

Wynne Leon (00:04)

to How to Share, a podcast that celebrates the art of teaching, learning, giving, and growing.

Wynne Leon (00:15)

I'm Wynne Leon and in this episode I'm with author Amy Weinland Daughters Amy's book, Dear Dana, is a beautiful chronicle of a letter writing campaign. When she saw on Facebook that her friend from summer camp 30 years before had a son who was sick and needed prayers, Amy started writing them letters. She explains how this effort blossomed into a project to write each one of her 580 Facebook friends.

a letter. We talk about the level of effort involved in writing that many letters and how it was transformative for her.

Amy shares some of the research around the benefits of writing and we talk about the insights of what she learned about the benefits and limitations of social media in the process of her project. One of my favorite ahas is that we can use social media as a jumping off point for real relationships because we lose the richness if there's no investment in our relationships. We talk about God whispers and how listening to them

can help us participate in making this world a better place. Amy's perspective is so real and inspirational that I know it'll leave you feeling motivated. This is an incredible episode with a powerful story and loads of magic. I know you'll love it.

you

Amy Weinland Daughters (01:54)

you

Wynne Leon (02:02)

Hey Amy!

Amy Weinland Daughters (02:03)

Hi Wynne!

Wynne Leon (02:05)

So good to see you, because I was captivated by your book, Dear Dana. You encapsulate so much wisdom about friendship and social media and our willingness and our ability to be there for other people in your amazing endeavor and story. It's just so good.

Amy Weinland Daughters (02:25)

Well, thank you so much. mean, what a compliment. And thank you so much for having me on.

Wynne Leon (02:29)

~ my pleasure. So you started writing letters to all of your Facebook friends, 580. After your Facebook friend, Dana, suffered a tragic loss and you realized you didn't have her address. And you started questioning all the things we know and don't know about our friends online. Can you tell us the story?

Amy Weinland Daughters (02:52)

Absolutely. mean, and I like to tell the story that I didn't mean to go on this journey I went on. Absolutely changed my life, but I was just minding my own business. Like this was the most, and I think that's what part of the reason it packed so much punch is because it was so non-intentional. And so I was minding my own business. I got on Facebook and I'd always remembered my friend Dana from camp, from summer camp. We probably spent six weeks together. We were both loud and thought we were funny. So I'm sure that we pinged off each other.

but we literally went from 1986 to 2014 without speaking a word, not exchanging a word, you know, not being connected in any way. And so one day get on Facebook, her name popped back in my head and I was like, Dana, I'll type it in. I typed it in, there she was. Since it didn't require me to do anything, I friend requested her and since it didn't require her to do anything, I guess she remembered who I was and she accepted my friendship request.

And so that led to what do we do when we get a new friend? I just looked through her life and like, what happened to Dana? Well, she had a bunch of kids. She overachieved. five kids and four girls, one boy, the youngest was the boy, his name was Parker. And right away I found out Parker had cancer and he was at the St. Jude Children's Hospital in Memphis. So that meant it was serious. And I was like, no. So as a...

a fellow human being as a mom, as all those things, was like, oh no, worst case scenario. So that resonates with you right away when you hear a story like that. I did feel myself over feeling a little bit because I knew I didn't know them, but she asked for prayers. That was kind of my, or it is my thing. So I prayed, but then I was just in the background. I didn't hit like, I didn't comment on anything because that seemed disingenuous. Here was this girl, you know, living all the rest of our worst nightmare. And so I wasn't going to say anything. So I do follow along with the story though, and I do pray. And so I watched as

He went into remission. ~ So I felt some relief that didn't really fit the circumstances, but again, as a human being. then months passed by and then he goes, the cancer comes back and he goes back to Memphis. This is awful, you know? And so she posts about it, this long post about they're going back to Memphis and somehow she was grateful for all the people that were gonna support her there. And so I sit down at my desk the next day and I did not pre-plan any of this. And it was like a lightning bolt hit me in the head. I was like, you know what I'm gonna do?

I'm going to start writing Dana and her son Parker, little supportive notes, handwritten notes, and I'm going to mail them to the Ronald McDonald House in Memphis. And I hadn't written anyone a note in 25 years. You know, I was living the same life the rest of us were. And I had still had no contact with this woman. Her son didn't know who I was. And so I do it because I felt like this was the thing I was going to do. Like I felt so pulled to do it. So I started writing. I write them little notes, like I'm praying for you, you know, keep fighting.

