

# S01 - E35 - Rooted & Unwavering - Dec 8 - Hylke Faber & Jill Meyers

**Presenter 00:02**

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 rightness also when we don't feel it, join hosts Silca 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 00:41**

Welcome to root and unwavering broadcasting live today from both Arizona and New Mexico. This is episode number 35 and rooted Aaron wavering we help leaders connect more deeply to their innate potential. I am your host Hoka Faber and I'm here today with Jill Myers sees a senior leader in a an engineering services company and also a pilot and a person that loves to be in space deal. How are you today,

**Jill Meyers 01:10**

I am most excellent Elka. Thank you for having me on.

**Hylke Faber 01:13**

It's it's a true pleasure and a true honor to be with you. Today, Joe, and I'm looking forward to our conversation today. And if you're listening, you're in for a treat. I'm gonna tell you a little bit more about Joe in a second. But before we do this, I'm going to first share as we always do about this podcast so that we all get grounded in a mindset in a space of listening that allows for for the podcast to do its work. So this podcast was started by us because we felt that it was great to figure out how you stay connected to what's most important to you. Especially when it's stormy when the mind moves in all kinds of directions. Emotions can be so powerful. We can feel great, but can feel tired, we can feel helpless, we can feel uplifted. We can feel angry, we can feel so many things in the midst of all that. How do we stay connected to what matters most to us? Not? What matters most to part of us in that moment. But what matters most to us to a deeper part of us? And how do we access that. And as opposed to spouting theories here? What we felt was, let's listen to leaders. Let's listen to stories because I find that I learned so much from stories. I was sitting on an airplane from the Netherlands this week. And I was just watching a mom taking care of her kids for nine hours. And I didn't talk to her but I something in me was like sparks, like ah you know, humans have the wherewithal to be so caring. Where's that in me? Where's that in me? It's a great mirror. So all the leaders we speak to here are leaders for us are mirrors for us. And Jill is Dale Myers is one of those mirrors for us today. Still do as I



said is a personal love space. He actually is gotten the first or a private license in being a pilot when she was 17. He's got more than 40 years of experience in aviation and aerospace including eight years in the US Air Force and more than 30 years, and an as an aerospace engineer, program manager and business leader. And as I said he holds a senior leadership position currently at an engineering services company that supports aerospace, transportation and national security communities. Now besides that deal is all about helping others and also helping other women and girls has been doing outreach and mentoring for more than 20 years, and is dedicated to inspiring girls and women to consider STEM education and aviation and aerospace careers. And so, Stickney stand for that and she has been recognized for that in many different ways. He's a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society in London and also the recipient of the national aeronautical association 22, a Catherine Wright trophy award, acknowledging her 40 years of dedication to the aerospace industry and our tireless commitment as a volunteer and role model working to educate and inspire young girls around the globe. Now, that's what's written about till I know Jill, for I would say almost a decade. And we met when JL was part of a team that I was supporting. And from the very first moment that I talked to Jill, I was struck by her frankly This, her clarity, and her willingness to to name what needs to be named. Not as a, from a place of resentment, but from a place of deep care of for what is possible and for the people around her. And besides that ideal is a delight to be with, I always find, I chuckle somewhere in our conversation, I find there very a lot of humor and tell us just a gift to be with and to be shared. So I'm so glad you're with us today.

**Jill Meyers** 05:31

Well, thank you for the incredible welcome. It's been amazing knowing you all this time to you're one of the most insightful people I've ever known.

05:40

All right, well, thank you for that.

**Hylke Faber** 05:42

Thank you for that one takes one to know, one. So first question, think about insights still is think about connectedness, and what you've learned about connectedness in your life, and in your leadership. So tell us a little bit about what you've learned about connectedness in your life and leadership.

**Jill Meyers** 06:05

Well, to me, connectedness has, you know, many, many definitions and many forms, if you will. But one of the things I've learned over my long career is that and you mentioned that a little bit in your intro hookah is that I really need to stay connected to what keeps me going, you know, what drives me my passions, if you will, kind of an overused word, but you know, they're they are, you know, so for me, my primary passion, as you mentioned, since I was a kid is aviation. And so the few times in my career, when I have wandered completely away from things that fly, not been fulfilling at all for me. So that's one thing, you know, that I found, as I need to be somewhat associated with the things that really excite me. So you know, staying connected to, you know, who I am, and who I've always been, you know,



deep down is one part of it. And you know, there's a lot of people have been offered positions in the past that had nothing to do with aviation or aerospace at all. And sometimes people will say to me, Well, you don't need to do that for your job, you know, you can do that as a volunteer do that on the side. But you know, we all spend so much time at work and so many hours a week with that the crowd that you work with, and doing whatever you're the product you're building, or the service you're providing, and for me that, you know, that's too much of my world, to not be doing what I'm connected with. But as you also mentioned earlier, and as I've been very lucky to have a lot of success in my life is, to me, the most important thing about connectedness and being connected is in order to introduce others to connect others. You know, some people call me the best networker they've ever known. I'm always and it's not conscious, it's just, you know, built into my DNA, I am always thinking of if I meet someone new, you know, who else might want to know this person who else might benefit from meeting this person or collaborating with this person. So the things that I'm most proud of in my career, as far as connecting people is when I've really introduced to other people to each other that just turns in and blossoms into something really amazing.

