to the way we make sense of our lives, from gathering the leaves to pouring water over it to drinking slowly, we cultivate the aromatic blend that helps us and heals us. Both Vicki and I like the ritual because it slows us down. Having a cup of tea is like an invitation to bring forward what we already know. I share my secret for how long I let it steep. And Vicki brings forward the treasures from her family that holds so much more than tea. Vicki shares a delightful book about making tea that has been a gift and a reminder to let the swirls of tea help settle our thoughts down. I'm confident they'll love the scenic and beautiful places we explore as we share the power of storytelling over a cup of. Tea. We know you'll love it.

Vicki Atkinson

Hi, Vicki. Hello. When do you have a cup of tea? I do, yeah. Let's pinkies up. We'll cheers each other. Cheers. I do. What's in your teacup? Mine is blueberry green tea, which is a nice combination.

Wynne Leon

Hello.

Vicki Atkinson

You know, there's something about green tea. Maybe this is true with blueberry, but I find I need a clear mug when I do it, so I can kinda. I tend to like over steep. So in your mug, how do you know when your blueberry green tea is good to go? Right. You have to like drink over the top.

Wynne Leon

No, I'm never patient enough to have it overdeveloped. It's just, yeah, that time.

Vicki Atkinson

I know well and we know you know, as we talk about, you know, tea in this episode, there are plenty of, you know, viewers and listeners who would think of what we describe as taking tea as being kind of like the worst possible way because we know all about T.

Wynne Leon

Yeah.

Vicki Atkinson

Rituals. But you know we're we're kind of the dunk the bag and go. If I'm really fancy, I'll use an infuser in a teapot, but it's usually only if I have a friend over. If it's just me.

Wynne Leon

Dangle. Dangle. Yeah. Dangle, dangle. Let's get going. Actually, you know, The funny thing is that I will turn the kettle on. I'll put the tea bag in my teeth. That. Yeah, completely dark. Except for the candles. I've lit. And then I let it steep while I read my meditation books.

Vicki Atkinson

Tangled.

Speaker

MM.

Vicki Atkinson

Oh, that's good.

Wynne Leon

And when I'm done with meditation, then my tea is ready. So I do. That's my better answer because and it's. I never do look at it because it's completely dark in the kitchen at this time of year. So I just let that be whatever, whatever that is.

Vicki Atkinson

Ah. Yeah. Yes. I like that, but you also there is sort of a time stamp to it because you're doing something that's part of your morning sacred time. Yeah. While the tea is brewing. Yeah, I love that. Yeah. And it's a great segue because. Yeah. One of the reasons we're talking about to you today is this passage from Mark Nepo.

Speaker

Hmm.

Wynne Leon

Who is one of my favorites and who I read every morning in that sad? Your time, and it's about tea.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, I love it. And can I just tell you, I always I think I always mispronounce his name. It's really nipo, not nepo. Is that right?

Wynne Leon

He is a really good question. I don't know.

Vicki Atkinson

I don't. Someone will have to fill us in. I apologies if I've been doing that wrong. Yeah, yeah.

Wynne Leon

Me too. Why? Don't you say it, Napo. And I'll say it, Nico, and then we'll cover.

Vicki Atkinson

Both. Let's call the whole thing off, right. We'll start singing, right. No, we won't. We promise. No, no, no songs. All right? Yeah.

Wynne Leon

No, no, we won't. We won't.

Vicki Atkinson

I love this.

Wynne Leon

We'll just call them Mark. OK, so his his meditation on tea that. OK. I just love is. If we stop to truly consider it. Making tea is a miraculous process. First, small leaves are gathered from plants that grow from unseen roots. Then boiling water is drained through dried leaves. Finally, allowing the mixture to steep creates an elixir that, when digested, can be healing. And then he goes on to ask some questions. The whole process is a model for how to make inner use of our daily experience.

Speaker

MHM.

Wynne Leon

For isn't making tea the way we cipher through the events of our lives? Isn't the work of sincerity. To pour our deepest attention over the dried bits of our days. Isn't patience the need to let the mixture of inner and outer brew until the lessons are fragrant and soothing on the throat? Isn't the heat of our sincerity that seems the lessons out of living. Isn't it the heat of those lessons that makes us sip them slowly? I I love that part because I you do have to sip slowly and then he finishes off. Yep. Perhaps the most revealing thing about all of this is that none of these elements alone can produce tea.

Vicki Atkinson

Yes.

Wynne Leon

Likewise, only by using them together can we make tea out of our days and our sincerity and our pain and our patience. And none of it. Is healing without a willingness to drink from the tea of life.

Vicki Atkinson

Wow.

Wynne Leon

Yeah, it's such a good I just love that because it's such a good invitation.

Vicki Atkinson

Wow.

Wynne Leon

Mm-hmm. To to to pour over what we already know.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, yeah. And it's hard. To listen to that and not slow down, you know, and you're reading of it, of course it makes it even better, but it's all the elements coming together, each having equal importance and then allowing it to unfold. Yeah. No, it's beautiful.

Wynne Leon

MM.

Vicki Atkinson

Love it? Yeah.

Wynne Leon

I it it, it's it to me. Tea and writing go hand in hand because they're both opportunities to discover what I already know.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Yeah, I think there's something about the slowing down with tea and there's a lot about tea rituals, you know, that we could spin off on, you know, that people kind of adopt and adapt, but that there is something magic about a warm beverage.

Wynne Leon

Mm-hmm.

Vicki Atkinson

Inviting contemplation.

Wynne Leon

MHM, MHM.

