

S01 - E39 - Rooted & Unwavering - Hylke Faber & Ashley Reid

Diana Belluomini 00:00

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' brightness, also when we don't feel it. Join host Hylke 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 00:40

Well, hello and welcome to root and unwavering broadcasting live today from Seattle and from Boston, where we help leaders connect more deeply to their innate potential. I'm your host. Hylke Faber, I'm here today with Ashley Reid, the CEO of Wellist. Ashley, how are you today?

Ashley Reid 00:58

I'm great. I'm so happy it's Friday,

Hylke Faber 01:02

I understand. Well, it's good to have you here, and thank you for spending your time with us today. I was so struck with your presence when we met in Boston a couple of months ago in a leadership event, and I was struck by Ashley's deep integrity and the very gentle and clear and purposeful energy I felt from you. So I was very taken with you, and then very grateful that you agreed to be a guest in our podcast series today. So thank you for being here today,

Ashley Reid 01:33

and vice versa. Your light is clear, and so it's always fun to be with people who look at the world and are doing the work in the same way. So thanks for the opportunity. Wonderful.

Hylke Faber 01:46

Well, thank you for being here before we get to know Ashley a little bit more. Let me say a little bit about root and unwavering, the podcast. As we as you, start every every podcast. So with, with root and unwavering. So this, this whole podcast series, was born from the idea that to be human, to be a leader, means that we're always at this point of choice where we can be in you could say our borrowed conditioning in the masks that we've learned somewhere along the way of who we should be, and we can also connect to something more deeply that is more replenishing, more life giving, more trustworthy, more fun, more loving, more light. And how do we connect to that higher self within



ourselves and also with others, especially when we're challenged, and we can come up with all kinds of frameworks which are useful at times. And what I find is I learned so much listening to stories. This is episode 39 so we've had so many stories so far, and I've learned from so many leaders. So I'm looking forward to learning from Ashley today. Ashley Reed is the CEO of wellist, and has a passion for whole person care with deep experience also in digital health strategy and consumer marketing. She's worked at many prestigious companies in leadership positions, Phillips healthcare, the bridge span group and Bain and Company, and she founded wellist, and wellist aggregates employer sponsored benefits on community resources to help manage gaps in support as employees navigate their unique life circumstances. I think we can all relate to that how challenging it can be to navigate the healthcare landscape and to find a way through it. That's what well list helps do. Ashley earned her BA from Colby College and MBA from the Tepper School of Business at Carnegie Mellon University. She's on the board of advisors for moms belief, which is innovation and research driven, holistic care provider for children with developmental needs. She also was on the board of advisors of mass challenge Health Tech. And she's been recognized in many ways, including being one of med techs 40, under 40, healthcare innovators in 2022 and she also received in she received in 22 to 2022 the Early Career Achievement Award from Carnegie Mellon University. So much there, and even without all the accolades, as I'm sure you'll find out in this conversation, just being with Ashley is a treat. So Ashley, tell us a little bit about what you've learned about connectedness in your life and leadership?

Ashley Reid 04:47

Thanks. Thanks for the opportunity. I've been reflecting on this question, and I think there have really been three life phases, and. And three key learnings, sort of as I've grown up as a human, I would say the first half of my life, I'm now 43 was actually marked by a profound sense of not belonging. And what happened during that period was that I built skills and tools to be hyper vigilant on how other people feel, and so what I learned, or what I know now that I didn't know when I was 13 or 19 is that a lot of my suffering was tied to seeing my life through a couple of key relationships that weren't functioning very well, versus turning my attention to all the areas where I was deeply connected as captain of lacrosse team or a granddaughter who was just in love with her grandparents or coaches or or teachers, or trying to seek sort of a belonging with, you know, mean girls when I had other friends who I wasn't turning my attention to, who were really very true to me. And so what I learned through that is, to some extent, belonging is a reflection of where your awareness is. And so if I could go back and coach my younger self or coach my nieces and nephews, I would really wish that they could see where there is deep connection, even if there are relationships that feel like they're broken, that experience gave me, candidly, some superpowers. So then I got into my 20s, and as I said, I was like, hyper vigilant around what do other people want? I became a true empath. And, you know, I fell in love at the end of college and had a great relationship with my partner and his family, and then I met my best friend after college, and I went to grad school and met some of the best friends I have in my life, and my ability to connect with others was really starting to be generative, um, both personally and then professionally, until it until I started my company, candidly, because I was deeply connected with other people, um, but I wasn't very connected to myself in sort of the second phase of my and that was a real problem when I started a company, because I was hyper attuned to how the investors felt. I was super attuned to how the



