

Wynne Leon (00:02)

Hi Roger.

Roger Kastner (00:03)

Hey, Wynne thank you for having me on today.

Wynne Leon (00:06)

I love having you on. You are such a remarkable person. You're an organizational development leader, coach, facilitator. You're dedicated to helping individuals and teams unlock higher performance through clarity and co-creation. I can't imagine somebody better for the How to Share podcast. You have so much experience. So I'm so excited to talk with you.

Roger Kastner (00:32)

It's a pleasure to be here.

Wynne Leon (00:34)

Well, and you and I met because of a mutual podcast, Pia Mailhot Leichter and she's in Copenhagen, and you and I turned out to live about three miles from each other. So I think my first question is, do you believe in coincidence?

Roger Kastner (00:50)

No, I don't and in fact, I've been on this journey in the last year to try to get a better heart and mind alignment, which

Wynne Leon (00:59)

Hmm.

Roger Kastner (01:00)

I know that's going to sound a little weird. think in other ways of saying it's just, you know, our heart center is really the center of emotions and feelings. And I've spent so much of my life, I think, really in the driving for logic, driving for reason. And I wanted to increase this connection between heart and mind. And what I've heard, some people refer to it as a spiritual journey. You know, that sounds cool. What I've learned, though, on a

spiritual journey, there are no coincidences. Now, whether this is the, you know, Baader Meinhof, like you buy a red car, you see a red car everywhere, ~ whether it's that phenomenon or whether there is something about the frequency and the vibration we're putting out there that attracts similar, there's something to that. ~

Wynne Leon (01:40)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (01:54)

And, you know, I haven't bought a red car yet, but I have a gray Volkswagen and I see great Volkswagens everywhere. So I don't believe in consequence.

Wynne Leon (02:02)

I love that, right?

So I think, mean, going, I love what you said about heart and mind because it reminds me of the title of your podcast, which is, What Do You Know To Be True? And what I like about that is knowing, to me, is a heart word. Thinking is a mind word. So what I want you to do, and I know...

Given all your incredible experience, you wrap a lot of that into your podcast, What Do You Know To Be True? So tell us, tell us the journey of starting What Do You Know To Be True?

Roger Kastner (02:37)

So the start was I was in a little bit of a career change. I had gone from 18 years of external consulting and in that consulting time frame, I had gone from doing project management to being a leader of a project management solution for a consulting firm where my job was to build workshops, to build capabilities and other consultants. And that turned into an invite to teach classes at Bellevue College, which then I got to transfer over to

the University of Washington and teach at that level. And I really love this idea of, you know, taking these simple frameworks, these simple ways of getting work done and sharing with other people. It was a way of me solidifying my own capabilities and skills. And it was also just really gratifying being able to share with us with other people to help them on their journey. Around that same time, I was moving into change management, which is a gateway drug to organizational development, where I get to work

Wynne Leon (03:26)

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (03:37)

and leadership development and learning and development and op model, org design work, change management, all that fun stuff where ultimately it's helping teams and organizations think differently about the work that they're doing, get in better alignment, better agreement, throw in some co-creation and co-create a better way of working together. So not only they're more effective at achieving their goals, but...

ultimately to try to get to a place where we create workplaces where people thrive. Because those people who go to that office who don't get along really well, then they go out into the world.

and they, you know, drive like maniacs on my freeway or they like show up at the kids soccer game and they're having a miserable life and they're going to have a miserable time with the people there. And it's like, okay, no, I'm like the way I can have an impact in the world is doing the work that I know can be effective to create better workplaces. And I think if we're better in the workplace, we're going to be better in the world.

recently came across a piece of research that talked about our manager has more impact on our well-being than anyone else in our life. Our partner, our doctor, our therapist.

