

# S01 - E33 - Rooted & Unwavering - Hylke Faber & Yvonne Higgins Leach

**Presenter** 00:09

Welcome to rooted and unwavering a podcast and radio show which features leaders from all walks of life in conversations about courageous connectedness. How do we stay connected to our best selves, especially when we are challenged? What becomes possible when we truly stay committed to our own and others greatness also when we don't feel it? Join host Philco, Faber, transformational coach, facilitator, and award winning author of taming your crocodiles and his guests as they explore leadership greatness in today's episode of rooted and unwavering

**Hylke Faber** 00:49

Welcome to roots and unwavering broadcasting live today from Phoenix, Arizona and also from Washington State. And we're going to find out shortly whether it's spoke on or Vashon Island or somewhere else. We'll, we'll do that soon. I'm here today with Yvonne Higgins Leach. And this is rooted in wavering where we help leaders connect more deeply to their innate potential. This is episode 33. And before we go into it, let me first check in with Yvonne, Yvonne, how are you today? I'm doing well. Thank you. Excellent. I'm so glad you're here. I really appreciate that. And before we hear more about Yvonne, I want to center us a little bit in the purpose of root and unwavering. So we do these podcasts are called rooted and unwavering. So that we can inspire each other through the stories that we hear about what it means to be centered in who we want to be, who we want to be also in who we'd like the world to become maybe, as opposed to always falling back into those places where we say later Yeah, nah, that's not really what I'm very proud of. This is not who I'd like to be. And what I find is that listening to stories, they are like pictures that I can draw from later on when I am in a challenging moment and think Ha, how do Yvonne do this? Or how would Rick do this? Or how would Augusto do this? Or anybody else that's been a guest on this podcast? How would they do this? And that's what I invite you to listen into. As you're listening today to this podcast. Think a bit about the story that you're going to hear from Yvonne nicking Higgins leads today. And think about what you can learn from her to work through especially those crossroads in life and leadership, that may be a little bit more challenging. So without further ado, let's just talk a little bit about Yvonne Yvonne is a very multifaceted leader. He's a poet, an animal shelter leader and board president of an educational nonprofit, and a former communications leader at Boeing for 25 years, he led international communications for lots of the planes that start with seven 777-787-7477 67757 and 737, lots of sevens and lots of big planes across three sites. He did this Everett rented in South Carolina. And you can imagine a lot of party stakeholders pressures that were at play back then in her leading communications there. She also loves poetry. She's loved writing poetry since high school. And her second collection of poems, which is called in the spaces between us will be published this fall by Kelsey books. She loves poetry because it helps her make sense of life's mysteries by telling experiences through the art form of poetry, and she



believes that poetry can serve as a way of healing interconnecting us as humans, and help us return to our wholeness. Now, since her retirement from Boeing, Vaughn has served on the board of a nonprofit called a child's notebook that believes that every child deserves a quality education. The organization's work is focused in Laos, one of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia and Yvonne had the privilege of going there and seeing the impact of their work recently. Events other passions be taught besides poetry and helping children education is shelter dogs, she works with shelter dogs, where she leads a program that gives dogs the enrichment they deserve until they find their next home. So besides all of these things that we can talk about that are very impressive and inspiring when I think of Yvonne, I think of a woman who is tremendously grounded in what she deeply values and follows that with grit with heart, and with a lot of wisdom and care. And besides that he's a delight to be there to be with. So I'm so happy that you're here with us today. He found you. Yeah. and amazing. Can you tell us a bit more about let's just start right with our first question. How would you say that you have learned about connectedness in your life? How have you learned about connectedness in your life?

**Yvonne Higgins Leach 05:43**

And you know, when I think back, when you asked the question, you immediately go to what was one of your first experiences, right. And I think, I felt connected at a lot of levels as a very young girl. And there was something in me that just drove me to go outside, I wanted to be outside. And I was often the first one up in the morning, and outside and within nature, and the birds. And we always had a dog or a cat that was coming along with me. And so I remember that being something very spiritual, for me as a young girl. And those quiet moments, there was just something, it's almost like I can explain it and even wrote a poem about that. Because that is what really set me in my course for life, which was find that quiet time, no matter how crazy like gets carved out, even if it's just five minutes. And then the second thing I think, for connectedness is I came from a household that was very active, to working parents, Irish Catholic, and six kids. And you'd think whereas connectedness and all that chaos, but there is a connectedness that comes from feeling like you're a part of something bigger, I was number five of six kids. And even amid all that chaos, I felt connected to something that later as I grew older, I was able to make sense of, and that was really a religious and cultural identity. As a young American woman growing up in the 60s and 70s, and I have carried that forward with me, ever since as well.