The notes become a little longer because I don't know what to say. And I do this for 10 to 14 weeks. And the whole time I think I'm crazy. Like this is nuts. You're nutso. so, um, I don't hear back from her nor do I expect to cause they're fighting, you know, but I can tell on Facebook, cause that was the only connection I had that things maybe weren't going well. And then she stops posting and then there's a post one Sunday morning. It's like, you know, Parker's gone home to be with God. He's passed away.

he's 15 years old, there's no good words for this, had nothing to do with me, but I felt, you know, not devastated, but I felt absolutely heartbroken for this family. And so I'm like, what do I do next? Had nothing to do with me. I sent a condolence card to the Ronald McDonald house. And I'm like, well, I can't just, I can't just not write her again. Like, you you can't just write 14 notes and then not say anything again and go into, and so like, what do I do? I was like, I don't know what her address is. I can't ask her for it. I'm like, well, I heard her husband's an attorney.

So I looked up his law office address and I just started sending letters there. And that's crazy and I know it. I mean, like totally.

Wynne Leon (06:43)

Yeah, but it's also very resourceful.

Amy Weinland Daughters (06:46)

Yeah, so in the whole time I'm doing it, when I'm thinking, this is not rational, like she just lost her son and you're writing your letters, but the letters become longer because I don't know what to say. And you can only say, I'm sorry so many times. I, know, and, ~ so I just start writing longer. I look at my life from the outside in and eventually about four or five months into this, I get this 10 page letter from this woman and I'm shocked.

just in awe and she shares a little bit about her grief. She talks about her family. She says stuff I never could have known on social media. At the end, she says something very telling. She's like, you know, I didn't mean to say any of that, but I feel better from saying it. And so this kicks off two years of me and Dana writing each other letters. We don't text. We don't even exchange phone numbers. We don't email. We see each other on Facebook, but we don't really like say anything.

we're having this regular exchange and since she can't, like, I don't know if she's even reading the letters. I never knew she was reading them. She doesn't know what I'm reading. So you can say whatever you want to, don't feel compelled to respond to anything specifically unless you have something to say. There's no pressure. And we just shared, like we shared very deeply. We ended up trusting each other and saying stuff like, I know I can say this to you stranger at the other mailbox because I trust you. And the best part was,

I didn't know how she voted. I didn't know what she believes specifically. She asked her prayers, so I knew she believed in God, but I didn't know if she was a Methodist or if she was. I didn't care. And I didn't care how she stood on any issue. I just knew I cared about her because not only did she lose her son, but now she was my friend in writing. And so this was...

Wynne Leon (08:23)

What's great about the book is that we kind of see this. mean, you've put this together. I you're living this and telling us the story is beautiful. But but, you know, some of the words that she sent back to you was that I loved from the book is your writing talents kept us engaged to the last word. It's hard for me to believe that someone I haven't seen in over 25 years would care so much. We have been surrounded by love, but there are many in our

inner circle who have moved on, which I understand. But because before that, was me. Yet you still make the effort. Wow. Thank you seems so inadequate.

Amy Weinland Daughters (09:04)

Yeah. I mean, obviously, I mean, that still makes me want to cry, you know, because I, I thought I was, and I literally thought, and I think this is so relatable. I thought the whole time I was shooting off these letters that there is no way that could mean anything in light of what these people had lost, you know, the four daughters, the husband and her, like I am just crazily writing these letters, telling myself the whole time. And she would, she would say stuff like that. And I was so

I was just so overwhelmed. And it's such a testament, not to me, but a testament to how we're never, no one's going to have the right words in that circumstance. But just the act of showing up in some way, you know, not forgetting, not just saying, okay. And really not knowing what to say and feeling awkward doing it, it's all natural responses, but showing up anyway. And I think that was all God, that's what it was to me. Now people can frame that however they want to frame it.