Like the stuff matters and we don't live in the severance world, the TV show where like we leave our ego and emotions at the door and we become another. No, that that which we experience in those 40, 50, 60 hours a week.

imprints who we are elsewhere in the world. And I don't know anyone who lives to work. I think we work to live. So at the end of my 18 years of external consulting, of doing all this work, my goal was, okay, what's next? Like, I don't want to go to another firm. I don't want to repeat experiences. So do I start my own thing?

Wynne Leon (05:16)

Right. Right.

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (05:33)

And I started talking to other people who started their own companies because I didn't really want to have, I don't really want to start my own company. And I was wondering, okay, what inspired people to start their own company? And it's not, again, being a business owner. It's that thing that they're, you know, feel compelled to do that superpower that they want to do that thing all the time, because it has meaning in the world. has value in the world and they can't do it in a corporate job. They can't do it in a, in a consulting firm. So they start their own thing.

And as I'm having conversations with people, I start getting really interested, like, tell me more about the superpower. Tell me more about, like, what inspired this. Tell me what it feels like when it has a positive impact. Like, what do know to be true about this thing? And through that journey, a couple of people said, you should, like, we should do a podcast. And I thought, well, just talking about your superpower every week wouldn't be great, but maybe I can go talk to other people.

about their superpower, podcast is born. That was about a little over two years ago. What I found really quickly is people's superpower shows what their purpose is. It's connected to their purpose. And so then the podcast went from superpowers, okay, now we're talking about purpose. And after about six months, I'm a little slow. But after six months, was like, okay, well, purpose is actually in service of something else. And then

this word potential came up. I'm like, ~ this is about where we get meaning out of life. This is where we like keep striving, keep trying to get better, to have more impact. And I started thinking, okay, if purpose is part of that path to potential, what else is there? And so I've been going through this journey of trying to identify what else are these building blocks as I'm having conversations with people about their superpower.

And the goal after five years of doing this is to take everything I've learned and then go share it with people. I've already sharing it every other week with the episodes every once in a while pull together what I've learned from the material. But it's that that, you know, sharing that is sort of drawing, you know, keeps me motivated of going and learning every other week as I'm talking to guests.

Wynne Leon (07:53)

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (07:54)

and then sharing what I'm learning about how we can be inspired to discover our superpower to unlock our potential and then ultimately create our impact.

Wynne Leon (08:03)

So much good stuff in what you said there. mean, teaching as a way to solidify your knowledge is foundational. Creating people that thrive, that's such an incredible mission. ~ Superpowers that really unlock or show purpose and potential. There's so much there and of course,

You you wrapped it up with my favorite word, sharing, because, you know, if we're going to do all this work, what are we? Why keep it to ourselves? I mean, it doesn't do much, right? So, so much that's good there. As a host of a podcast for two years, I mean, you have so many interesting guests on, you know, recently talking about internal family systems and Ayurvedic medicine. So just to name a couple.

What's your favorite thing that you've learned from a guest?

Roger Kastner (09:04)

~ that's good question and an impossible question. What I've learned from all the guests, this might sound like a cop out, but I promise that it will be valuable. What I've learned from all the guests, when people are talking about their superpowers, there are some common themes that come up in every conversation. Curiosity.

Wynne Leon (09:09)

Mm.

Roger Kastner (09:29)

curiosity is always there and it's what we were talking about with your superpower of being a very good trier. Curiosity is embedded in that. It's like, okay, well, how else could we do this? How could we do this a little better? Empathy, like superpowers do not exist.

Wynne Leon (09:34)

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Hmm.

Roger Kastner (09:47)

You know in a vacuum they exist in relation with others like you might have a power That's really really powerful But if you don't share it with other people if you don't do it in service of other people, it's just a power Superheroes get capes when they use their power in service of other people and that's in relationship and for it to land Empathy we have to have empathy for other people not only to under you know to want to do something for

Wynne Leon (09:52)

Mm-hmm.

Right.

Roger Kastner (10:17)

them, but we need to understand what it feels like to be them, what their needs are, so this puzzle piece of superpower and need fit together. And the last thing, again, similar to empathy, is we need to be in connection with each other, and we need to continue to build and foster connection with other people, and the starting place there is our connection with ourself.