patients were experiencing well as or the nurses or my clients or my team, but I didn't have a mechanism to metabolize their experience, let alone define my own. And so what I learned in that is it's equally important to be connected to others as it is to be connected to yourself. And so I would say the last phase of my learning has been probably in the last five to 10 years, which is, okay, how do you build that confidence? And it's really been in three key areas. The first is getting people and tools and tactics and strategies, many of which I think we we share. And how do you metabolize that? If you're an empath and you are hyper attuned to others. How do you actually digest that in a way that's healthy? I would say, in my worst moments, when I was depleted and scared. The problem is, if you don't have the ability to metabolize that, it leaks out. And it leaks out to the people tragically that you're actually most connected to the people who you love, and you know, love you. And so on my worst day i i can be really condescending, like not in words, but in tone, and in the most stressful times of like, the first half of the building wellest, I was not as kind as I needed to be to the people who I was closest to and were closest to me. The second part of my learning journey there was, how do you be very thoughtful? If I'm an empath, you got to pay a lot of attention to who you Who do you put in your circle? Who are your investors, who are your team, who are your clients, Adam Grant, you know, does a lot of good work on like givers, takers and matchers. And I match really well with givers or matchers, but takers, if you don't have your own sense of self, it's a really unhealthy dynamic. And then where most of my work is now is actually in. And getting very clear on what I need to keep a full bucket, because I love generous and attentive and all of these things, but it's not healthy unless I it's generative and I'm fully resourced. And so that's where most of my work is is today. So

Hylke Faber 10:20

I love the chapters, and I love the structure. Somewhere in my mind was, oh, we have a strategy consultant. I, at least I sort of recognize your brain a little bit as a fellow traveler on that path, like That's chapter one, chapter two, chapter three. So thank you for that beautiful structure, which I think is so illuminating for us, like the first chapter of having these beautiful connections and feeling almost not belonging in some way, maybe indexing towards where you were not belonging and where you're not receiving, then having this beautiful fruition of people that actually connected with you, and that you connected with you, partner, best friend, all that beautiful things that happen, especially in the 20s and 30s, when we have all these hormones and all this energy that comes out, it's like so creative. It's beautiful how we we weave this fabric of connectedness and then building a company next chapter, realizing that when we're not taking care of ourselves, the UN and metabolized stuff starts to come out in ways that are not so kind, and now you're finding your way into to to get more connection before we get to this last chapter, which I'd like to dive in deeper in a second, I'm very curious, actually, about this sense of not belonging that was earlier on in life. I'm sure you've looked at that. Can you tell us, maybe, of how you learned that, how you how part of your mind may have learned that you didn't belong, because I think it's such a common place for B to be in. I think actually people have each person has that to some extent, like, ah, yeah. I'm not quite sure whether I completely belong. So maybe you can eliminate illuminate that a little bit more.