But I just kept showing up because I felt so compelled to do it. But then when she started sharing, how was I not going to show up then? You know, that's just a human thing. that experience was so profound when she would say stuff like that to me and when I would share with her and just the relationship that I sat back after about, I don't know how long

we've been writing, eight months, I'm gonna guess. And I was like, if this could happen from the one random girl, the one random camp girl who I knew nothing about.

who now I consider one of my closest friends in writing, what about these other hundreds of people that I supposedly am friends with? And so I was like, you know what I'm gonna do? And this was just all world bananagrams. I mean, this is like someone gone rogue in their lives, you know? And I'm like, but wait a second, what if I write everyone a letter? So I put everybody's name into an Excel spreadsheet. printed them off, I shoved them in my box, I put stationery, I got a journal, and I sat down to write letter number one. I pulled an A amount.

Wynne Leon (10:58)
Scientific method, I love it.

Amy Weinland Daughters (11:00)
~ yeah, I had rules, you know.

Wynne Leon (11:02)
and had rules, two pages, right?

Amy Weinland Daughters (11:05)
We're on the stationary, but I really thought in my heart of hearts that I was going to get to like letter 30 and that would have been a like a really great thing that I had done. But when I got to letter 30, I was like, wait a second, this is going to be the most important thing I ever do in my life. And I didn't really know why, but I could just have, I had a feeling that this was going to change everything and it did. And it took me 18 months and I wrote everyone a letter and

And I had no idea the power a letter in 2020 or whatever year could have. I had no, I had no idea that amount of, you know, just the amount of perspective it was going to give me, how it was going to change my heart and just transform my entire life by writing these little letters.

Wynne Leon (11:54)
Yeah, yeah. And trans, I mean, there's just so much that's transformative here. just your realization and we feel as we read the book, how hard it is to write 580 letters. mean, it, it's, it's a non-trivial effort. mean, you sat and you grew calluses. mean, you, and, but you also, we feel the awkwardness that comes from like writing something like, I haven't seen you in.

X number 30 years, whatever. But you also have all these great, fascinating realizations about social media, ~ about being connected, but not being connected and all the things

we assume about each other and ~ how many people we could really be there for. in preparation for this interview, I stalked you on Facebook. So I know you still use it.

Has it changed how you do?

Amy Weinland Daughters (12:50)

absolutely. You know, and I have more friends now than I had then. You know, I've added quite a few friends, but I really thought when that when I wrote letter 580 that I would get off of Facebook. But after that, I couldn't because I had made this individual connection with each of these people, this very tactile, personal, you know, ~ connection. especially the original 580 that I wrote the letters to, I could never.

I would never not want to be connected to them in some way, you know, because that it turned these electronic beings into real people on a bunch of different important levels. But as it turns out, I absolutely look at Facebook completely different because now I look at it as one, a jump off point for real relationship. I would not be telling the story without Facebook. So we can say bad things about social media and all of that would probably be true, but it is an absolute.

jump off point for real relationship. The other thing I learned was, you know, here's this list. This is so relatable of hundreds of people that I either knew for five minutes or, you know, five years that I danced with at some girl's wedding or that I lived next door to for 15 years, you know, but each of these people somehow fit into my relationship diagram. Like they all showed up for a reason. They're all living beautiful, messed up.

lives that are just as real as mine and they're all valuable in a way to me personally. So one, there's so much hope in that and so much gratitude in that, but why would I disconnect myself from somebody like that? Because this trivial thing called Facebook or Instagram allows me to remain connected to these real human beings.

Wynne Leon (14:36)

Yeah, yeah. When you write about sort of all those connections from page 278, we all have a relationship graph with circles representing our people and then lines connecting them with us and others. Only by viewing the chart from above can we begin to see how many amazing links exist, how we are bound in meaningful ways to so many people.

And that's such a, you just, you know, just underscored that point. It's just beautiful to think about that.