Wynne Leon (10:26)

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (10:46)

Like the people who are in the game of utilizing their superpower to create meaningful impact, they've done work with themselves. They've understand who they are and why it's meaningful, how they tick, how they think, and how they actually can, you know, manipulate or modulate and regulate themselves so they show up as best they can on any given day.

Wynne Leon (11:14)

That is powerful. Because, just that, in service of others and needing to be connected to yourself in order to do that. You know, we had a funny conversation about, you said that sometimes in your workplace, when people see you coming down the hall, they're like, ~ no, this dude, don't want, he's gonna ask me big questions.

Are people shy about sharing their superpowers? Ever.

Roger Kastner (11:40)

Well, case in point, my wife is. And before I ever hit record, she and I were driving up to a mountain town in our neck of the woods, three hour drive, and I'm like, okay, I'm gonna test these questions on my wife. And so I asked her the same standard questions I ask any of my guests, and I learned something about my wife. We'd been together at that point for 33 years.

Wynne Leon (11:53)

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (12:08)

I didn't think there was anything I didn't know about my wife, but what I learned was about her superpower. She's one of the nicest people ever. And what I learned about her kindness was it actually started when her sister was born, who's eight years younger than her. She wanted to make sure that that little peanut felt loved.

felt special. And so she just like manufactured all this kindness and poured it into her little sister. And she just continued to, you know, it worked with the little sister and now she does it with everyone else. And so I'm like, okay, like I want you on the podcast to share your superpower of kindness. Like, no, no, no, I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna go on the podcast and tell people like I'm the expert in kindness. Like, that's not the point. ~

Now I kind of did it for her.

Wynne Leon (13:06)

I love it. You outed her.

Roger Kastner (13:07)

Yeah, totally.

I outed her as kind. ~ Most people I talk to when I ask about their superpower, about half the people know. The other half are like, well, I'm not sure. I'm like, ask a friend.

Wynne Leon (13:22)

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (13:22)

Ask

a friend what they think your superpower is. They'll tell you immediately. Do not ask your teenager. Do not ask your partner. The teenager will give you a smart ass response and

your partner might give you something very similar and it might end up in an argument. But ask a friend.

Wynne Leon (13:30)

Hahaha

Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. That's a great piece of advice. ~ So your superpower is creating frameworks, right? And what I love about that is that you share them and you use them to help others be their best self and create people that thrive. Do you think a podcast is a framework in and of itself?

Roger Kastner (13:50)

Hmm.

For sure. I think the, the, What Do You Know To be True? podcasts originally starting as this journey of understanding people's superpowers and the relationship with powers and then discovering, this is, this is aligned to their purpose. That superpower is perfectly aligned to their purpose. then realizing, okay, purpose is actually in service of something else potential. I'm like, okay, well, what are the other building blocks?

Wynne Leon (14:28)

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (14:31)

of potential and I just started, you know, based on the conversations I had, I just started writing down certain words like joy, like adaptability, wellness.

Wynne Leon (14:38)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (14:44)

courage and the one that was added this last summer was team or community. It's like these things that show up for people as behaviors, as characteristics, actions before beliefs. The people I know who are in that space of living into their possibilities and unlocking their potential. ~

Wynne Leon (14:50)

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (15:09)

are spending time in all of those building blocks. So my goal is to learn as much as I can about those building blocks and how do we discover and how do we try and lean into those building blocks, the experiences we need and the characteristics or qualities that we need to be able to carry with us.

My goal is to be able to package that all up and share it with people once I'm done. And I've already started to do that a little bit. I've gone and spoke to a couple of professional networks about finding joy at work. And that came out of a couple of different podcast conversations that we were talking about how to access joy, especially right now when a lot of people feel like joy is not accessible.

Wynne Leon (15:53)

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. That's so good. And I think, as I write, that joy is your theme of this season of your podcast. Is that right? Yeah.