08:27

Beautiful, beautiful. I'm so

**Hylke Faber** 08:30

curious deal about how you connect it to space and flying. Can you tell us a bit about how that came to be? Because I would say that's a kind of unusual thing. And not many people wake up and say, I want to fly, or I want to have something to do with things that fly as you said. Yeah. Well,

**Jill Meyers** 08:55

my my usual story, which I'll caveat in a minute, is that I grew up I'm from Philadelphia, originally. And my dad had a friend who lived north of Boston on the coast, an amazing, amazing guy named Josh, who was an adventurer and a scientist and an engineer and a private pilot and had just incredible mind and incredible interests. And we used to go up, they live literally a half a block from the water. So we would go up almost every summer when I was a kid and stay with Josh's family for a couple of days, and then usually go somewhere else in New England for vacation. And then when I was 12, we went up there as usual. And one day Josh said to me and my sister, he said, you know tomorrow we're going to do two things. We're going to if you want go up in my airplane, take your flying and we're gonna go sailing. So we did do both. I hated the sailing, I will say but we went up in his airplane for an hour. It was a small, Cessna 140. It's called a tail dragger. So this was in the 1970s, early 70s. So a tail dragger is an airplane where the the most small, most small private planes, there's a triangle of three wheels toward the front of the plane, but a tail dragger has the third wheel away in the background of the tail. So it looks like it's dragging its tail when it when it taxis. So Josh took me up in this Cessna for an hour and we flew out over the ocean and up the coast, and I was just, I was completely enamored, I was like, Okay, that's it. Like, that's it, I have got to do something with airplanes, it was the most exquisite feeling to be flying in this small plane. And what you can see from small planes, you can see almost 360 around you. And the reason I'm going to caveat that is I used to build models all the time,



when I was a kid, you know, plastic models, balsa models, and I have, I have memories and a couple of photos. Of me building models. When I was eight, nine years old. Entire, I remember building an entire aircraft carrier, my mom was not too happy, because I cleared the entire dining room table, if I recall, and just was building this aircraft carrier with all 75 aircraft on it. When I was very little, I was doing balsa wood aircraft when I was nine or 10. So I don't really know Hilco where the original spark came from. But the conscious Spark, if you will, was when I went up and Josh's airplane. So that's really what got it going. And then right around that time, my parents were divorced when I was younger. So my mom and stepfather and sister and I moved to Phoenix, Arizona, Scottsdale, Arizona. And we lived about a mile from the Scottsdale Municipal Airport, which is way bigger. Now. It's a big executive field. Now, it was really small when I was a kid. So I started riding my bike to the airport, even at 1213. And just sitting on the edge of the runway and watching the planes to the fence. And, and when I was about 14, I went inside and I said, you know, I really want to learn to fly, I did research and learned that you cannot get your private pilot's certificate until you're 17, you can solo at 16. And you can get your license at 17. So I tried to get a job there. I remember asking them if I could just wash the airplanes, you know, sweep the floors anything and they're like, you're 14, you know, go away. So when I turned 17, which was the summer between my junior and senior years of high school, marched back over there borrowed money to kick it off from my father, thank you Dad, and started my flying lessons. So I was in a very intense program in high school, pre college stuff. So I was really, really busy at school. But I would fly in the early mornings, we'd usually take off what we call wheels up at 5am. So I could fly an hour less than get back to school by the time my first class started at 720. And then I would fly you know, the requisite nights and whenever I needed to fly on weekends, so ended up getting my passing the FAA tests and getting my checkride and got my private pilot license December 28 of 1978 when I was 17 and a half.

**Hylke Faber** 13:07

My so how long have you been training,

**Jill Meyers** 13:10

then it took six months to get my license six months

**Hylke Faber** 13:13

and such dedication. So I want to go back to that moment when you're with your friend, Josh, in this plane off the coast of Boston round there. Right? And you have this feeling of this is it. And I think that's a feeling that we probably can recognize in ourselves. So can you say a bit more about what that feels like? Or what that felt like then? Or maybe what that feels like now, when you are very clear, like, Ah,

13:46

this is it.