Amy Weinland Daughters (15:10)

Right, and you know, the way I came to, you know, and again, I didn't mean to do anything magical. didn't, I wasn't intending to do anything at all. I just was gonna write these letters because of Dana. And I felt like it, you know, that was just the thing to do. But in sitting

down to write the letters, I had to decide what I was going to say. And the reason that I got that perspective on the relationship graph.

or whatever I called it, was because I was forced because I had to write something to look at each of the people individually. And in trying to find something to say, because that's all I was doing, I wasn't like, let me say something meaningful to you, friend. I was like, so I went and looked at everyone's profile. And that was probably the most gratifying part of the whole process is I was forced to sit down and you think about what that would look like for you to look at each of these 580 people as individuals. And I'm like,

I had assumed so many things about it that were wrong, not because I'm a bad person, but because we don't do that with Facebook friends. And like, wait, she went to Harvard, wait, he is a ~ airline pilot, wait, she's a foster mom, wait. So that was the first part of it. And the second part was figuring out what these people meant to me. People had suffered a loss, people had had an illness, people needed to be congratulated. And on top of all that, I was connected.

for a reason and I had so many things to say like, thank you for being there when my mom passed away. There were so many things I had to say and it was so full of goodness. I just had no idea because I'd never looked at them individually. And then I saw the graph come together.

Wynne Leon (16:44)

Yeah. Well, there was a response, I think from recipient number 66. You have people numbered in your booth, is to my math brain, a really good way to keep track of things. ~ He responded, God has been reminding me to slow down, not because Facebook is bad or useless, but because we are connected without ever needing to invest.

Amy Weinland Daughters (17:14)

That's it, that was a beautiful line. that's the thing about the book. Those people's, words are every bit as powerful as mine. It's almost an anthology of a Facebook friend group is what it is. Yeah, but that idea, that's one of my favorite parts of the book though. Cause we don't, when we make it, it's back to my story of Dan and I, we didn't have to do anything. So it was easiest to say yes to the friendship request. when you don't invest in someone else's life, when you don't sacrifice something, when you don't risk something,

then it's not a real relationship. And that's the thing I didn't understand about letter writing or note writing is that people are going to get that you had to do something. You sacrificed effort. You sacrificed time. You sacrificed your hand being sore. You sacrificed a stamp. then...

You sacrifice driving across town and trying to find a mailbox and drop it into it. And I call it the magical moment at the mailbox. When people hold that letter in their hand, regardless of what it says, that's just next level. They're going to be like, my God, this is how much I

matter to another person. They're going to connect the dots and it is going to change their heart. And I didn't know that until I saw it happen 600 times.

Wynne Leon (18:26)

Right, right. Well, and you have so much to say about the goodness of letter writing. ~ I think National Letter Writing Day is coming up. Is that right? Right. December 7th or something like that.

Amy Weinland Daughters (18:38)

Right, right, yeah.

Wynne Leon (18:40)

But you say something like, though receiving a letter is a wonderful emotional experience and you just described that well. Writing one provides a therapeutic release that is difficult to describe in words.

Amy Weinland Daughters (18:52)

Right. And there's, and there's, you know, as I spoke about this, there's science behind that. Like that's just not feelings, you know, the journal of psychology and psychiatry has shown for people who handwrite letters or keep a handwritten journal, but just the act of writing stuff down that there's a 20 % increase in emotional clarity and there's a 20 % decrease in stress just by the simple fact. I'm, and I think the thing is we assume that

If you reach out to me when and say, Amy, I appreciate your friendship, you know, I'm sorry for what you've gone through. Congratulations. That that's going to be about making me feel good. But the plot twist of this whole little story is that the person who walks away being the most changed from participating in this kind of process is the person doing the writing. Because the person who's the most changed from all of this, you know, is me a hundred percent. the other thing is, you know,

because I'm a writer and because we use the word letter, it makes the entire ~ act of doing it seem like there's hurdles to it that are not there. There are hurdles, but it's, don't have to be a writer and it does not have to be a letter to have this impact. All you need is the cost of a postage stamp and a human heart and you absolutely don't need to be a writer and you don't need to do it 600 times to have

this power and it turns out that was in our little human tool kits all along and we just, we just didn't know about it. And I get to be the girl who gets to remind people about it.

Wynne Leon (20:23)

Yeah.

Well, you get to be the girl because you, you listened to the God whisper and, ~ there's so many God whispers in this book and, and bigger than me moments, ~ the timing, the inspiration. And I'll share one from yesterday. was preparing for this, ~ conversation with you and I get my mail and there's something from St. Jude's which, know, was key to your story, key to Dana's story. And, and I was like,

You know, amazing. So we'll just chart that down as another amazing moment. But you're right. The key is to not to stop listening to the little voices in our heads, to continue to press on boldly in those ways that feel completely right, regardless of lack of feedback. Maybe changing the world is all about not expecting to, but never, ever giving up.

on trying to.