Roger Kastner (16:03)

It started and it, you

know, the beginning of 2025, man, it was either the best time to start conversations about joy or the worst time. And in fact, I had to do an episode where it's like, OK, we're in a break glass moment because people are telling me joy feels elusive right now.

Wynne Leon (16:11)

Right.

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (16:24)

You know, the research shows and some of the people I've had on the podcast will say joy is accessible all the time. But we can't think of an emotion like joy sits by itself. You know, a lot of people are feeling dread or feeling grief and grief is not possible without joy being present. And so can we hold multiple emotions at the same time? And the answer is yes.

Wynne Leon (16:31)

Mm-hmm.

Say more about that

grief is not possible without joy being present

Roger Kastner (16:55)

Yeah, I mean, when do we grieve something that hasn't produced the feeling of joy? There's a connection, whether it's a loved one, whether it's a pet, whether it's a job.

Wynne Leon (16:57)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm. Great.

Roger Kastner (17:06)

Like we have received joy. We have felt, you know, again, love and valued and belonging with that thing that once it's gone, yeah, grief, grief floods in there very quickly, but it's not possible to have that grief without first creating joy.

Wynne Leon (17:15)

Mm-hmm.

There's

a Winnie the Pooh quote that's something like, you know, how fortunate am I to have something so special that makes saying goodbye so hard? Right? Winnie, oh my gosh, isn't there? Yes, that's true. So yeah, so you were saying joy is present, but we're working for it in this season.

Roger Kastner (17:38)

Yeah, I love that you pulled that forward. There's so much wisdom in Pooh Bear.

Wynne Leon (17:56)

in this climate, right?

Roger Kastner (17:57)

Yeah.

Yeah. And it's like, what are the things that bring us joy? I was talking to Dr. Adam Dorsey, who was when I asked him, I asked him the question, like we're in this emergency break last moment. And he said, you know, I asked him, what are the three things people can do to access joy right now? And he said, first thing is laughter. Fine. Yeah. Watch that movie or that TV show that causes that creates laughter for you and then laugh a little harder.

It's like the only time I think fake it till you make it makes sense. So laugh a little harder and be with people that make you laugh. Another guest that I had on Jess Brain who studies laughter, she's a laughter leader and she runs laughter classes and she will say, children laugh three to 400 times a day. Adults laugh 10 to 12 times a day.

Wynne Leon (18:39)

Hmm.

you

Roger Kastner (18:50)

And

we know children have so much, you know, so much faster ability to learn. They're more creative. They're more playful. We would all, most of us would like to be more childlike and we know we would enjoy life a little bit more. Laughter might be one of those keys to help us get there. The second thing Dr. Dorsey said was appreciation. Like find the thing that actually gives us, you know, whether it's that cup of coffee that, you know, watching

Wynne Leon (19:17)

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (19:19)

the

sunset, the being with our children, whatever that thing is that brings gratitude to the point of savoring that we feel it deep inside of us. Go do those things more often. And the third thing he said is we need to be in the creator's chair more often. We need to create more than we consume. And that creation of art and Amy Mcnei who has this amazing TEDx talk

Wynne Leon (19:39)

Mmm.

Roger Kastner (19:47)

from last year on ~ TEDx Manchester, where she talks about we need your art more than ever. She defines art as the thing we create with the intention to connect. So our podcasts are, is art. It doesn't have to be poetry. It doesn't have to be painting. It doesn't have to be dance. Like what we do, what we create with the intention to connect. We need to do more of that.

Wynne Leon (20:13)

I love that.

Roger Kastner (20:14)

And if you do

those three things, you will you will spend more time in the space of joy. ~

Wynne Leon (20:19)

Mm-hmm.

That is. ~

Those are great, you know, I love that because those are three actionable things that we can do sort of in any situation. And they remind me of awe, which is, know, I mean, if you think about, you know, beauty, collective effervescence, you know, all those things that sort of bring about awe, they're closely related to joy as well. Yeah.