**Jill Meyers** 13:47



This is it? Well, for me, there's something incredibly special about flying in a very small aircraft. And part of it I think, when I was young was, first of all the the view that you can see, you know, a lot of my Instagram posts when I am in an aircraft, I don't fly privately anymore. I don't I'm not piloting anymore. It's too expensive to keep current. But you know, when I when I fly on a commercial airline, I usually will spend a lot of time photographing the clouds out the window or the or the ground and I'll put hashtag view from above, in all of my posts. And there is something about seeing the world from a little bit of a higher altitude. It's just it gives you this feeling of the expanse that's under you. And you know, I'll digress a little bit for one second. So astronauts go through something that is really miraculous. They call it the overview effect. There's actually the man who named it that wrote a book about it. But when people go up in space, you know, even the folks that fly on Virgin Galactic or blue or gym where they are, they're actually weightless for only three minutes. And they really just see part of the curvature of the earth, they don't see the whole earth as if you're on the space station, or in the shuttles in the old days. But the overview effect is something that astronauts and I have, I'm lucky to be friends with astronauts. So I've talked to her about it, there's something about getting perspective, in your own perspective about your own life, when you see the Earth from above, and part of it is you realize how small you are in the world, that you really are just a piece of something bigger. And the other thing for me, so you see a little bit of that, you know, as a private pilot, I mean, when you when you fly small planes, like the Cessnas that I trained in and flew when I was younger, you know, you're flying at most, usually 8000 feet off the ground, so you're not super high, but you're surely high enough to see, you know, mountains and cities from a different a different perspective. And I love flying the most at night, especially in Phoenix, you know, you fly over Phoenix. And as you know, from living there, from living there hills, it's, you know, the fact that Phoenix is a valley and it's got complete dark mountains all around it when you fly, and the only elimination is all of the city lights at night. There's just something so mesmerizing and calming about it. But when I first when I did my first solo and flew the plane alone, when I was training at 17. My instructor knew me extremely well. And he knew that because I caught on to things really quickly. I got kind of lackadaisical about the training process. So there were times when he would say, okay, you know, let's go ahead and do steep turns, and I would just go Okay, here we go, again, steep turns. Alright, let's do it. And it was very wrote to me by that. And so normally, he knew that if I was prepped for something, I would not be as reactionary and as excited about it. So most people know ahead of time where they're going to solo, you know, so they would say, okay, he'll come Monday morning, you're going to come in, we're going to, you know, fly together for to go around, and then I'm going to get out and you're going to solo and you know, they want you to get ready for it. Well, my instructor His name is John P. Campbell, who I'm in touch with, again, he looked me up after like 2030 years, it was amazing. We went up one day, you know, to do what they call go, you know, you just basically stay in the flight pattern and practice takes takeoffs and landings, which are the hardest things. And literally, at one point, he said, you know, can you do a full stop on the next one and pull over, which was not at all unusual. So I full stop, and I pull over on the taxiway, John jumps out of the plane looks at me says do three more by yourself, slams the door and runs that was just like, Oh, my God. But there were planes behind me. So I didn't have any time to sit and think about it. So you know, hit the power went back on, you know, and did three by myself. But I will never ever forget, the very first time I took off all alone, went into the traffic powder and got on with the call the downwind leg, which is



sort of the, the your parallel to the runway, just sort of going going back in the rectangle. And I had time to just sit and think and I sat there and I thought, Wow, I'm 17 years old, and I'm flying an airplane on my own. And the the confidence that that built in me and I'm not a power trip person at all, but kind of the power that I felt if I have control of this airplane, and there's no one sitting next to me if I do something wrong, it was it was really amazing.

**Hylke Faber 18:27**

So much in that story, the confidence that you felt taking off by yourself and then coming back alive, you're sitting here a few decades later to talk about it. And also the overview effect, the sense of humility. Yeah. So so maybe tell us a little bit about that humility, and that confidence that comes so through from this story about how that shaped you in other parts of your life, because there's something that draws you to the window, even of a commercial jet to to take those pictures?

**Jill Meyers 19:06**

Yes, definitely. The humility part is just that, um, a lot of people I think, don't necessarily have a way or have gained enough perspective on their place in the world. And I just think that flying in a small plane when I was training, and you know, I flew for another year or so before I joined the military, and then never had time after that much. I mean, I've flown since then a few times, but not for any length of time. I think that just having that perspective and having that humility, as you say, it's really helped me helped me for the rest of my career because I never think that I never had to waste So I don't really falsely escalate my own importance, I guess as a way to say it, you know, I, I always feel like my role in life is to support someone else or help others. I mean, that's really kind of what I'm about. I think I learned from all of that on the humility side that you really do need to have perspective, no matter what you do, and it's translated into the workplace for me, in a lot of ways, and I'll tell you a quick story, which I think translates really well is that when I lead an organization, I am always, first of all, I over communicate, I always tell people, you're gonna get more information from me than you probably want, you can always delete it or ignore me. But I want to give you the opportunity to hear it. So many places, I have worked, withhold information, and the whole information is power game, which I just can't stand. So I'm always making sure that everyone in my organization or in the organization, I am in the higher level, has perspective on what we're doing and why we're doing it and understands our place in that world. So the example I'll give you, because it was really a very amazing moment for me of feeling like I did something for others that was around this topic, Silica is that I worked on. I worked on a program that was not something that flew that actually was an okay thing. I was at Raytheon working on an aircraft program in 2009, I think and my boss came to me one day, and he said, Would you be willing to move to New England? And I said, Well, I used to go there as a kid, I would love to live in New England. And they asked me to move to Rhode Island. And there's a very small Raytheon facility in Portsmouth, Rhode Island on the same island that Newport is on. And they do all Navy stuff. So they were building a ship called the DDG 1000 Zoom, Walt class destroyer, the first stealth destroyer ship ever built. And they asked me to take over the whole sonar program. So I was in charge of development and deliver manufactured delivery of four sonar subsystems on this ship. So we had a ton of people on the program 1000s. And in the facility, which was pretty small. We had a manufacturing arm and we built a