Amy Weinland Daughters (21:24)
Right.

Wynne Leon (21:25)
So good.

And does that continue after that project for you?

Amy Weinland Daughters (21:30)
Right, and yes, it has. And in one way, I thought again that when I stopped writing letters that that would be it for me, because I was done writing letters and the book's very clear about that. I mean, I was finished. But I still, every morning I get up and write someone a card, a note. And I do it one, yes, I'm honoring the story that I was allowed to live, the best version of me. Two, it just spreads so much hope. It's a reminder to me every day that

We can't do it And three, It's almost, ~ it's like adrenaline for me. I believe in it so strongly that I, know, if I'm not, it's just, it's the one great thing I can do. So I don't think I'll ever stop, but I also see it in other parts of my life. Cause I think the bigger story with your Dana in the letter writing, mean, the media story is absolutely note writing. And that's what I want to talk about for the rest of my life. You know, like selling the books, that's great. But what I want to do is talk about this message, you know, but, but the,

Other part of the story I think that's compelling is that, you know, if we all just believed in our own stuff for five minutes, like that one little voice in our head that tells us to do something that we consider crazy, you know, if we were just step forward, just long enough and little increments to go forward. And that's exactly what I did, you know, that maybe we changed the world and

not even know. And if we would just support each other, because it's not a blueprint, we all have some idea in our head if we could all just make ourselves do it, then what happens?

Wynne Leon (23:06)

Right, right. If we could just listen, trust, support. There's so much to it. Something else that you wrote. It was insanity. I was reading Dana's Facebook posts, saying prayers that no one knew anything about except for God. And then responding to her in writing, as if it was 1983, this bizarre combination somehow, some way was resulting in mind blowing stuff that was

actually happening. And it describes what you just said, just the little increments that

Amy Weinland Daughters (23:42)

Right,

right. And who would ever known the impact those letters were having on her and her family? There were so many stories and they're chronicled in the book about people needing a letter, people needing someone out to reach out to them. I'm pulling names like little slips of paper out of a box. back to my opinion, it was God the whole way, using those moments. the important thing is I didn't know it. I didn't.

know it, I'm not some inspired. I love one of my favorite lines in the book is I was not some girl in a white dress twirling around the field of wheat, God what I was supposed to be doing. I was just another skinny, skinny, under-old. Yeah, trying to stay married and raise my kids, you know. And the thing is we can be doing something, you know, without, we just don't know the impact. And the thing is to encourage each other.

not to stop. had a best friend at the time, her name was Mary and I lived in Ohio and she was my best friend and we would meet at Panera like every two weeks. And I'd be like, Mary Barr, I am done writing these letters. She's like, you're not gonna stop. She's like, duh. She goes, you can't stop. Don't you realize you can't stop? And so the support role is just as important as the person doing whatever it is that's being done.

Wynne Leon (24:57)

Right. You know, all this conversation is reminding me that I once heard this little tid bit that Princess Diana spent every Wednesday night writing letters. And, you know, it's just a little tid bit that I don't know why it has stuck with me for all these years, maybe so that I could bring it up in this particular conversation. But, you know, the power of setting aside that time to write the letters, right?

Amy Weinland Daughters (25:20)

Right.

Right. And it will, I mean, that's the thing it will in my experience. And now I went from telling this inspirational story, writing a book about it to doing podcasts. Now I speak to businesses about it. I speak to people I never thought because it, as it turns out any arena where there's two human beings with some relating to do this, this enhances that in a way that cannot be gauged. And I tell people all the time, I think the only thing better than this is giving someone a thousand dollars, you know, and really

And you cannot gauge the amount of goodness this does for people. And I've seen it happen in so many contexts that I could have never guessed would have happened. It's just powerful. We all have this, the ability to do this.

Wynne Leon (26:02)

Yeah, it seems to me that you not only got gave that gift to yourself, but you also gave Dana a way to write out her feelings. ~ And we know that's so powerful in order to process things. And what seems remarkable to me is that her family saw how helpful that was and commented to you.