Vicki Atkinson

You know and and I think you and I often believe that being seekers and looking for answers, solutions all. Of that, the reason why we meditate and we seek those quiet moments is that very often what we need is on the inside, and it's really hard to drink hot tea in a hurry. You really gotta you gotta commit.

Wynne Leon

You do, you do. Yeah. Yeah. The other part of the ritual that I love is that I wrap my hands around my warm teacup. And it's usually right about then that my kids come down from, yeah, sleep. And I'll have these really warm tea hands when I call them and I put them on their faces or and it's that.

Vicki Atkinson

Oh. Yes.

Wynne Leon

It's a ritual, be, you know, with. Kids that that's the warmth of the warmth of life, the warmth of lessons and yeah.

Vicki Atkinson

Now.

Wynne Leon

Healing. If somebody has a heart sore back and you put your hot tea hand.

Vicki Atkinson

MHM. Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's and it's a reminder this time of year. You know, we're we're recording this, you know, in the middle of October, literally. And things have definitely started to change, at least in North America about, you know, light and temperature and all that and seasonal changes. But you're right, it's that, UM, the savoring the cup. And I think you know, both of us have you know it. It doesn't work for me to have a cup of tea. And I have, you know, a couple of examples. This is a tea set. That was my momma's mother's, and my mom never used it.

Wynne Leon

MHM.

Vicki Atkinson

But it's in a special place, you know, in a cupboard, in a cabinet. And I've got a little chocolate set. That was my. My uncle brought it back back from Vietnam in 1967. But there are the precious things about tea. But then there's the utilitarian like I love.

Wynne Leon

Right.

Vicki Atkinson

Those, but I would never use them because I hadn't thought about it. I like the wrap around also right? And then what that does for you. But what what transpires with your kids, you know, in the warm hands. But I have to ask you in when it's very hot in the summer. And I know Seattle doesn't get, like, ridiculously hot your tea ritual in the morning doesn't change it. You still are, you know, all of that.

Wynne Leon

Right. It is. It doesn't change for the morning, but I probably won't have a second cup. But then if it's hot of the day, how about for you?

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah, I like coffee in the morning because I have. Found my way into having some people would call it protein coffee, so I like, you know, a little bit of that. And I have a dear friend Irene, who makes the best coffee. So I have her kind of secret recipe of some people would call it like a coffee version of hot chocolate, but.

Speaker

Hmm.

Vicki Atkinson

But it fills me up and it's good iced, which I'll drink, you know, even when it's cooler out. But as soon as I've had that, I'm onto my first cup of green tea just because I feel like. It's a cleansing thing in the morning and I'll take my vitamins and you know, get moving, start thinking about, you know, where does the exercise fit, you know, or the stretching because I'm the person if I don't do that in the morning, it's not getting done. Any other time? Yeah. And then I'll, I often will make like a big batch of. Green tea to keep ice in the fridge, and I prefer to brew my own because I know what's in it and it takes nothing you know to do that. But it drives Paul a little crazy because there's always, you know, two or three different glass decanters of something in the fridge. Yeah. But I like my tea.

Speaker

Yes.

Vicki Atkinson

And I like tea in the afternoon too.

Speaker

Yeah.

Wynne Leon

Umm. And you have another precious tea book.

Vicki Atkinson

I do, yeah. A former student who became one of our student workers when I was in higher Ed was a big fan of tea and for him it became a self-care ritual and he knew it and he ran across. I'll take some of my little. Things out of it, he ran across a book and we'll, you know, put these references in the show notes, too, by Malachi McCormick called a decent cup of tea. And I've had it for 25 years and I've always thought of it as a precious volume, partly because of the size. But I also really enjoyed the design on the cover and it's written from a man who's originally from Ireland. But it talks about kind of rituals and I love that it has some delicious recipes about, you

know, what do you have with your tea? Just delightful and I I wrote about it a couple of years ago, not quite about what it means to have, you know, precious little books around that remind you.

Speaker

Hmm.

Vicki Atkinson

Of people or? The stories that they've told. You know about what matters to them, but I I love this little book and I don't know if it's common anymore. This was printed 33 years ago, but it is a handmade book.

Wynne Leon

Oh wow.

Vicki Atkinson

And so I I don't know if it's still available in this way, but from a very boutique publisher that Once Upon a time, you know, took great care in crafting, right. So I think about all of our, you know, artists and designer friends and creative types. There's something special about little books that remind you. About self-care now.

Wynne Leon

Like tea, like tea, and you commented on the the design of. The book the.

Vicki Atkinson

Swirls. Yes. Yeah, I love that because. I am Once Upon a time I did a post about that too because I I love design and home decor. Also, it's a part of who I am and things that I've dabbled with and I am very enamored of scrolls, Gaelic scrolls, swirls and they are pronounced. You know, design elements throughout our house, iron work. You know I love. You know, and and I've learned the older I've gotten and the more I learn about ancestry, this is not a random thing. You know, my love of old stones, swirly things. But this sweet little book has this cover design that you can tell, you know, someone made this with love and care. You know, not something that was, you know, AI generated, you know, or or done, you know, with some CAD drawing or something. It was someone's, you know, beautiful hand taking the vision from their head when they thought about tea and the swirls and yeah, it just makes me happy.

Wynne Leon

Right. That's wonderful. And I love this conversation. I love that.

Vicki Atkinson

Uh-huh.

Wynne Leon

Tea often invites us to slow down, as you've observed so well, and take our attention on the things that maybe we already know the the the things that we need to step out of our experience. So thank you for talking about tea.

Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. Hmm. 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 sharingtheheartof.thematter.com.