lot of our own equipment or equipment would come into us, and we would check it and then, you know, send it up to the place in Maine, Beth Ironworks to put on the boat. So one day we had an issue and I was walking around the manufacturing facility. And you know, I was chatting with the folks on the production line, which actually I did every day. And one of them made a comment that made me realize that they had no idea what program they were supporting. And I looked at them and I said, Don't you know about the zoom out program? And they said, Well, no, you know, we just build these widgets. And I said, Well, that's, that's insane. Like, it's such an exciting thing that we're all part of. So I went to my boss, he was relatively new and as shocked as I was great guy. And he and I went through the process, which was very lengthy because these were union employees. So you had to get union approval, it was insane. But we ended up taking a briefing that talked about what the Zoom Walt ship was going to be doing. We stripped out the classified parts of it. And we got permission from the union to get all the all the manufacturing staff in the room at lunch. And we went through this briefing. And and we started because of what had happened. We started with the widget that the that person was working on. And then we said, well, that widget goes in this box, and this box goes in this cabinet. And this cabinet goes on this part of the ship, and this is what the ship does. And people's minds were just completely blown. And they were just like, we're part of that. And morale just skyrocketed. So for me, it's all about perspective. It's all about understanding where you fit, where we're where what you are doing 810 12 hours a day fits. Because if you don't have that context, I don't think you can have as much understanding of the why of why you're at work. And just so much so many platforms I have worked on my career are just ridiculously exciting things. And people don't even know what what it's about and what the thing they're building is going to accomplish someday out in the field. It just doesn't make any sense to me. So on the confidence part real quick, it's just that I think most people have some level of self confidence issues as I have had a lot in my life. But when I was and I had a difficult childhood so when I was 17 flying an airplane by myself it was just kind of mind blowing that I had set my mind to do this. Most people thought I was insane to start flying as a quote kid. And when I accomplished that and passed all the tests which are not easy and got my license it really was a huge sense of accomplishment. And it built a lot of confidence in me that, you know, if I can, if I can learn this, and do this at 17, you know what there's, there's no end to what I can do. And, and when I get in moments of self doubt, I think back on my, my most accomplishments I'm most proud of, and of course, that always comes up first.

**Hylke Faber 25:21**

It's great that you're, you're you're going where my my sense was going, which was. So tell us a little bit about, it may be a difficult moment or difficult time in your life, where you're able to apply those lessons in some way, you know, this connecting to the overview effect of being part of something bigger. And actually, when you were describing this of the widget that goes into the box that goes into the cabinet that goes into this ship, I got goosebumps, and I wasn't there. But something in me viscerally responded to that, which tells me there's something truthful about it, that's there's a, there's a deeper truth that you're actually describing in this particular way, which, of course, can be described in many different ways, we can all be thinking about being part of something bigger our family, or the world or community or the our history or whatever, we want to see that that that we're part of it. But there's,



there's something inherently opening and energizing about that. So I, I appreciate you highlighting that. And at the same time, also, the humility of being a small part of that, and being a part of that, the confidence of being applied, applying myself to something. And then seeing that bear fruit, and trusting applying myself trusting myself. So I would love for you to speak, maybe give us a an example of from your life where you've had to put that to the test. Right. And it may not have been as nice as Oh, I just got my exam passed, you know, might have been something a little harder. Maybe you can share that example. And and then we're going to take a brief break, and we'll go deeper into it after that break.

**Jill Meyers 27:17**

So you want an example of something that didn't go well, yes.

**Hylke Faber 27:20**

And where you had to apply that? Yeah.

**Jill Meyers 27:24**

So the first I'll give you the first thing that came to mind. It's a long story, but I'll shorten it. So I did really, really well in high school. Third in my class of I don't know, 750 students or something and my senior class, got a full scholarship to Arizona State went for one semester hated, it didn't really have direction. At that point. I wasn't really actively thinking of flying professionally because there were very few women doing that. And that's another story. So I ended up joining the Air Force as an enlisted person when I was 19. And I continued college classes while I was in and they sent me to a special program once I got my degree, which isn't aeronautical airspace, but aeronautical engineering. And once I got my degree, I was supposed to be commissioned in the Air Force and go back in as an officer. Well, I was already in but to become an officer. And I had to go through Officers Training School, even though I'd already been through basic training, you know, five years prior. So I went to offers this training school after finishing my degree. And it was a 12 week really intense, crazy hellacious program, I will say. And when I walked into the squadron, which were randomly assigned, it was me and 39 Guys, and I thought, well, this isn't going to be a big deal. You know, I'm used to this. One of my aerospace classes in college, there were very few women. So I went through OTs and two weeks before graduation, I was running the mile and a half for time, you know, for the physical fitness test, and I fell, and I injured myself severely. I didn't know how badly for about a year later, but injured myself severely ended up tearing all the muscles off my hip bone. And after a couple of days, the head of the entire program called me into his office, he was a colonel and he basically said, we're throwing you out of the program. It's like what do you mean? He calls it being disenrolled, which was a new word for me. You're being a disenrolled. And I, I just looked at him and I said, you know, I don't understand, sir. I mean, you know, I failed the run test, but you really don't think you can throw me out unless I failed three things I did. And he said, Oh, yes, you did. And so long story short, they played with my records, in my opinion. They chose to throw me out. I would not be commissioned as an officer, I would have to go back into the enlisted ranks. And I really thought my life was over. I had worked so hard for it. I loved being in the airforce loved it and had to make a really hard decision as to what to do. And so my choices were well, the only The choice they offered me was to get demoted, go back to an enlisted