Amy Weinland Daughters (26:22)

Well, in several ways, you know, when I went after, I guess, two years, two and a half years, I met Dana in person in Memphis. Well, I had seen her in 30 something years. We went to the St. Jude Marathon weekend. She invited me and my family and her daughter came up to me, her second daughter. And she was like, you know, I don't know what mom has said in those letters, but I know it is a good thing. And I was, and I told her, was like, this whole thing is sheer craziness. And she was like, it is.

nuts. said, but you whatever has happened between the two of y'all is been better for mom. you know, the other instance that really touches me is the when so we had that meeting in Memphis and I came home to Texas for the holidays and I drove over to Louisiana to have lunch with Dana. And ~ it was turned out to be this, you know, this big lunch that I was honored at. I mean, it was completely overwhelming. All the letters were on the table, but ~

She told me, Dana told me that day that her girls had started asking her, when do you think she's going to stop writing the letters? And Dana said, I hope never.

Wynne Leon (27:29)

Do still, the two of you still write?

Amy Weinland Daughters (27:32)

Yeah, she sent me a picture of the letter she got this week yesterday. I have her last letter sitting behind me. We talk almost every day on the phone, but there's a separate relationship for us in writing that I think is, we've written all this time. We don't write as much as we did at the beginning, but it's almost like we have a separate level of

relationship in the letters that we don't have. I mean, we have a super close, it's like a sister now in relationship. And I tell people all the time, you can look at the story and say,

you look what you and your family have done for Dana and her family and absolutely a thousand percent they have done more than we will ever do for them. know, but that in writing relationship is very sacred space between the two of us.

Wynne Leon (28:16)

And I'm smiling about your description of going to Memphis for the St. Jude ~ 5K marathon, right? One of your funniest lines that just cracked me up was, cardio has never been one of my spiritual gifts.

Amy Weinland Daughters (28:33)

Oh yeah, I'm on the struggle bus. I'm going at the end of the month. Me and her are gonna walk the 10K. And we went from being strangers to everyone knows that whoever wants to walk with us is fine, but me and Dana are gonna do the walk together. Which is, if you look at the context of the whole story, that's crazy that we would be, like we'll stay in the same room. I mean, with our husbands. mean, the whole thing is nuts that we're so close.

Wynne Leon (28:57)

Yeah, it's wonderful. mean, the best kind of nuts. So it's been almost 10 years since you started writing the project. And of course, you've written the book. Has your understanding of what was so transformative about that changed over time?

Amy Weinland Daughters (29:17)

Yeah, you know, I'm, you know, and I say this, you know, separating myself from the situation. First of all, I'm in awe of the fact that there were 600 letters written, you know, but I continued in talking to people like you and having appearances and having conversations to get up, gain a better understanding of how powerful of a tool this actually is. I thought when I wrote that book that I had pretty much wrapped up what was transformative about my experience, but I think every

I come into contact with someone or somebody writes me, write them, or I talk to someone and I understand how powerful this is, especially as we go into the age of AI. I call it emotional intelligence. That's what note writing is. I find science behind it. I talk to people. mean, it is amazing how it continues to gain traction when I thought it was over three years ago.

You know, and I think it is now I think it's my life's calling. This is what I'm supposed to talk about as long as people will let me talk about it. And like I said, I speak to groups and work with people that I never thought I would. And to me, it's all about spreading this message and the message continues to be honed and broadened as I work with people.

Wynne Leon (30:33)

One of the other lines that I just love and there's so many, can't even bring them all in, but maybe, just maybe, we can't comprehend even half of what's really going on all around us. I mean, and it just seems like this project tapped into that.

Amy Weinland Daughters (30:49)

No, it did. And it's back to having those moments where I thought I was crazily writing these people to this law address in Lafayette, Louisiana. And as it turned out, these people are waiting for the letters. And I had this moment, and this again is not to blow smoke at my own rear end, Dana and I got asked after the book to go on the Kelly Clarkson show, which as an unknown author, literally unknown, that's like.

next world and it's all about the power of the story. You know, but I sat there and they taped it and we didn't get to see it till right before it aired, which is an interesting thing. But we sat there and I was watching her talk on the Kelly Clarkson show with pictures of Parker behind her. I just otherworldly. And she said, she said, my family and I waited for those letters every week. We couldn't wait for them to come. We would ask, is it here yet? Is it here yet? She said, and I remember hoping that my mouth wasn't wide open because I was like,

because I was like, wait a second, this actually happened. This actually happened. Like this occurred. I was that girl in a house in Ohio, sending letters to the girl in Louisiana. And I was like, wait a second, this actually happened. And it goes back to, I had no idea what was happening. Like that idea that we don't know half of what's going on around us. And our life is just, there's so much hope in that. Things are blowing up and we don't even know it.

