

Wynne Leon (00:03)

Welcome to the Sharing the Heart of the Matter podcast. Join us as we celebrate the brilliance of authors, storytellers, and creators.

Ritish Sharma (00:12)

you

Wynne Leon (00:15)

I'm Wynne Leon, and in this episode, Vicki Atkinson and I are talking with author and blogger Ritish Sharma. Ritish and his co-author Deepak Joshi have put together an incredible collection of heartwarming stories in their book, *Unfold the Stories of Unsung Heroes*. Part three of this series was just released on March 29th of this year.

and has 10 profiles of incredible people making a difference in this world. The people in this volume hail from Uruguay, China, India, and Indiana, and beyond. So we asked Ritish how they find and vet these inspiring stories. He tells us of the spark that started them on this mission. Deepak and Ritish do an amazing job of telling these stories.

They transport us across space and time so that we can feel the dedication and goodness of people doing great things for other people, not for the recognition, but because they care. We asked Ritish if he has a favorite from this incredible collection, which I think is a little like asking someone if they have a favorite child, but he was a nice enough to give us an answer anyway.

This is a fantastic episode featuring an interesting and inspired guest on a mission to celebrate unsung heroes. We know you'll love it.

you

Ritish Sharma (02:00)

you ~

Wynne Leon (02:09)

Good morning, Ritish!

Ritish Sharma (02:11)

Hi, good morning.

Wynne Leon (02:13)

I guess it's evening for you. yes, yes. Thank you so much for coming on and talking to Vicki and I. ~ we're, we were laughing cause this is, you know, my, first podcast I've done from a car, as, as, know, it's a little odd, but the gas company came and kicked me out of my house while they're checking out a leak. So we'll just roll in with it.

Ritish Sharma (02:15)

So it's evening here, yeah.

Pleasure is mine.

Vicki Atkinson (02:38)

Absolutely.

We figured it was one of the ways we were going to make your podcast extra special.

Wynne Leon (02:43)

Exactly. Exactly right. So you just released, and for anybody that's watching this on video, Cooper the dog is also participating in this podcast. So, so this is, we wanted to talk to you

about your book, Untold Stories of Unsung Heroes, which we love. And it's your third book in the series. So can you tell us about what inspired the series and give us an elevator pitch for the book?

Ritish Sharma (02:46)

special.

Yeah, sure. first of all, I like it's hard to believe that we are already on the third part of the book. And so it was actually Deepak's idea. like in 2022, Deepak read this article in his local newspaper about this man who feeds the stray dogs in the town selflessly. So he came to me, Deepak and said that we should be like, start telling these stories to our readers.

I really liked that idea. I thought that yeah, that's a very good thing to do like to give them the light they deserve, give them the platform they deserve. So we started publishing stories online. We introduced this category on our blogging platform, Aspiring Blog, as you might have known. So we introduced this category called the Unsung Heroes and we started publishing the stories there. We started collecting the names of the heroes that we know and

Sometimes the people recommends us. So we started publishing there and the response that we were getting after like four or five months publishing those stories, it was just so incredible. It was just incredible. And sometimes even the NGOs that we have mentioned in those stories, they message us and email us to say thank you. And sometimes the heroes themselves, they say thank you for.

that thank you for writing those stories, writing about me and giving me this platform. So that's, I had this idea that why not we take this to a much bigger platform? Like we should be sharing these stories to a large number of audience. So like they should also have the right to like feel the same inspiration that we were getting by just writing them. Right.

So I proposed this idea to Deepak that we should start a book series called Unfold the Stories of the Unsung Heroes. And that's when the series began and we had our first book published back in, I think in 2022. This was the whole idea behind the book.

Wynne Leon (05:16)

That is wonderful. It's such a great book and these stories, you have people from all over the world. How do you find, so I think you mentioned this a little bit, but can you tell us more about how you find these heroes?

Ritish Sharma (05:28)

yeah, absolutely. So like it's something that we are proud of that our heroes are global. Like are not just limited to a region. And that's the best part about it. That when we find heroes, that's half the joy for us. So we have a mix of methods of finding those heroes. First of all, our beloved readers who always suggest and recommend us that, we know this guy. He's doing a wonderful job in our community and you should know more about them.

