

Wynne Leon (00:00)

What if the stories that move us most are not the biggest stories, but the stories that make us say, that could have been me? The small moments, the funny details, the awkward tries, the everyday scenes that somehow open a door and remind us that we're not alone. I'm Win Leon, and on this episode of Life a Try, we're talking about how we tell stories about life in a way that feels real, relatable, and human.

Wynne Leon (00:29)

And how those stories can help us see the courage, connection, and beauty inside our own attempts. I'm from Seattle, so it was probably only a matter of time before I brought up Jimothy. You know Jimothy, right? The short spined raccoon who has been making his way across the internet like a tiny, furry legend. he looks a little like a wheel of cheese with legs.

Wynne Leon (00:55)

A little like the Tasmanian devil from Looney Tunes. A little like life took one look at the instruction manual and said, Let's try something different. And then I started getting texts from friends in other cities. Have you seen Jimothy? Do you know about this raccoon? Is this a Seattle thing? And I had to laugh because apparently it was a Seattle thing. But it's also more than that. Because when a story

Wynne Leon (01:24)

Travels like that. When a little raccoon with an unusual body and an unforgettable name makes people stop scrolling, smile, and send a link to someone they love, I start to wonder, What is it about certain stories that gets inside us? What makes a story relatable? What makes us lean in? What makes us say, I know that feeling?

Wynne Leon (01:49)

Even when the story is about a raccoon we've never met, or a child on a soccer field, or a stranger standing at the edge of the bathroom waiting for a friend. This weekend we were sitting out on the back patio celebrating my seven-year-old son's birthday. It was that sweet pocket of time after dinner but before cake, when people are relaxed, kids are buzzing with sugar anticipation, and there's a pocket of time to just be.

Wynne Leon (02:19)

That's when my friend Eric told a story that somehow captured everyone from age seven on up. He'd been waiting outside a park bathroom near a soccer field. And while he waited, he noticed a little boy, maybe four or five years old, dressed head to toe in Norwegian soccer gear. Shorts, jersey, socks, the works. This child was taking penalty kicks into the goal.

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Now, he had moved close enough that the only real way to miss was to kick it directly at the goalie. But that did not diminish the drama, not for him. Every time he scored, he

threw both arms into the air in a victorious V and cheered like he'd just won the World Cup. Then he ran to the corner of the field and slid on his knees, Ronaldo style, celebrating with his whole body. And the goalie? It was his grandmother.

Wynne Leon (03:14)

She was stoic. Steady, unimpressed by the theatrics. After each goal, while he celebrated like a champion, she used her cane to retrieve the ball and roll it back to him. And then they did it again. That's it, that's the whole story. A boy, a ball, a grandmother, a cane. A goal that was almost impossible to miss, and a celebration big enough to fill the whole field.

Wynne Leon (03:40)

But everyone on my patio could see it. Everyone could feel it. We didn't need a lecture about confidence or joy or support or the courage to keep kicking. The story did that for us. And that, I think, is the power of a relatable story. It does not have to be enormous. It does not have to involve a mountain summit, a dramatic rescue.

Wynne Leon (04:02)

Or a life changing announcement. Sometimes the most powerful stories are small enough to fit in the palm of your hand. A child celebrates. A grandmother shows up. A raccoon survives. And suddenly we recognize ourselves. The research on storytelling

Wynne Leon (04:22)

has a name for part of this. It's called narrative transportation. That experience of being carried into a story world so fully that we picture it, we feel it, and we remember it. Studies on narrative transportation suggest that stories can make ideas more vivid, more persuasive, and more memorable because we're not just receiving information, we are acting

Wynne Leon (04:47)

Entering an experience. And isn't that what happens in real life too? We don't remember every fact. We remember the moment. We remember the smell of birthday candles. The sound of cleats on grass. The grandmother's cane tapping toward the ball. The odd little raccoon body moving through the world anyway.

Wynne Leon (05:12)

That's why the best stories about life are not perfect stories. They are specific stories, human stories. Stories with enough detail that we can see them and enough truth that we can find ourselves inside them. So if we want to tell stories about life that are relatable, maybe we start here. Not with a lesson, but with a moment. Not be brave. Show me the shaking hand.

Wynne Leon (05:41)

Reaching for the microphone. Not keep going. Show me the person tying their shoes again after the run went badly yesterday. Not you are enough. Show me Jimothy, different and awkward and beloved, being named not despite what makes him unusual, but because someone decided his unusualness was worth loving.

Wynne Leon (06:10)

Because the stories that reach us are the ones that tell the truth sideways. They sneak past our defensive. They let us laugh first and then realize we're crying a little. They let us cheer for a boy in Norwegian soccer socks and then recognize that part of us still want someone to hand the ball back and say, again.

Wynne Leon (06:34)

That is the life of try. Not the life of getting it right the first time. Not the life of looking graceful while we do it. Not the life of waiting until the goal is regulation distance and the crowd is ready and the odds are respectable. The life of try is the life where we kick the ball from where we are. Celebrate the tiny wins. Retrieve the ball for each other. Name what is different and call it lovable.

Wynne Leon (07:03)

And when life feels unfair, awkward, clumsy, or uncertain, we do the brave and beautiful thing anyway. We give it another try.

Wynne Leon (07:14)

Thank you for listening to The Life of Try. I'm so glad you spent the time with me, thinking about stories we tell, the moments we notice, and the way we find ourselves in each other's lives. If something in today's episode made you smile, made you remember, or made you want to tell a small story of your own, I hope you'll carry that with you. And until next time, keep noticing the moments, keep sharing the stories, and keep giving life.

Wynne Leon (07:44)

Another try.