**Hylke Faber 07:44**

Think it's beautiful, that's beautiful. So I want to go to that. These moments where you were a little kid, and you're out in nature, in the morning, by yourself. What, what woke up and you from that? What was the experience of being there?

**Yvonne Higgins Leach 08:07**

Yeah, that's when we when we talk about poetry. And we talk about the mysteries of life, that is really one for me. Because I don't, I almost like I don't know where it came from. But there was just many moments, really, when I was below the trees, or on top of this park view that we had in my neighborhood. I also used to ask the neighbors if I could take their dogs for walks. And I remember many moments when I would just be with that dog and looking in his eyes. And it's like, I wish I could



explain it. There's just something that is more than myself. And more than me and I just have always felt that

**Hylke Faber 08:56**

something more than me something more than me something more than myself that I can connect to no matter what. And then, you know, life started happening. And you had a love for poetry and you became a leader in Boeing. So tell us a bit about your journey with connectedness working at Boeing.

**Yvonne Higgins Leach 09:22**

Yeah, you know, I started my career. At a very interesting time it was I graduated into a recession. And it was very tough time. I ended up having a degree a degree. I got an English degree at college. Had a real tough time finding a job. So after waitressing for a couple years, I decided to go get a graduate degree. And you'd think that I would get something that was a guaranteed job on the back end, but that just wasn't who I was and I still had my love of poetry. And so I went and got a master's degree in Fine Arts, in creative writing poetry. And on the back end there, I was like, Okay, you, Vaughn, two years later, what are you doing with this degree now. And, you know, I think when you follow your passion, and that was kind of a message at that time, I will say that, you know, I graduated, and 82, and then the Master's in 86. And that was still a message that we were getting, at least my parents gave it to me, which was getting an education, that's the first thing. And you can go get something that you really care about, because they encouraged me to do something that I loved. Sometimes I think that message has changed. And a lot of it's about you have to go get the job that pays the bills. So I was very fortunate that way. But again, 1986, what am I going to do with this degree, but when you start applying for jobs, companies can find that you do have some different skills that can help them with the work they need done. And they realized that I could write and I could communicate, and I could put a sentence together and I could help communicate their needs. So I ended up at a very small company. And it I thought, Great, this is a good match for me a small company. And actually, I found that it wasn't exactly what I thought it was gonna be. I, it was way more hierarchical than I thought. And they didn't really welcome everybody in, in different areas of doing the work. And so I realized, oh, wow, I thought a small company would be it for me. And then after I had my first child, it was an opportunity to leave that company take a break. And then I had the opportunity to interview with Boeing, and I thought, oh, my gosh, this place is a, it's mega bag, it's got to be hugely bureaucratic. How am I going to find my way in this huge company? Where am I going to add value, and I came to find it was a really good fit. It is a big company, but it really knows how to have you add value and your role. They're very good about clarifying roles and responsibilities and connecting you to the vision. And so once that happened, for me, I was in all in, besides the fact that they had great training, I was a pretty newbie, I mean, I was new to the corporate world, I only had like two or three years experience at that other company. They threw me into a pretty big job, but they also gave you training. And I find a couple of things and leadership for connectedness is people need to feel included, significant and competent. And they hit that all three of those pillars for me. And I talked about training, because competence is a human need, you need to feel good about yourself and like you are contributing. And so they immediately got me



trained people skills. I got to go to conferences around public relations and communications. So for me, it was just a fit from the beginning.

**Hylke Faber 13:49**

So significant, competent, include it, right, you talked about that. And so what I'm curious about the fullness and thinking back of little livan with this deep connectedness, so there C is in this big corporate world. What did you find? And what did you learn about staying connected to what's what was important to you, that you could almost say that deeper dimension of life that you had connected with as a as a young person, that mystery of life, and being in this big bureaucracy? How, how did these two things interplay? Can you talk about that?