rank, because I had been promoted to go through the program. And then never get to use the degree I just worked extraordinarily hard to get was a really hard program. So I was extremely depressed, I would go so far as to say I had suicidal thoughts at the time. And I really didn't know what to do. But I ended up deciding to stay in the military, at least for a while. Took the demotion and all of that, because I thought to myself, you know, I do love. I mean, I didn't like what was happening at OTS. I didn't like the way they were treating me and others, by the way, not just me. And I decided just to, I decided the environment I was in was important enough to be around aircraft to be serving our country, that it was worth the sacrifice at the time to kind of give up the engineering part of it and just see where things fell out. So I did stay in another two years ish. I got to the point where my base commander at my next assignment, found out what had happened. They did a whole legal investigation and found out that what I had reported was true. And the way it ended up is that they offered to me to go back. The lawyer came to me after the investigation is like, well, we are offering you to go back to Office training school. I said, under what conditions he said, well, first of all, you have to start day one, I thought, oh, geez, I don't even know. Okay, fine. And then I looked at him and I said, Let me guess the same gentleman who threw me out is still in charge. He said yes. I said, Do I look stupid? Like no. So I declined. And I stayed enlisted for another year and eventually got out, you know, to the was my only way to become a quote real engineer was to get out. But it was it took a lot of perspective assessment for me to get to that decision. And to decide to just move forward and let things fly as they did I they actually put me in a really fun job from our last Air Force assignment. So it wasn't bad wasn't horrible. But it was it was probably one of the one of the hardest points in my life where I really had to focus on perspective and where do I really fit into the world? And what do I want to do? So it was a combination Hilco of the prospective concepts, and again, trying to stick with things that keep me excited about getting up every morning I? Think you're frozen. Elko. You there?

32:38

We just lost Tilka.

**Jill Meyers** 32:40

That is not a good thing. I'm sure he'll be back, everybody. If you're still on. There's Rick.

**Rick Gage** 32:48

Yes. Not sure why hilker dropped off. But I'm sure he'll be back in a moment. There he is various,

**Hylke Faber** 32:53

thank you for catching that. And thinking about a bigger space, like getting getting a bigger overview of my internet, just stop for a second, which I've done before. So it's interesting to have a conversation with you about being in space. I want to continue this conversation with you after the break about what that moment was like when you were demote while demoted, basically. And you decided to stay because I want to understand a little bit more about where that motivation came from. And learn from that. Because that seemed like such a hard decision to take. So thank you so much for sharing. We've been talking to Jill Meyers, a senior leader in the aerospace and everything that flies space and also



engineering services company at the moment. It's been a delight to talk with God already. And we've I've been learning a lot about the overview effect, and getting a sense of what's my place in the hole, and then also finding a way to stay close to and go and closer and closer to what inspires my confidence. Thanks for listening. We'll be back after the break.

34:17

You are listening to rooted and unwavering presented by growth Leaders Network, the leadership team and culture development company. If you would like to learn more about working on connectedness for yourself, your team or organization, please contact growth leaders network on LinkedIn. And now back to the show.

**Hylke Faber 34:43**

And welcome back to Rutan wavering episode 35 with Jill Meyers, a licensed private pilot since he was 17 and a leader in the aerospace, anything that flies Industries at all. So a passionate volunteer and supporter for people that want to pursue a career in this space. So let's go back to this moment to of thinking about being thrown out basically, from the officers program. Can you talk to us about if you can go back to how you felt? And how you dealt with that? How did you move through that?

**Jill Meyers 35:30**

Well, it was one of the things that made it most difficult is I knew deep in my heart that they wanted me thrown out because I was the only female in the squadron and they didn't want someone in a skirt at the parade of graduation. I mean, I knew that was the reason I couldn't prove it. There was nothing, you know, I didn't feel discriminated against any time in the entire training until that day when I was disenrolled. So what was hard for me is I knew that they were removing me from the training program for completely bogus reasons. The commander eventually told me it was to save budget, which was ridiculous, but that was his public excuse. And I just felt cheated really out of my future. You know, I had worked very hard. To get into the service I had done extremely well, while I was in the military, I had some incredibly important and surprising jobs for someone who is 2021 22 years old, which is what the military does, because they train they train us so well. On the technical side. I had letters of recommendations from two and three star generals for this program, when most most applications came from, you know, Lieutenant Colonel's or kernels. But I was in a role at the time stationed in Germany working for NATO, that I had visibility from extremely high levels every day when I would brief them. So there were a lot of people backing me who I felt I had disappointed, or the system had disappointed, I didn't feel like I had disappointed them, really. But I just felt cheated. Because I envisioned myself staying in the military 25 years, I wanted to do a full career and retire. And I could have stayed in as an enlisted person forever. i In hindsight, could have a few years later tried to get a commission again. But I just thought that there was this black mark on my records and whether it was true or not, I would never get get away from them. So but the decision I made to stay in was because, again, I did a I just constantly thought about what I wanted to do that would make me happy. And because I really love the Air Force environment in general. I really loved my prior assignment, which was three full years in Germany, before that I was in Omaha, Nebraska, which was okay. But I knew