Ashley Reid 12:19



Yeah. Like most people like it, a lot of it starts with like, who are your parents? And I have great parents who parent very differently, and when you're a kid, you can't discern what is heavy coaching, like coaching is love, Maybe is what I would say, versus criticism, and as you probably know, generationally, that stuff gets handed down, and, and so yeah, that was hard, and it colored the way I saw, not just like how I lived in the world, right for a really long time, and you then look for ways when that happens, you look for ways where you don't fit, versus you look for ways that you do fit and and now that I'm adult, I realize, like it was none of that stuff was my fault. I had ADD, I have a mother who I would probably say leans towards having, uh, undiagnosed OCD, like she doesn't want you to touch the paint when you open the door, like there's a handle, like she doesn't want you to, and that's her own neurodivergent things that make her special. But as you might imagine, add that type of it's not very healthy pairing, especially when you're a kid. And I'm very fortunate that I got into Athletics and Activities my mother was great at, like navigating us to do all the things, tennis, swimming, skiing, but even things like debate and the television studio, I was like, a weird one. It I and my father used to go into work early to coach all of our soccer teams. And so I really had, but I was, I was profoundly connected to where I was inadequate or not, connecting versus not. And then I would also say, I think some of that's just some of its nurture, some of its nature, like I. Remember being very young, and my mother gave we were traveling to the Amish country, and my I think my mother gave me my brother and sister each \$1 maybe \$2 and they bought candy and shared it. And there was a little boy on the side of the road who was selling corn. So I used my dollar or \$2 to buy eight years of corn, and like, take it to my family. Now, did I as a six year old, or whatever I was, really want corn that badly? Like, no. So some of that's just been in me since, in me since, like, coming out,

Hylke Faber 15:36

yes, yes, yes, yes, this sense of almost looking for not belonging, spurred by criticism, the distinction between not knowing, the discernment, between coaching and in terms of what's here to help me grow and what's here, basically that's undermining me, that's depleting Me, that this discernment is a very hard place to understand for a young person, so I can empathize with that, and also then that translating into maybe wanting to make up for that by looking for places where you didn't fit, so to prove to yourself that you could fit anywhere, maybe something like that. I don't know. Yeah, yeah. So something like that. And so now, now you've, you've, and it's interesting what happens like in life. These programs then become more visible over time. They start to play out more visibly over time, so they the consequences are harder to miss. And so now that you are like, CEO of a beautiful company where you've had these realizations, right? What have you committed to? Or how are you leading differently for maybe the way you learned to lead and you were leading a couple of years ago?

Ashley Reid 16:58

Oh, yeah, I Yeah, so much of it is like, where, where am I before I open my mouth, like I need to be clear in my own well being to be able to actually support the rest of my team or my clients or anything else, and so obviously, I think I've always been very Good at leading with empathy, with leading with generosity of all of the multifactorial reasons why something may not be working right. What I have gotten clearer on is like, what do I need, or what does the business need? And then how do we have a



conversation that stays in that lane of like, what do you need? What do we need, and how do we get there together? I would say I got wellness into a really dysfunctional place. I would say, prior to the pandemic, when we were under resourced, we had closed some big accounts, and I didn't hold anybody accountable because I felt like I hadn't given them enough time or coaching or whatever to be successful, and so my ownership of not setting them up for success meant that I didn't hold a high performance culture, and I also didn't set people up for success because I gave them too much. And so my learning was twofold. One is I have to be really honest about what resources are available and what resources are not and what I can own and what just may not be a fit, like dating somebody who's amazing, but like, it's just not meant to be a long term thing, right? The second is, we've actually rolled out Eos, which I'm finding to be much more valuable than I candidly anticipated, which really talks about, do you have people in seed who get it, want it, and have the capacity to do it, and so the ability to use some of these frameworks to get unstuck in areas where there are points of friction, and then really orienting the company to building a high trust business and culture around these themes of competence, sincerity and reliability and socializing these models so that when there is a disconnect, we can sit shoulder to shoulder and say, actually, like trust in breaking because this thing didn't. Happen. And so it's, it's about reliability. And, you know, do you get it? Do you understand what success looks like? Do you actually want to do it? That's the one that I've become much more attuned on and do the have I set you up with the capacity to be successful in that? And if those answers are yes, you can pretty much unlock any challenge. But if I'm not clear coming to that with resource and clear on what the core coaching point or challenge point is, so that we can work together to get unstuck, then you have this really. Real position where you could do damage. And so really understanding how important it is to be able to have those discussions with integrity is really important.