**Yvonne Higgins Leach 14:29**

You bet because every day is an opportunity, and every conversation is an opportunity. And then you get into the teaming environment and it gets even better. So really, truly, I often had a little checklist in my head that kind of came naturally, which was how are we including people? I always said that to myself, and it's not like you need to end Look, everybody just to include everybody. But there's times I found when people were excluded because of, oh, their role isn't really that important, or they don't rank where we rank. But you know what, why not include the executive assistant? If she's the one that's pulling together all the meetings for these meetings, and she's the one, putting the PowerPoint together, and she's the one doing the minutes, why wouldn't you include her in a strategy meeting? Because then she walks away, and understands the work we're doing and what we're trying to accomplish. And in the end, the objective, so, inclusion was really big for me. And you think, Okay, well, what's the difference between inclusion and significance? Well, if you include people, they feel significant. But to make them feel significant, I think you really need to make them feel listened and heard. And so you have to, first of all, stop and be present. You know, people know, when you're not listening, they know when you're distracted, they can see it in your eyes and your body language. But you also have to create avenues for people to feel they've been heard and listened to. So I also did that when I was leading teams, I asked myself that question. And, you know, is everybody on the team? Do they have a clear role? Can they do the job, you know, build on their strengths? I always was a believer build on their strengths first. And then if there's some gaps, that's when you work on the performance plan together. It's that combination of the two together.

**Hylke Faber 16:54**

Great. Great, very clear. So let's think about a time that we where you feel felt challenged, where you felt challenged, because I in what I perceive, you're being a very, very grounded person, you came in with this checklist in like, almost intrinsically in your head, like, have, you know, are we including are? Are we helping helping people to be competent? Am I doing this right? Like, am I am I am I really, in integrity here? Tell us about a time where you felt really challenged? And what you learned from that time about connectedness?

**Yvonne Higgins Leach 17:35**



Yeah, well, I can definitely pick a time. It's not necessary with my team, but I can a challenging time when conducting this was, yeah, I've had to really work at it. And the situation was, I was leading the 787 Dreamliner team. We were bringing a new aeroplane to market. It's a very big deal. You know, we only bring a market a plane to market every 13 to 15 years. And here we are, right. And we've been about two and a half years in the marketplace, going around the world selling their plane, talking about its benefits, its great attributes, how it's going to change the aviation industry. And we then started to have some program issues. And, you know, it's hard to bring an airplane to market, there's going to be some challenges. But we had a bit more than we thought we were gonna have. And what I mean by that is that we give a date, when we're going to roll out there playing, and the world is ready. And everybody wants to be involved. They want to feel significant. And we had to do that with a lot of stakeholders, from customers, to suppliers, to employees, to media, big stakeholders. And we ended up I'll just say, over the years of bringing the airplane to market, we had seven program delays. That is very difficult on one of our stakeholders, which is the media. And I was leaving the team that was in charge of media relations, from the program perspective, and we coordinated with a department that also led media relations. This is at the corporate level at our program level and worldwide. And I will say at about the you know, fourth or fifth delay media, we're really getting frustrated. We were losing their trust. They were used to a lot of access, you know, being able to come to our sites. Do that. tours, see the airplane interviewer executives have access to employees and the door was shut. And I was the main spokesperson when we had a delay. And I just had to really come to grips with this situation because it was tense. And I had personal relationships with these media. And I just said to myself, first of all, it's not about me. It's never really about you. And two, I have got to get the big picture here. Otherwise, I am not going to make it through this situation. And the big picture was I believed in that airplane. And I was going to speak for that airplane. And I knew we were gonna get through this and that I had to keep giving them the vision. Yet, I had to balance that with Yes, I understand you're frustrated? Yes, I understand. You're used to access. Yes, this is hard. But we will get through it, you will get to see this airplane, again, it will fly. And it will have the best attributes ever. It will deliver on the promise. And we had to get creative. And that's when I went back to the team. What can we do? We've got to find a way. And we did we came up with I mean, without getting too entrenched in the solutions we did, we came up with what was called a media call, and we put our executive up on a phone call and went global. And everybody called in and we did like three a day to cover the time zones. And you know, by golly, it really took a lot of tension away. Even though we didn't have a lot of answers. Our executive sometimes felt uncomfortable being put in that position. It was opening the lines of communication and connecting. That's that's what it was. Even if we couldn't answer half the questions, people felt like we were trying and we were connecting. So

**Hylke Faber 22:19**

I am fascinated by you having the wherewithal because you speak about this water like yeah, and then you know, I remember that wasn't just about me, if I just think about it's about me, I'm lost. I know that. And so this is what I did, right? It's thinking about like you're taking a walk in the park. But for many people, it's not like that. So tell us about how do you evolve? Or how did you back then center yourself and remind yourself of, it's not about little egoic Yvonne and looking good in that moment and pleasing



everybody and going along with whatever ego play might have been going on with the media and with within bowling or whatever. So how did you rise above and create that space? How did you do that?