And then second, we have a form open on our website that people can come and just share more about the heroes they want us to find and write stories about them. And then we have our social media and even Deepak and I do some intensive research, continue scrolling over the internet and social media and finding those heroes all around us. And that's one thing to do, but sometimes it takes a lot of time, a lot of research.

Wynne Leon (06:18)

Right.

Ritish Sharma (06:23)

to just know that these are the people that we should be writing about. They are very genuine and deserve the recognition.

Wynne Leon (06:31)

So there have been times where you've gone through a particular research and determined that somebody should have a longer story in your book and

Ritish Sharma (06:45)

Yeah, yes, yes. So whenever we find a hero, our motive is not just to copy paste the content, we find it on. So what we do is we contact the NGOs they work with, we go to the local newspaper where their story might have published before. our aim is to find every tiny details to understand them, basically.

like to answer those questions that who they are and what makes them them. Yeah. What drives them to take such steps. So we try, we aim to, we try to collect all those little details and then we just curate them. And I think the point of these stories, like it's not written like a biographies or news report or an article. We try to feel the emotion that

whenever someone's reading those stories they should feel they are they basically learning about those people but they are also feels that what those people might have felt while living their life like when doing such grateful things such wonderful things right

Wynne Leon (07:50)

So that's the whole bio. You make the story so personal and readable. mean, they just really are lovely stories. And your research really shows because, you you just have such great details.

Ritish Sharma (08:02)

Yes, yes, yes. That's always our aim to just grab every single details and then create a very, very meaningful, emotion full stories behind them and to just grab all the emotions that they might have felt while living that moment. So we always try to do that. That's the power of storytelling.

Wynne Leon (08:03)

Yeah.

Vicki Atkinson (08:24)

I was just going to say that. I think it's the power of wholehearted storytelling. Because what you and Wynne were just talking about, we can go to lots of sources that might, on the surface, say they're going to provide inspiration. But you do such a beautiful job of bringing the factual forward. And Wynne and I were talking, there has to be so much

vetting that goes on because you want to be accurate and some of it so much of it is it has, you know, important cultural, you know, aspects and historical so we can see all of that time and care and attention that goes into telling the story right but like Wynne said, then you layer the love and the importance and the reminder that we are one global

community. really are. And I get chills when I say that because for us, that's sort of the higher order importance of what you two are doing, that the world really is a very small place and love really is everywhere. If we open our eyes to it.

Wynne Leon (09:34)

Yeah, and that we can make a difference. Yeah.

Ritish Sharma (09:38)

Yeah,

so I always says that even a small act of kindness and just love even quietly and without applause can create a ripple effect beyond our imagination.

Wynne Leon (09:50)

Yeah.

Vicki Atkinson (09:51)

my God.

Well, and I don't know how often readers tell you that they cry while they're reading, but I mean, there were moments in reading the third book where, you know, I don't want to say too much, but a couple of the stories, even if I was aware of them, you know, kind of at a surface level, I mean, I was just flooded with tears overwhelmed by the power, you know, of an individual person reaching out. Yeah.

Ritish Sharma (10:17)

Yeah, there are so many stories like this. Yeah. Like that deserve to be told.

Wynne Leon (10:23)

Yes. You have a favorite one from this book three.

Ritish Sharma (10:29)

Actually, that's a tough question because every story is very inspirational on its own. since you asked, I would say that yes, do have. Can I say a story from my part one book? Okay, so there was this story of a little girl. Her name was Claire Vineland. And I don't usually get emotional while reading or writing things, but

Wynne Leon (10:42)

Sure, yeah.

Ritish Sharma (10:55)

her story while researching about her and her life that really hits me. Like I have to take a pause and just take in all it. Like it was so, so heartwarming. the way she explained life with so much grace and humor is just so inspirational.

Wynne Leon (11:11)

Yeah. You know, I'd have to say that one of the things that really resonates with me is, the stories of kids. And so like in this book, I'm not sure if I'm saying the name right, but Babar Ali.