Roger Kastner (20:35)

Yeah.

for sure.

For sure.

think, you know, that, that feeling of awe, the feeling of joy comes deep from within inside us. And this is where having better connections with ourselves and understanding what are those things that come from internal, that come from, you know, from inside of us, that feel innate. is there, joy is there, love is there, value is there, strength is there. Some of the work that I do with clients using eternal family systems as a modality,

Wynne Leon (20:58)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (21:21)

to realize that we don't need to go searching for evidence that we are loved. We don't need to go searching for evidence that we belong. I'm quoting Bernay Brown here, that all that exists with inside of us, that is part of our true innate self. It's there. We know that when we're taking care of a friend, when we are with our children, love is coming from inside of us.

Wynne Leon (21:33)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (21:50)

that's accessible for us. It's not just accessible for us to give to someone else. So sometimes we need to parent ourselves. We need to be our own best friends by tapping into our own sense of awe, joy, love, strength.

Wynne Leon (21:52)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

No, no. Has there anything as you've done this podcast, has anything that you what you knew to be true, have you discovered to be otherwise?

Roger Kastner (22:21)

Yeah, it's one of my, one of the questions that I asked my guests, of course, is what do know to be true? The second question, the follow up questions, what did he used to believe to be true is no longer true. One of the things is, even though it's the name of the podcast, not every guest is ready to answer that question.

Wynne Leon (22:29)

Yeah.

Roger Kastner (22:38)

And it's one of the funnier moments that happens in recording when I'll ask, what do know to be true? And they're like, I don't know how to answer that question. Like it is the name of the podcast. ~ But I think, I think it's like the first time I heard the question, it pissed me off.

I was with a couple of friends and someone was explaining everything that was really hard in their life. And they had a spouse that was diagnosed with late stage cancer. They had a teenage kid that was having a really hard time with their parents ~ diagnosis. They had a lot going on. And another friend, another coach asked the first person, what do know to be true?

And I'm sitting there like, how dare you ask that question? They just told you what they knew to be true. And then the first person goes on this beautiful soliloquy. That's probably not the right word. Monologue just explores this, like the thing she does hold to be true in this moment of what it's like to be her.

what it's like to be a mom, what it's like to be a partner, to be dealing with these things in the moment. And I went very quickly from, that's a horrible question to like, that's one of the best questions I've ever heard because of the response it elicited.

Wynne Leon (24:03)

Right? I'm feeling the goosebumps all over just hearing that story. That's amazing.

Roger Kastner (24:10)

Yeah, it's there's something amazing about witnessing other people in their truth. And a question like that, I think, helps people get to their truth. And it also shows the process that they're in as growth of healing, of being human. And that's that's ultimately what I think a lot of these conversations get to is people's humanity. And we don't see enough of that in our day to day world.

Wynne Leon (24:38)

Right. Well, you know what brings that brings up for me is I mean, you talk a lot about possibilities. And if you think about kind of this intersection right now that we have with artificial intelligence, who's really good at probabilities, but possibilities are so truly human. And so when you're talking about bringing those possibilities up, that really is what we ~

Roger Kastner (24:58)

Mm-hmm.

Wynne Leon (25:06)

are so good at generating and living in, especially when we're living in our possibilities as you so wonderfully coach us to.

Roger Kastner (25:17)

It's a fascinating observation. think AI, because AI right now, what we know of AI, it's just a prediction machine. And so it's trying to predict.

Wynne Leon (25:25)

Mm-hmm. Right.

Roger Kastner (25:29)

the future based on past performance. And, you know, we've all been through the 401k talk where we learned that we shouldn't be doing that, but it's just trying to predict what the future is. It's not trying to talk about what are all the possibilities and, you know, any question you'll ask of an AI, they'll tell you like, Roger, that's a fantastic question. Like, OK, what are you selling me? ~ But the possibilities that that comes from a space, you know, I also believe

Wynne Leon (25:49)

Yeah.