**Yvonne Higgins Leach** 23:07

You know, I think, um, I think that little girl did come back. Because I remember finding that five minutes in the mornings. And Boeing is very early company will say, for a couple of years during the delays, we were in Everett in the main conference room at 630 in the morning. That's how we started our days, we often left 12 hours later. But I always built in time for a pause. And that was just it's just that closing your eyes and taking a deep breath and saying I don't have the answers for the day. But I'm here and I've been placed here and please give me the strength I need to do what's necessary today. And that that really pretty much kept me grounded through the experience.

**Hylke Faber** 24:14

For those of you who are listening and not seeing evilness, you are speaking, you're having your hands in prayer. And at least how I saw that together of your heart and saying, you know, this is not about me. I don't have the answers. Please guide me. And that kind of surrender. How did you learn to surrender to that? How did that maybe a little girl show up in those times? Because I think that's a part of connecting that in our current world is so lost sometimes. How did you do that?

**Yvonne Higgins Leach** 24:54

Can you still see me on the screen?

**Hylke Faber** 24:56

Yes.

**Yvonne Higgins Leach** 24:57

Okay, sorry. I'm going to just take a second because my screen just did something strange. Sorry about this, that's fine, I want to be able to see you. That's fine. Otherwise, I won't feel connected. You go, you know, I think it goes back and without getting religious or anything, but I do think it goes back to my Irish Catholic upbringing. And there was a strong message of service that was taught deliberately, you know, we had religion class. And they taught the importance of service. And also, my parents had professions that were service oriented. My dad was a physician and ran his own office as a general practitioner, and I worked in his office. And even though you're making a living, there's a sense of service there. And my mom actually became the Executive Director of the mental health center in Spokane County when they were just opening and starting it. And she did that for 25 years. So I got to also work summers, and see her inaction. And I do think that there's something about getting the message that service to others is important. Because when you learn that, as a young person, you also learn that service moments come in all ways, whether it's the neighbor that can't get her groceries out of her car, because she's 87, I can't walk him to the door. And you rush in and do that to bigger things. Like what does service mean. And I do think that that started some kind of connectedness for me, that I've always carried with me. I hope that makes sense.



**Hylke Faber 27:11**

Makes total sense to me. And what I'm getting from what you're saying also, is, when we put ourselves into service, we connect to a higher power. And we feel empowered, that connecting to service connect, putting ourselves in service puts us in connection with a higher power, we become empowered and I'm thinking about use you thinking this conference rooms at 630 freakin am in the morning, ever. Like and, and taking time beforehand to center yourself where you didn't know. And and also talking about how you didn't have the answers, like how you didn't have the answers. And yet your strength had to come force from some some other place than the answers, the strength wasn't coming from the answers, the strength is coming from a deeper place than just the answers. And that, to me is so beautiful in terms of how you're speaking and what you're sharing here that our mind is so conditioned to think that my strength and my value, my significance, my competence, my reason for being included, is my answer. But actually, what you're saying is no, no, no, no. What I brought, what I'm hearing from you is, I was it was my intention to be in service and holding the space to be in service and creating a space for others to have this open dialogue. So we're going to take a break in a moment, Yvonne and after the break. I want to explore more with you this orientation towards service and how that unlocks your deeper power. Also, as a poet, I'm very curious about that how that has been informing your life throughout these last few decades. And also after the break. I want to reveal where you are today. I love your background, but I want to hear where you are. So after the break, we're going to hear this we'll be talking to Yvonne Higgins leads at RIT and unwavering Yvonne is a poet, works with animals and also in the spirit of children education, and is a former communications leader from Boeing. So happy to have you Vaughn and we'll see all of us back after the break.

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**Hylke Faber 30:00**

Welcome back to rooted and unwavering we're talking with Yvonne Higgins Leach, a former communications leader from Boeing, and also a poet, animal, shelter, leader and helper and also a person that helps with education for children that don't have access to it. So we've been talking about the power of service evolve the power of service. So tell us a bit more how this power of service has led you to where you are today, because you're retired now. That's interesting concept. That's interesting concept, when I see you as a current sees retired. wonder about that. Tell us about that, like that transition from of leaving Boeing and then entering into this next chapter of your life, which include it becoming a full time poet.