Ritish Sharma (11:23)

Yeah, it's Babar Ali,

Wynne Leon (11:25)

Yeah,

you know who, who went to school and then thought, there's these other kids that aren't getting the same education. mean, and that's so powerful. kids changing the world. mean, it's, it's amazing.

Ritish Sharma (11:36)

Exactly.

Exactly, it's such a powerful story that is. Good part about that story that the students that he taught are now in very good positions like some are lawyers and teachers doing wonderful things.

Wynne Leon (11:46)

Yeah, because

Yeah. It's like kids don't know the limitations of what really is possible. They really defy expectations. It's awesome.

Ritish Sharma (12:05)

It was awesome.

Vicki Atkinson (12:07)

I think that's what we love about when you described kind of the nomination and the submission process that it really is very all encompassing that you and Deepak will receive, you know, and, and you kind of some things you may be aware of some not. But I think that the common thread that's just so endearing is that, you know, to a person, at least in what I've read in the third book,

These are unsung heroes. These are not people that were looking for fame or fortune or a claim. And the one that really spoke to me, think because of my background as a therapist was, and I hope I'm pronouncing his name right, Chen Si, who just over and over again made it his life's mission to be on the Yangtze River and kind of look soulfully at people in pain.

give them options, feed them, give them a safe place to stay. And I think he embodies that example of someone who didn't want attention, there's work to be done. Yeah, but it's just so beautiful. And then some of the stories are about people that we know. And the one that jumped out at me was Dian Fossey, I've read about her plenty of times, but never like this. So good.

Wynne Leon (13:22)

Hmm. So true.

Ritish Sharma (13:24)

Yeah,

there's so much details. There's so much story behind behind the life.

Vicki Atkinson (13:30)

powerful.

Wynne Leon (13:31)

Well, I think you and Deepak are unsung heroes too for writing these books, for celebrating people that make a difference. mean, that celebrating people making a difference makes a difference. Yeah.

Ritish Sharma (13:46)

That is always our aim, to just keep giving them the platform and share these inspirational stories to every one of you. I think the feedback we received about these books are just so incredible. We are just so grateful to every one of you who are joining the cause and supporting us this way and showing their love and gratitude.

Like it's just so, I can't even say that. Like it's just so incredible. Like we never even imagined that we are doing this. We are doing, we are part of something that is even making a tiny difference in the world.

Wynne Leon (14:19)

Yeah.

Vicki Atkinson (14:21)

I think

there's a hunger for it. There's an appetite, know, and without being overly political with what's happening, you know, in the United States right now, I'll speak for myself and say, you know, that there is a need to find the light, to find the good. know, and you two are providing that, you know, and a reminder that good does win.

Ritish Sharma (14:42)

I think it's not just the human condition, it's happening all over the world and the world needs to know the good side of human.

Wynne Leon (14:50)

Yeah. We're so grateful for you for the work that you do for this beautiful book that we can't recommend. We can't recommend it enough. And for this coming on the podcast to talk to us about it. We're just so grateful.

Vicki Atkinson (14:50)

Ugh.

Ritish Sharma (15:04)

Thank you so much. Thank you so much, and Vicky. I don't know, I could have asked for a better first podcast experience. And to everyone listening this, thank you so much for letting me share these stories with you. And I also want to say that if you know any unsung heroes in your family, in your community or in your neighbor, do let us know about them. We'll be really happy to know.

Wynne Leon (15:23)

you

Yes. Well, you know, Cooper the dog would like to have a nomination. He rings the bell for the cat every time the cat's outside and wants to come in.

Vicki Atkinson (15:38)

That can be a whole different category. Unsung heroes of pets.

Wynne Leon (15:41)

Right, right, right. That's Cooper's nomination. Thank you, Ritish. We so appreciate you. All the best. All the best.

Ritish Sharma (15:45)

We can introduce that category too.

Wynne Leon (15:56)

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 SharingTheHeartOfTheMatter.com.

Ritish Sharma (16:12)

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