the opportunities that were ahead of me if I stayed in. And, and I loved being in uniform, which was kind of unexpected, I didn't really join for patriotic reasons. I joined the military because I wanted someone to pay for school, which I knew I would finish, I wanted to travel the world and I wanted to get out of the house. So I was working a part time job. And one of the girls who worked with me came in with a brochure from an Air Force recruiter, I had never met anyone in a uniform in my entire life ever. And so it was it was just a complete bizarre decision that I made to join the Air Force in the first place. And I ended up really, really loving it and just the thought of walking away from that just wasn't an option once I really kind of walked through that decision. So knowing what possibilities there were if I stayed in was was kind of the the best of all the options in front of me.

**Hylke Faber 39:05**

So I heard you, you stay really loyal to what was important to you in that moment, even though you had to stomach some nonsense, and and a setback, but you stayed stay with it. And then after a while you left. You left the military before we go there. I'm very curious till about the uniform. And and and, and that part. It's a part i We've never talked about and I'm very curious about it. So what does that connect you with? What does that what does that uniform evoke in you?

**Jill Meyers 39:49**

What it invites a great question no one's ever asked me Holika what it invoked in me was feeling part of a unit that had a mission. You know, one of the one of the things that I loved about the military, which is the hardest thing for people to deal with, when they get out no matter how long they're in, is that when you're in the military, you get assigned to an organization, everyone has the same goal, the same mission follows the same processes. You're told what to do, and you do it. You know, in the army, they always say, you know, there's the hill, take the hill. And I just aligned with that more than I ever thought I would. And, you know, wearing the uniform, which a lot of people don't like, but I loved it. First of all, you don't have to think about what to wear in the morning, except it's long sleeves or short sleeves. Their biggest decision of the day. I loved wearing the uniform because it made me feel like I was an important part of this thing they call the US Air Force, even though there's hundreds of 1000s of people in the military. And I was very proud to wear the uniform, you know, a lot of people you know, couldn't wait to get home at night and rip it off, you know, and put on the t shirt and jeans. And that was that was really never me and I was very proud to wear the uniform. I thought it was fun to wear the uniform, you know, I'm very meticulous. So you know, getting everything you know, getting your nametag on right and getting your your metals on right and making sure everything's aligned. You know, I love I loved all that. You know, I love marching I love you know, saluting I used to when I was in basic training, going into the Air Force at 19. I volunteered to be what they call the guide on bearer at the parade. It's the person in the front who carries the flag next to the person leading the squadron loves all of that Pomp and Circumstance loved it still do you know? Yeah, that's that's what it that's what it really did for me

**Hylke Faber 41:49**



was thinking uniform is like one inform literally translate it. So we're like you're part of something bigger. There's a sense of stability in that and a sense of purposefulness together in that that is unquestioned. That is unquestioned. And that

**Jill Meyers 42:06**

purpose is huge. And that's, that's what I have struggled with since leaving the Air Force as have others is, or a lot of organizations I've been at don't have that don't create a strong sense of purpose and don't know how to get people aligned to it. Right.

**Hylke Faber 42:25**

Right. Right. So that not the Raytheon experience in New England, Rhode Island makes even more sense to me, because you help people to see they're part of basically see the uniform, it's actually part of something bigger, and have that uniform experience, even though people have all kinds of baggage or associations. When we say uniform, right? It's this interesting that you have this very uplifting your sense of uniform, like I'm part of something bigger, something that I enjoy something that I want to be part of something I I'm actually want to spend time maintaining, it's something that I I really cherish. So fast forward in your life. You've, you've been growing so much, you've had so much experience in leadership. Tell us a little bit about how that experience then informed later positions that you have later leadership positions you had. And think about. Maybe think about the people that may be listening to this that are thinking well, yeah, my company doesn't have this sense of purpose. I am. I don't have this Jill moment in the Boston sky thinking this is it? I am, I'm a little adrift. So maybe think about an experience that speaks to that, that can help leader leaders and listeners think about like, ah, yeah.

**Jill Meyers 44:02**

So part, I'm going to start answering that HelloGoodbye saying that, I think the most important thing about leadership is to be a compassionate leader. And I've always people started calling me that before I realized I was was one he but you have to you have to really care about the people and because if the people that work with you, for you, the people you work for, if they're not feeling like part of something and they don't know why they're doing what they're doing, and they don't feel like anyone cares about them. You're you're not going to succeed as an organization have been a few of those. And I'll give you one exhibit the first example always comes to mind I used about being the first time someone called me compassionate leader. When the Raytheon job ended because we were finished delivering everything to Bath Iron Works and my head No charge number, my job was done. And it's a very small facility in Rhode Island, there was nothing else for me to do. So I ended up taking a different position in New Hampshire and moved to New Hampshire. And I was it was a company that makes thermo optic electrical systems, really cool things like night vision goggles for pilots, and stuff, really fun stuff. And the very first even before I arrived, after I signed the offer letter, and before I showed up at work, the HR person who was one of the best I've ever worked with called me and said, Well, now that you've signed the contract, we want to tell you what you're walking into. Everyone hates you, and you're not even here yet. I'm like, Well, how can that be? Well, they've had a series of bad managers, no one had any leadership skills, you're coming in, and they're like, Oh, another one, you know. So we