**Yvonne Higgins Leach 30:56**



Right. So leaving going was a very big decision for me, I always plan to leave at age 55. But I also believe that you need to watch the signs. Because sometimes, there's a different plan. And for me, there was a different plan about two years earlier. And my mother had passed away. And that is a life moment to to lose your last parent. So I lost my father four years earlier. And I think it just makes you step back and reflect and look at the meaning of life and how much time is left? And what do you really want to accomplish. And I also had the fortunate opportunity to have my first poetry book come out that June, so my mom dies in January, June, my book is coming out. And I had worked on that book, my whole life. And even though I had a big job at Boeing, I was raising a family. I never stopped writing poetry, whether it was at 10 o'clock at night, or squeaking out two hours on a weekend, I had to write poetry to stay home for myself, and I can explain a little bit more about that. But when it came time to look at June, in my book, I thought, you know, I just don't think I'm going to be able to, to do both. In the world of poetry, when you have a book come out, it's on you, you have to do all your appear your marketing, it takes a lot of time and energy. And I thought, you know, do I want to miss that opportunity. If I stay here, I'm not going to do it to the best of my ability, I am not going to launch this book and share it with the world in the best way possible. And that was super important to me. 25 years, I've been wanting this book to come out in the world, I really evaluated. And of course, you have to go look at your finances. And you know, there's a lot of evaluation there. And I did a lot of quiet time. And I'll just say I found a way to leave two years earlier than expected. And it was probably one of the best decisions I could have ever made. Because I launched that book. And I did it well. And I don't have one regret about that decision. So that led me into the opportunity to oh my gosh, now what do I get to do with my life, I've got the book done, it's in the world. And I've always wanted to go back to do more service work. Now, I'll tell you when I was at Boeing, I felt like I was doing service work in my heart. Because I felt every day, I had the opportunity to do the right thing by my employees, and the team and the company. So I always felt like this is where I'm at now. Do the service you can now but now I had the opportunity to move out of the corporate world, making a paycheck and do something else. And I ended up what I call kind of following the breadcrumbs so to speak, because I think sometimes they're, they're planted there. And so I have kind of a phrase in my mind that I say is where you lead I shall follow where I am as good. But let me be an instrument. Wherever I

**Hylke Faber** 34:50

go. Please say that again. That's so beautiful. Say it again.

**Yvonne Higgins Leach** 34:53

Where are you lead? I shall follow. But where I am is good. But Let me be an instrument. And that's a service or piece or whatever needs to happen. And so I was led to to two things that I, you know, both I have high value for, and one is the first thing that came my way was working with the shelter dogs. And then the second was, my friend started a nonprofit around education. And both were great matches for me. And that's where my energy's been in the past number of years.

**Hylke Faber** 35:32





Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. I want to go a little bit more into you writing poetry. What's it like when you write poetry, I

**Yvonne Higgins Leach** 35:46

love this topic, because I don't get to talk about it very much. For me, I think as that young girl was very sensitive to the world, and I do think poets are an empathetic people where we can be highly sensitive, and I found I was. And so for me, I believe to get a hold of my feelings and do something with them. It ended up through poetry, because I had, my middle sister also wrote poetry and she influenced me, which was a wonderful thing to happen that age 910 1112. Because people write to make sense of their emotions, a lot of times, right. And when it comes to poetry, people either write poetry or turn to poetry in challenging times, or times when they want to make sense of the emotions. And that's what it does for me. So if I'm troubled, or anxious, or have a story, I feel I need to tell or I heard a beautiful story from someone else. It makes it here, it makes it into a poem. And then he woke up when it's written. And it's separate. It's like I'm whole. It's like, oh, everything that was here, is now here. And now I can look at it and go, Okay, that's good. That's good. It really works for me.

**Hylke Faber** 37:29

I'm going to invite you to read one of your poems to us. I didn't prepare you for this. So I'm going to ask you to read a poem in a moment, as I am going to share a little bit about my own reflections are what you just said. So maybe you get a get a sense of like, Get up, get some time to think about what you'd like to share which poem you'd like to read to us. And so when I, when I hear you speak about poetry, I think it's so helpful. Because in our current world, we put so many labels on us and your personally, Vaughn, who's basically as, as one of our friends says, You could have make those sacred cows as hamburgers. That's what that's what our friend said. And so you, you're a mother, you're worked in corporate very high up, you launched a 787 of Boeing and your own 787, this poetry book. You're a poet, right? Your work with animals. I already think I already talked about the your mother, you work with children. It's your daughter, there's so many things into and you're, you're you're operating between all those areas. And so when I think about poetry, many of us may have this idea like, Oh, I'm not a poet. And yet, the way I hear you talk about poetry, it's almost like doing the internal dishes. Like, Oh, I feel like I have this emotion. This feeling this story has to come out and I have to do something with it. And the what I will do with it. Some people go for a run other people meditate and pray or the taxman take some time in nature, talk to your friend and you write and maybe do all the other things too. And, you know, that's what we all can do, like put our something about putting our words to paper, that can be very restorative, and something that anyone can do if they like or draw. I know my husband loves to make music. That way. That's it's an interesting way that we can all give expression so Yvonne, would you mind reading as a poem?