Wynne Leon (32:11)

Yeah, yeah. Well, it reminds me of something that you quote from Dana at the end of the book. she was talking about how you guys said goodbye at camp, right? Years and yeah. 1986, okay, thank you. I started thinking about how God must have been laughing hysterically as we hugged and said goodbye. She said, we were thinking, well, have a nice life, because I probably won't ever see you again.

while God was chuckling and knowing if you only knew what I had planned for you two.

Amy Weinland Daughters (32:45)

Right. And that was a great, great, we were, that was during COVID. We were, we would walk and talk like her in Louisiana, me and then I was in Texas then. it was such a great perspective on the whole, like who knew that? you know, Jim, her husband said, and this is probably the biggest compliment to, it is a compliment to God, not to me, but he was like, you know, God connected us in, cause he was a counselor too. I met him the year before I met Dana. He said, God connected us with her. in our darkest hour,

she would be with us.

I can't even, you can't even, mean, how could you even comment on that?

Wynne Leon (33:22)

Yeah. Well, and I was telling you before the show that, you know, recently I opened Facebook to discover that a precious woman that I connected to a few years ago had died in a motor vehicle. She'd had an accident, a car accident, then lots of surgeries. And I know I've kind of been following her progress and, and, and then she died. And I was stunned that, you know, morning to open up and,

And I was in the midst of reading your book when that happened. And I thought, we have so many reminders to take action on all these well wishes that we have. And I love the work that you're doing because it reminds us to do that work.

Amy Weinland Daughters (34:13)

Right. And I will tell you this, and that's such a tragic story, but I think those things that come into our head, and I still feel vulnerable writing to people. I tell people this all the time. I should get it. Anyone, the letter writing lady, should understand. I wrote a guy today who I met the same camp, I met Dana, his father passed away last month, and I sat down, literally wrote him, thought, my God, I can't believe you're doing this. And I was like, my God, I can't believe you're saying that.

Like you believe in this, you know, it's going to take you 30 seconds. You know it, you know, and that's going to make a difference to him to have that tactile thing get delivered to him. But it's, it's, and I will tell you this, it is never ever too late to tell another human being that you care about them, that they matter, that they're valued, that they're appreciated. And it doesn't matter if you do it three years after the fact, 30 minutes after the fact, it's never too late. And if it's said out of sincerity,

You know, and it doesn't have to be two pages. it's two lines, it will mean something to people. And they will tell you, here's an all I've done workshops on this, the Facebook letters, the number one takeaway from people receiving a handwritten note is this. I will save it in a special place for the rest of my life. And we all have that power. And you talk about this world of devices that we're living in, you know, we have the power to reach out across the abyss.

and remind each other and ourselves of what really matters. And it comes down to the human connection. We're connected to these people living real, beautiful, messy lives for a real, beautiful, messy reason.

Wynne Leon (35:52)

Beautiful. Absolutely beautiful. Amy, I am so grateful for this conversation. I'm so grateful for you, ~ for all the things that you've done to listen to the inspiration in your life and to pass that on in letters, in books, in podcasts. I'm just grateful.

Amy Weinland Daughters (36:13)

Thank you. I'm just grateful for the, those are very kind generous words. think it's all God. That's my opinion, but I appreciate the opportunity. Cause like I said, you know, yes, books, want to sell them speeches. want to give them, but to me, this is all about the message. Like give me, give this message. So I appreciate the opportunity to come on today and share it with your audience. What a, what a gift.

Wynne Leon (36:34)

What a gift. Thank you.

Thank you for listening. Our music was written for us by the incredible duo of Jack Canfora and Rob Koenig. For show notes and more great inspiration, see avtiva.com A-V-I-T-I-V-A dot com.

Amy Weinland Daughters (37:00)

you