

Wynne Leon (00:03)

Welcome to The Life of Try, the podcast about moving towards things that matter, even when the path is messy, uncertain, and not fully formed.

I'm Wynne Leon, and in this episode, I'm sharing the story of how a long-held wish to visit friends in France turned into an unexpected adventure, involving Airbnb, airplane tickets, helpful neighbors, pet logistics, and a whole lot of learning to take the next step before seeing the whole staircase. It's a story about listening to the tug.

Noticing the sparks around us, asking for help, and discovering that when our motive meets the means already in front of us, opportunity begins to unfold. I've told the story many times now. How I came to rent out my house as an Airbnb so my kids and I could travel to Europe. But every time I tell it, I understand it a little more.

I see more clearly that this wasn't just a travel story. It was a story about listening to the pull, taking the first step, and discovering that help often appears after we begin. It started with a simple desire. I wanted to visit dear friends in France before they moved away. They had lived there for four years. They were leaving in August, and for three of those four years I waited for the right time.

I waited for it to be convenient. I waited for the path to become obvious. But guess what? It never did. But the knowing inside of me, the quiet, persistent pull that said, This matters never went away. And honestly, it would have been easier if it had. I could have waited until my kids were older,

until travel was simpler, until their taste buds were braver, until they could pack their own backpacks and entertain themselves on an airplane seat the size of a compact refrigerator. There were a hundred reasons to wait. But the truth is the things that matter most are rarely convenient. They don't show up when every obstacle has been removed. They show up as a tug on the heart, and then they ask us to move.

So takeaway number one, don't wait for easy. Move because it matters. We often know what we need to do long before we know how to do it. We spend so much time waiting for the whole solution to drop into our laps. Leap and the net will appear. A great motivational image, right? The net doesn't appear while we're standing still.

The next step appears when we take the first one. So when time forced my hand, I began. I went to book the airline tickets and immediately hit the first roadblock. Oil prices had risen. Airline prices had skyrocketed. Suddenly the trip felt out of reach. But a seed had already been planted.

Months earlier, a neighbor had said we should rent out our houses when the World Cup comes to Seattle. At the time, I wanted nothing to do with that idea. It sounded like work, it

sounded like chaos. What about the dog? What about the cat? What about the gecko? What about all the cleaning, decluttering, organizing, and logistics? So I let the idea sit.

I talked about it with friends, I circled it, I resisted it, I waited for someone to wave a magic wand and make it simple. No wand appeared. Then one day two things happened. I went to the bank and noticed a flyer for Whiskers Lodge, a place to board cats. That same night I read a section of *The Fun Habit* by Mike Rucker about activity bundling. The idea that

we can pair hard work with fun to help us move through it. And suddenly the pieces caught fire. I could rent out my house. It would be a lot of work. Yes. But it could also make the trip possible. One neighbor's comment, one flyer, one book passage, things that had seemed random became part of the solution once I was willing to move.

So that's my second takeaway. Pay attention to the sparks. Other people's words, stories, and ideas can ignite something in us. When someone shares how they move through a roadblock, it can become the spark that helps us light our own way. Of course, having an idea is one thing. Acting on it is another. This was vulnerable. I had to say the plan out loud.

I had to rally people around it. And not everyone thought it was brilliant. I heard that it sounded crazy, impractical, and unlikely to work because the World Cup was too close. So I gave myself a fallback reason to keep going. Either way I would win. If we didn't get bookings, at least we'd have a cleaner house. If we did get bookings, we'd be able to go to Europe. And then we got two bookings right away. Suddenly the dream had dates.

The idea had momentum. The first step had created the next one. What followed was not effortless magic. It was several weeks of hard work. Cleaning, decluttering, planning, preparing, trusting, and practicing patience. I'd say the last two were the most hard. There was no point when I felt like I had it all together. Most days all I could do was the next thing in front of me.

And then my village stepped up. Friends and family helped me in ways that still amaze me. My neighbor Katie helped prepare the house and agreed to handle the transition between guests. My friend Eric volunteered to take Cooper the dog. My mom and sister and brother all stepped in. Even my kids helped pressure wash, cut the lawn, clean windows, and scrub walls.

Mike Rucker tells another story in *The Fun Habit* about a man in Phoenix who accidentally received an invitation to a ski weekend in Vermont for a bachelor's party. He didn't know the groom, so he replied with humor, Thanks, but you've invited the wrong person. The group said he sounded like fun and should come anyway. So he started a fundraiser and people donated. That story reminded me of something important.

People are often willing to help us reach our big, strange, beautiful goals. But first we have to let know what we're trying to do. I've never had it all together, so I couldn't pretend to be self sufficient. I needed help. I asked for help. And just as importantly, I accepted help. So that's takeaway number three. Say the dream out loud.

When you commit to the thing you feel pulled to do, people can help. But they cannot support a dream you keep hidden. Communicate the goal. Ask for help. Accept help. And trust that you only have to meet the next step, not master the whole staircase. Maybe you're thinking, that's a great story.

But it only applies to you. Maybe you've already dismissed it because you think your circumstances are different. Maybe you think I'm younger or older or bolder or luckier or somehow better equipped. Yeah, not true. But here's what I'm learning and relearning. This pattern is not just for me. It's a formula we can all use. Motive plus means. Make opportunity. Motive is your why.

It's the thing tugging at you. The call you keep trying to ignore. The relationship you need to repair, the skill you want to learn, the adventure you can't stop imagining. It's the next brave thing that makes you feel exposed because it matters. Means are the pieces already around you.

They may look ordinary at first. A conversation, a flyer, a book, a neighbor, a friend, a skill, a resource, a small idea. They may not seem like enough until you start moving. Opportunity is what happens when your why meets your what. Once you begin, the path starts responding. Not always in the way you expected, but often in the way you need.

So takeaway number four, use the formula. Find your motive. Gather your means. Watch for opportunity. Or put another way, when your why means your what, the how begins to unfold. And let me be clear, the how rarely looks like we imagined. In my case, the cheapest tickets to Europe were not from Seattle, Newark, San Francisco, or any closer city.

They were from Hawaii. And I just happened to have a free ticket to get us to Hawaii. so as I record this, I'm sitting in Hawaii. We've enjoyed the sun and the beaches, and we still have a long journey ahead. Seven hours to Dallas, a nine-hour layover, and nine more hours to Amsterdam. And a 12-hour time difference waiting on the other side.

Am I worried about pulling it off? Yes. This plan has included sleepless nights, low moments, and plenty of opportunities to lose confidence. There have been times when I thought I couldn't get it all done. And then, right when I needed it, someone showed up with an offer to help.

Learning that a lot of fear comes from trying to solve problems that are not yet the next step. Sometimes the bravest thing we can do is set down the imaginary staircase and take

the real step in front of us. Martin Luther King Jr. said: take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.

I know this from climbing mountains. You probably won't see the whole staircase. Even when you can see the very tippy top of a mountain from the parking lot. You will not see the crevasses you will have to traverse, the boulders you'll have to navigate around, and the avalanche conditions until you meet them.

But you still have to take the first step. So here's the message I want you to remember. Don't wait for easy. Pay attention to the sparks. Say the idea out loud. Use the formula. Motive and means make opportunity. Name the thing that's tugging at you. Take the first step.

Let your people know what you're trying to do and trust that the path does not have to appear all at once. It only has to appear one faithful step at a time.