**Yvonne Higgins Leach** 39:53

Not at all. It's an honor. You describe that very well, by the way, because it is As many times people turn to different art forms as a way to connect to the world or make sense of it. I'm wondering if I don't read beyond the senses, because it it will help me I talked earlier today about how, as a young girl, I



had this connection, but I couldn't explain it. And I ended up writing a poem about it. And even though at the end of the poem, I still don't necessarily have the answer, I have the experience down. So this is about that. Beyond the senses, how the light leads me down two flights of stairs, my feet, avoid the creeks, my frame small against the biceps of furniture. How because it is spring, I need only a light jacket and slip on shoes. In the meadow, the wash of dewy grass wets my shoes. When the birds come in the morning, I am unafraid. And nothing but clear air SOPs up the sky. How upon entering the forest, the trunks are wild and perfect. In the sense of ponderosa pine blossoms. I tip my head to the canopy, specks of blue breaking through and something comes beyond the senses, beyond the edge of the world, catches my breath and calls me without efforts. I am more than I am. I run back home and shake my parents awake, announcing something outside came to me. And because I cannot name it, they turn over under the covers and tell me to go back outside and play

**Hylke Faber 42:16**

something I'm bigger dents than what I am something

**Yvonne Higgins Leach 42:21**

like that. effort. I am more than I am. without

**Hylke Faber 42:25**

effort. I am more than I am. That is such a beautiful sentence. And there's so many more beautiful sentences in that. Without effort I am more than I am. That brings me back to the conversation where you were the communications leader, giving it over without effort. I am more than I am. This whole conversation we've been having about service, which I sense an effortlessness that opens itself in you when you do so. And then also in this conversation, without effort, I am more than I am. So Yvonne, you are into this new chapter of your life for a while. What do you yearn for? Now?

**Yvonne Higgins Leach 43:18**

What do I even for now? That's a great question. I will say that I am finding animal welfare to be very challenging. And I yearn to do the work there in a way that I can be a bit more. It's hard to explain. I carry a lot with it. There's a lot of heartache. It's it's very challenging situations, people surrendering dogs. Seeing dogs challenge themselves in that environment. And so I'm finding I'm carrying a lot and I yearn for doing the work and finding a bit more peace. I hope that makes sense. Because I thought I was going to go walk dogs. I thought it was going to be up in the park as a little girl with a neighbor dog looking in the dog's eyes and it is not that by any means. And so I don't want to give up. And there's times when I think I think this is too much for me. And so I yearn to stick stick with it and find extra strength and resilience. And

**Hylke Faber 44:58**

do you have an inkling Where that strength might be coming from? And I will keep the sentence with me for the rest of my life. Without effort, I am more than I am. I'm going to keep that with me. So how do you practice that in this in this yearning in this state of your life?



**Yvonne Higgins Leach 45:17**

I think it's a constant. I think there's a constant turning to whatever that bigger thing is. And just saying, Okay, I am here, I've been placed here. And I would really, I feel I should stay here and just that constant check back with whatever that is just saying, Okay, I need you. I'm feeling like, this is a tough one. And just again, watching for the signs, you know, it's a balance of your own health, against other things, but just it's a constant check back for me, he'll cut just constantly saying, I'm here, I'll stay. But I need whatever that is. So give it to me.

**Hylke Faber 46:12**

Constant check back, how do you check back

**Yvonne Higgins Leach 46:16**

through my breath, my breath is, is it's great way like just, and also, I'm pausing to not respond too quickly. It's easy to just react. But it's really important to take that breath and pause before reacting. I think those are important, important moments to constantly have interactions with people.

**Hylke Faber 46:51**

What would you say to somebody who is playing with the idea of what you did? Which is I'm going to dedicate myself more fully, to what I'm called to do now. And they're hesitant. They're scared? Like, no, my bank account tells me I can't do it yet. Or, like, I don't feel confident in myself, because I don't know when I'm going to make it as a adult dog walker, poet. I'm going to feel good. I don't know what this is. What would you say, to a person like that?