brainstormed she and I about how to have me and you know, introduce myself to them. And I had this crazy idea to in the morning and, and had a very successful entry into this organization. But I was only there about a month and my boss came to me and said, he called in all the managers, there were a few of us, maybe six. And he said, all we're going to do a layoff. And all of you need to pick one person in your organization's to let go. And I looked at him, and I was like, Well, I just got here, I don't know, you're gonna have to help me with this decision. I don't know these people well enough yet. But the very next thing I did is I pulled my team into a room. I had I think 12 engineers that worked for me. And I explained to them what was going on, I said, you know, we're going to be downsizing, you know, likely one of the people in each of our organizations, including mine is going to, you know, be asked to move on. And afterwards, people came into my office, and they were like, well, I can't believe you told us that. I said, Well, why wouldn't I? I mean, you need to know what's going on. And they said, but no one ever tells us anything, we're cool, but I care about you guys. And like when no one's ever cared about us. And that was like my big aha moment of Compassionate Leadership. And, you know, there's a couple of companies out there that are doing marketing and media now about, you know, making employees happy, you know, is the number one thing, but I've been doing that my whole life and, and there's just, there's just nothing more important than people feeling valued and cared about. And organizations where senior leadership withholds information, where they don't know, obviously, there's some things you can't share with the whole company. You know, there's some things that executive levels that don't get shared, and I understand that. But if you don't let people know what's going on, first of all, they're going to hear it through the rumor mill anyway, then they're going to come back at you after. So I'm all about preparing people for things that are coming down the line I'm all about just, you know, leading with integrity and ethics, which is my, I have an extraordinarily high ethics bar from some things I witnessed, and was party to at other companies that caused me to leave them. And you have to be ethical, you have to be compassionate. And you have to really make sure that as a leader, your job is to make everyone in your organization as successful as they can be. And that's really what leadership is to me.

**Hylke Faber 48:28**

So interesting that you use the word compassionate this way, because the word compassion gets thrown around so much in leadership. And it's almost like an overused word. These days, you've got to be compassionate. And the way you are describing it, as this example of basically practicing the overview effect, helping people seeing to see like, oh, well, here's the situation, we are all in it together, right? We're all in this together. And, and that being a way of practicing compassion, part of being compassion, is sharing as much as you can with others, what's going on to people see their place in the hall and helping people to see their place in the hole is very compassionate, because it's helping to remind people of that overview effect of that's something that's least that's how I hear this off that something that bigger than them, which is much more energizing, and that could say healing, then, you know, I've got to now just look out for only number one, and that's the only thing that counts, which can be a very limiting, stifling and debilitating perspective. So it's very compassionate from that perspective to share the bigger view. So what I want to know Jill is, so you shared that and then what happened, people said, I can't believe you said that. Then what happened next?



**Jill Meyers 49:54**

I said to them Well, again, I'm sharing with you because maybe We can all make this decision together, instead of me going off in a dark room with my boss who I've known for a month and picking one of you. So we actually as a team, I mean, I got some suggestions from my boss, of course, it was the Vice President about, you know, who he thought would be good candidates to be let go. But we actually talked about it as a group openly, which is kind of crazy. And we selected someone who actually was close to retirement and was kind of almost okay with being laid off, you know, we did a severance package and everything. And it turned out really fine. And I think I gained respect for that, which wasn't necessarily my goal, but it was sort of a positive byproduct is people then knew that they could come to me with anything. First of all, which I always tell my, my, my staff, you know, you can come to me with with any question, any problem, it doesn't have to be work related. Even I mean, I'm here, you know, I always let people know I'm here for them. And it just, it just really set our organization on a on a positive path forward. And we did really good work and just kick butt after that.

**Hylke Faber 51:07**

It's beautiful. It's beautiful. Amazingly, we're already getting to the final minutes of our conversation, which is like, so good in terms of that it flew by because it means it was a great conversation. But what do you want to say to somebody who is just not feeling it today? It's like this not feeling today. Yeah, I know about compassion. Yeah, I know about integrity. Yeah, I know about the bigger picture. But you know, I'm stressed out. I have too much to do. I may be demotivated, I don't know what's going on, what would you say to a person like that?