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (25:57)

There are no original ideas. think innovation, I love this definition of innovation. It's actually taking two existing things and creating something new. I don't know how well AI

does that, but I know us as humans do that really well. And I had this experience at work ~ just this month where we had gone through and we had done interviews with a large number of stakeholders and we took those responses and we put it into

Wynne Leon (26:06)

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (26:27)

an AI and asked it for themes, asked it for, you know, where are we in alignment? Where are we not in alignment? What's, you know, what's the critical differences that we need to get agreement on? And normally, I've always done this process, you know, by hand, by, you know, my own brain. And after looking through notes for four hours, I'm exhausted. This time.

we were able to do it within 30 seconds and it came up with a themes and we reviewed it and found, okay, it's about 95 % accurate. And then we thought, okay, now we're going to come up with three recommendations or three options, pros, cons, and know, trade-offs and risk. And then which one would we recommend? And we're like, wait, wait, wait, let's let, let's let the AI do it again, got us about 95%. And that's like, okay, now what's it going to take to implement the recommendation? And so we were freeing up

our cognitive load to think about the third level question and let AI do the heavy lifting for 90, 95 % of the number level one level two question. And I remember like being in that space of co-creation when it was time to ask that third level question, how energized and excited I was when typically at that point, I'm like, I can't look at another PowerPoint slide and put another quote on us on a theme slide.

It was really powerful in that moment of getting us to the place where we're able to tap into our humanity at a higher capacity than what I've experienced before.

Wynne Leon (27:50)

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. I love that because you just so illustrated that that difference between possibility and probability and letting you know the computers do You know that portion so that it frees up the human portion, so what's next on your podcast radar creative reader

Roger Kastner (28:15)

Yeah.

So I am really excited about.

A lot of the guests that I've had in the first two years would be people like within my circle. And now I'm beginning to spend time finding people who are outside of, you know, level one, level two circle. so even even like you're only three miles away, but you weren't in my universe before this. And it took our friend Pia to be able to connect us. I think there's more people like that. I'm also interested, like I talked to a

Wynne Leon (28:45)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (28:56)

of coaches, a lot of OD practitioners, people leaders. I'm interested in going into different spaces. I've had conversations with artists. I've had conversations with ~ doctors and the idea is like, where else are people striving to like lean into their superpower to achieve more of their potential? It's like that human need to discover where else is that happening?

how

do I get to have conversations with these people, learn what they've learned, share it on this platform, and just have a more full answer about what does it take for us to find our superpower, to unlock our potential, and have more meaningful impact in the world?

Wynne Leon (29:36)

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Yeah. Yeah. Well, I love that. I love that your, your circles are widening and, and that you're doing your incredible work to, you know, solidify the things that you're learning through educating others, through helping people, you know, finding people and encouraging people to thrive, to bringing them out people's superpowers, whether they're ready to answer the question or not. And, and, and, you know,

then drive that to the purpose and to the potential and really creating ~ a better world through it. So thank you so much for your time. Love talking about What Do You Know To Be True? and so fun to talk to you, Roger.

Roger Kastner (30:17)

Mm-hmm.

Oh,

it's been such a privilege being here and thank you for creating this space because there's something magical about and we were talking about it earlier about this idea of like

sharing, know, sharing is caring. But I think it's like that is true. But ultimately, it's encouraging people to try to learn.

Wynne Leon (30:41)

Right.

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Roger Kastner (30:53)

to be able to make the world a better place, make our communities a better place by sharing our process, sharing what we know to be true and hopefully inspiring other people to be willing to try and share as well.

Wynne Leon (30:56)

Mm-hmm. Right.

Yes. Yes. Yes. Well,

I know that you're doing that and I'm so grateful that you're part of my local community and my podcast community. Thank you, Roger.

Roger Kastner (31:17)

Thank you. Take care.