**Yvonne Higgins Leach 47:39**

A couple of things, I think. And, you know, I have to say, it's not a recipe for everybody. But for me, there was a couple of things that spoke to me. That told me it was time for a change. And so maybe that could work for other people. One is, I would say that I felt I had experience I had what I don't know how to say grossed out, you know, 25 years. And I felt like I had way more than I ever expected in my career. And then the carousel carousel kind of started turning like, Oh, I've seen that horse before. Oh, I've seen that horse before. So I kind of felt like I had tapped out a bit. That's the word I'm looking for tapped out a bit that I had done a lot. And really wasn't sure what more there was. So that was important to me. I wanted to keep contributing. And I just felt like maybe I'd done it all. The second thing is, I'm not a cranky person. And I started to get a little cranky. And I thought, this is interesting. You need to still enjoy. And if you're not enjoying, check, check it. Check it. Are you still contributing? Are you still enjoying? And that started to speak to me that I think this not only did some milestones happened in my life, that were telling me things but also just from a career standpoint. And three is it's always going to feel like a risk, no matter what. And sometimes, it's just worth taking the risk. I'm kind of okay, not having all the answers. I'm just kind of a person like that. You're just sure you could probably go from one job to another lot of people can do that. But if you're thinking about taking a bigger jump, it's just gonna take risk. And sometimes you just have to go for it. You just have to say, Okay, I'm just, I



know I'm not. It's not working here. You're so I'm gonna just go for it. And then I'm gonna see where the bread comes from. Yeah.

**Hylke Faber 50:09**

Yeah, so these three things like, I feel like I, am I still growing? Or am I on a carousel? Like, am I still growing? Or am I right? carousel? Two is, am I enjoying? And, and three is, okay, there's going to be a risk, I'm going to have to jump. It's this is just this is what it is, it's not certain I'm going to have to I have to do this and follow the breadcrumbs. So you've mentioned the breadcrumbs now a few times. And I need to know more about those breadcrumbs. So where do you find them? Where do I buy them? And I get them online somewhere? Where do you get those breadcrumbs?

**Yvonne Higgins Leach 50:57**

I think when you open yourself, they come. And when they come, you need to kind of say, for me, it's a value check. Like, you know, I've always loved animals. My friend was volunteering at the Humane Society. I'm like, yeah, that speaks to me. I'm gonna go give this a try. And then the same thing with education. Like, I've just felt so fortunate to be born when I was. And you know, I mean, I hit the sweet spot for being a woman in America, getting an education, all the women that plowed the road before me. And I just feel like it opens up the world to people. And then what happened, my friend leaves bowling herself and starts a nonprofit, and I'm like, you know, that matches for me. I feel like I would really contribute there. And so that's kind of how the breadcrumbs work for me.

**Hylke Faber 52:08**

I love it. I open myself. I open myself and see like, Oh, does this resonate this? This resonates like Aha, okay, does this resonate. And that's, it's very poetic guidance, Yvonne, which I, which, which I enjoy. And I also sense the effortlessness in that it's not forcing something, but it's really stepping back, like, oh, okay, does this resonate with me? Does it really resonate with me? Not my right. Little brains, machination, but something deeper? That gets us back to this little girl that walked out early in the morning and connected to something that resonated with her that resonated with her? So what would you say to a person that, at this moment, feels very disconnected from themselves? They don't feel they have access to this morning. refreshment, you could say no, that you talked about this, this this spiritual refresh with it, you talk about that feel disconnected, that sort of feel like in the middle of the madness, what would you say to them?

**Yvonne Higgins Leach 53:25**

Yeah. It can get crazy out there. There's, there's a lot to the world. There's a lot of frenetic energy, you can be taken down just by the headline news every day. And I think our minds don't help us. Our minds can take over, they can start overthinking. And then if we're not paying attention, the negative voice comes in. And I think the only way to really get clarity is if you're in that state, I would shut out the world for a bit. I would really, maybe not watch news for a while. And I would do some self care. And I would do what it takes to calm the mind. Because until you calm the mind, nothing else is going to come in and it takes effort. You got to kind of say I am going to shut out the world and I am going to try to calm



the mind. And I'm going to do it through breath and I'm going to do it through. I'll start with two minutes of build the five I'll build the 10 But until you do that, nothing else is going to you're you're not going to be open enough for anything else to come in.