**Jill Meyers 51:53**

First, I would say go get some fresh air, get out of the building. What I would say to anyone in that situation is to try not to spiral which I know people who do that. What I try to encourage people to do and I try to take my own advice is you know, if you feel yourself not feeling it, or spiraling or headed down the bad path, just reach out to someone and, you know, not necessarily ask overtly for help if you're not comfortable with that, but do if you are, but I find that way back to, you know, connectivity and connection HELCO from the beginning and what your whole podcast is about. It's so important to have to have your universe your circle of friends and colleagues. And, you know, from a professional standpoint, I learned a long time ago about having a personal board of directors, which I feel like I do. And I have a chair of that board, Miss Krista Dima, who I think might be logged in today. You have to have people in your professional world that you can go to either just to vent, or to vent and ask advice or just ask advice. But I find that if I am not feeling it, which happens more often than you would think just reaching out to someone who's important to me professionally, or personally, even if it's just, hey, can we just go get coffee and just chat or just do something that that you're passionate about outside of work, you know, I'm very heavily into photography, and there's times when I'm not feeling it, and if I have the opportunity timewise I'll just grab my camera and go somewhere beautiful, and just put everything out of my mind for a bit, you know, and take some photos. So finding a way to recenter yourself, I guess, I think is the key. And what that might mean to one person, you know will be totally



different than the next but find finding what will bring you out of a funk and you know like that little spark inside you again, I think is the way to is the way to move forward.

**Hylke Faber 54:08**

Thank you so much. I I keep seeing seeing us coming back to this overview effect, like find a way to connect yourself to a bigger view. However you do that, you know by taking pictures by reaching out to somebody by having a board of directors that support you by taking a walk by looking at the sky by climbing into a plane, whatever you need to do to help yourself to to serve yourself with this bigger perspective that then reignites your spark your passion and helps to remind you of what what you're here for. So final minutes final minutes deal. So in closing, as you think about your closing reflection, I'm going to start with mine which is I'm so struck by By the fearlessness that you share today. Like no, like, yeah, yeah, no, no, yeah. We even announced this podcast thinking about women in being authentic and leadership. And this whole story has been about that even though we haven't called it out so much like you, being a woman in a profession that is male dominated, still. Being a person, woman, man or whatever, have integrity standing for what you stand for, you know, the story you told about the layoffs, very telling, like, No, I care about something bigger than just following the playbook that somebody may have given me, I am going to reinvent a way that is in integrity with who I am, it's compassionate is serving, what I feel like I'm here to serve. And that that that's what will that will stay with me. I will think about today and the time that comes like, Ah, how can I take that bigger view and so closing reflections from you, Joe?

**Jill Meyers 56:14**

Well, thanks Ahsoka. I think what I want to say is that it's so important to really know who you are. And it's, it's hard, it's took me a long time to get there. I mean, I knew a little bit of it when I was younger, but and who you are, can change over time as well. And I guess what I would, what I would comment on is that I think it's just really important to, to really have the introspection to get to the point where you know, who you are, and you know, what your strengths are and what you can and can't do, especially as a leader. And the other thing is that you just, you just have to be really brave enough to make hard decisions, you know, I've made a lot of in my life. I have left organizations with no other job in hands, because of as the one I referred to, when when ethics were crossed, and people's lives were at stake and nobody cared, you know, I just I couldn't stay. But you really have to build up the strength to understand who you are, where you fit in the world. By the way, the overview effect, the person who, who claimed that his name is Frank White, I believe if you Google it, there's a book that you can buy that talks about it and describes it, it's decades old. But really getting that perspective and using your inner circle to help you gain that perspective, I think, is what I would would give guidance to to folks. And yeah, so it's still an incredibly male dominated field, women are still only 5.96% of all licensed pilots on the planet. It's It's insane. In the 1960s, it was 4%. Now it's six, you know, do the math, it's just really not. So a lot of us. A lot of women in aviation aerospace really struggle with, as you said, being handed a playbook and you just have to have the wherewithal to say no, that's really not the best way to go about it. And luckily, I've been successful most of the time in having the strength to do that. And



just do what in your heart you think is right. And if it doesn't work out, it doesn't work out. But I think it's it everyone owes it to themselves to give it a try.

**Hylke Faber 58:32**

Thank you so much deal, thank you for sharing with us about the strength that comes from the bigger view. From the bigger view that doesn't often come for free. That often comes because we have to make a decision. And very struck also by what you just said about leaving jobs, plunging, not knowing what's happening next. But just because you have to. So I know we're also at this time of year, where people have holidays and vacations coming up. So maybe that's a great reflection of what is your bigger view? What is your big bigger view? And how can that inform you and guide you maybe in a gentle way to design more of your own playbook and doesn't have to be drastic or radical. It can just be in small ways, how you interact with the person sitting across from the dining table or what you do with your day to day or how do you plan your life or your day to day so thank you jail for being here today. It was a delight and an honor to be with you. Likewise looka thank you so much. Yeah, and for everybody listening, I really appreciate you listening and being in this work together of taking a stand consciously for what truly matters to you, and not what's prescribed but truly what matters to you and let that come to the fore stand in that. Next time. We'll be talking to A suit that tastes who is a writer and a leader, who also take a stance for working differently. One of the first things he told me is that she's working halftime. He's in a mid 30s as his as his or her husband to spend time with her kids. And he says, I'm no longer interested in the rat race. So we're going to hear more about that in two weeks. And if you are interested in this podcast at all available on Apple and other places where you find your podcast, and of course, also on LinkedIn and YouTube and other places, so you can subscribe there. Thank you for listening. You have been listening to root and unwavering where we help leaders connect more deeply to their innate potential. I'm your host, SOCO firebrand See you next time

**Presenter 1:00:53**

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