**Hylke Faber 54:52**

Be open to what needs to come in by doing this internal cleaning what I'm hearing from you which can be You're taking good care of yourself. Not looking at the news. Spending some time in meditation, whatever you need to do go out in nature, whatever you need to do, do something you love, whatever it is. The breadcrumb question that came from me right now was, I want to know, what's the next poem that you are called to write about? Or what do you call to write about today? Or this week? Or right?

**Yvonne Higgins Leach 55:31**

Oh, my next poem. You know, what I say to myself, is because sometimes I'll tell you and other artists and writers will tell you, there is a negative voice that comes in. It's an it's like the imposter voice that says, You're not gonna write that next poem. You know, you think you're a poet, but um, and I say to myself, I have the power and the passion, and the next poem shall come. And I believe the next poem shall come. And when I find quiet time, and I'm able to create a poem, I listen to myself and say, what has been going on? What? What does my heart keep revisiting? What keeps coming to me? What am I trying to make sense of? And then my next poem comes, because there's always something right, we're living the human experience, we are constantly being challenged or trying to make sense of something or figuring out what is that emotion I'm feeling and why is it still there? So I would have to say that I, it might be around this animal welfare issue and the judgment that happens when someone surrenders a dog, and how misunderstood that situation is, because people are like, how can you do that? That's so horrible. How can you give up your best companion and I see people coming in who have housing issues, financial issues, health issues, they've got to behavior dog, they're overwhelmed. And they just don't know what else to do. And I'm want to somehow get in in the poem, that we need to come from the place of compassion around that. Because until we do, we're not that's not a place of kindness. And I would love to get that in Word somehow, so that if someone were to read the poem, they would walk away with a more compassionate heart.

**Hylke Faber 58:14**

What a beautiful place to pause our conversation, Yvonne, it's always already been an hour, time flew by, I happen. without effort, we are bigger together than we are. And I love the breadcrumbs. I love the opening. I love the taking a conscious breath, I love the not giving in to the judgment and doubt. Seeing myself in service of something, seeing myself as something as part of something bigger. There's so much that you brought to light as a poet does, bringing to light bringing to the Census bringing to understanding and I love what you just said about. There's always something in life that we have a yearning to make sense of. And whether we do that by writing or any other way. That is that is up to us. And it makes for such a rich human experience. Thank you so much, Yvonne. It was a true pleasure and honor to sit with you and to sit at the poet's feet and let her hear from her and from all the other aspects of you. So thank you so much. Anything else you want to say by way of closing?



**Yvonne Higgins Leach 59:31**

No, thank you for the opportunity. It's conversations like this that will help everybody go further in their journey.

**Hylke Faber 59:42**

That's, that's wonderful. That's wonderful. So yeah, we've been in conversation with Yvonne Higgins Leach. She is a poet, mother, spouse, daughter, animal rights supporter. Child Education. activist and leader, and many, many, many more more things. without effort, I'm bigger than I am. That's a sentence that's going to be just traveling with me in my life. Very, very redeeming sentence. Thank you for that. You've been listening to Karuta and wavering, this was episode number 33. Next week or an up next week and next episode, we'll be here with Patty Obermeyer, who is a senior leader in Microsoft, Chief growth officer in the health and life sciences area for Microsoft, and hear from her about what it means what it means to be connected in that situation. So and of course, if you're interested in following this pop this podcast, you can do so on Apple, Spotify, and everywhere else on gets podcasts these days. I lost count where it is, but it's many places and also on YouTube. Of course, you can follow growth Leaders Network, also on LinkedIn. And of course, you can also reach out to Yvonne Higgins leech, I'm sure she will welcome that. I know she's on LinkedIn and other places. And of course, check out this fall her new book, which is called in the spaces between us in the spaces between us, and I am sure that you can already pre order it. Is that right? Yvonne? All right, fairly soon, in about a month, in about a month in the spaces, the spaces, the spaces in the spaces between us in the spaces between us. And all the things we find there and the spaces between us. You've been listening to rooted and unwavering broadcasting live we didn't actually clarify Are you in Spokane are watching

**Yvonne Higgins Leach 1:01:44**

Russian. I am revealing my home on Vashon Island on Vashon Island. You

**Hylke Faber 1:01:48**

are on Vashon Island. So we're broadcasting live from Washington Vashon Island, and from Phoenix, Arizona today. And this is where we help leaders connect more deeply to their innate potential. I'm your host Ahsoka Faber, see you next time.

**Presenter 1:02:10**

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