Hylke Faber 20:56

I stuck with where you started saying, you know, I have to be clear within myself. And then all of that translates into this, these values of competency, sincerity and reliability and being able to be real about that and be shoulder to shoulder on that. So tell us, Ashley, how you are taking care of connecting to Ashley. How do you do this?

Ashley Reid 21:23

Yeah, so maybe I'll start with the first piece, which I think is, actually I owe a debt of gratitude to a lot of people, which is, what are the tools I've like sort of put in my backpack over the last decade to metabolize what's what? And so I have an amazing coach, Andy Christener, who is just an invaluable partner in helping sort of peel the onion back in times when I joke, because I have lots of nieces and nephews now, it's like, what do you do with big feelings? Right? So unpeel the and get curious about what are the underlying issues? Where are there opportunities to get creative, either interpersonally or strategically? I have a really great therapist I started working with when I was doing my own clinical training. I studied for my Master's of social work in the evenings prior to moving to Paris with Phillips and so I never completed my work, but started that now 15 years ago, and we have a interim like not a regular, maybe once a month, once every other month, checkup now, but she is an invaluable resource that really helped me digest how the things that happened to me and how I grew up are both, you



know, superpowers and challenges. And what can you do with that? I have a friend, Meg Bailey, who works with built an amazing company called cancer around she also built the only and largest oncology specific home care business. So as you might imagine, helping people at the end of their life, and she's the one who connected me to like Byron Katie's work and the three magic questions. And so really putting people who are also students of of how do we live our values in the world has been really helpful. And then I like, have things that I go to a lot like, I will go back to David Foster Wallace's, this is water, or there's a surrender meditation on on YouTube, or Elizabeth Gilbert's talk around, how do we manage psychological safety for creative people or and so I have these. I actually go back quite a bit to a talk called like, why you will marry the wrong person. And as someone who's never been married, I find that very funny, but I I have now. I don't, I don't do church, so, like, I, but I have assembled a number of tools, assets, tactics, and people who I call on when I need to, like, get a different perspective. And that really is what it is, right. Like, how do you shift your attention to look at problems differently? And then, personally, where most of my work is now, like, I feel like I've I have that now. Lot of my work right now is around, it's not rocket scientists. Like, how do I, how do I stay full to be able to, like, live as I just will naturally do and have it not be there. And so what I've learned is actually sleep is, like the Jenga piece that brings down that so, like, I'm very disciplined now about sleep, and that impacts how I drink and how I exercise. And I used to be an athlete, so I exercise. For me was always about, like, I. Achieving something or competing or like maxing it. Right now, there was a great book that one of my colleagues referenced about how exercise is the critical and high stress jobs like ours where it's not physical, because biologically, we used to know complete the stress cycle by fighting the tiger so your body knew, like you were safe after you had this physical release. Well, in job like running a company, you're not fighting tigers. And so I have gotten to a point where I ride the peloton and I turn off all the numbers and like it is just about how is that physically processing that stress hormone out of my body, so that I know, like everything's cool, and so that's really where the bulk of my work is today. And I didn't start a company to make a ton of money like I started a company because my best friend's father died of cancer. She went into preterm labor within 24 hours of her dad dying, and it was horrible, and I was like, there's this thing called the internet. Like, it shouldn't be so hard to get the toddler to school and dinner on the table and the laundry done and have a baby in the hospital and be planning a funeral and so but I've never, ever, ever designed anything for me, like it's just not in my first piece, I like problems, and I do love people and so but as I'm in my 40s, you realize, like, if you have not also factored yourself in In some ways, like it's not it's not a healthy dynamic. You're not giving from from something that's generative. And so I'm really spending a lot of my time focused on that piece right now.

Hylke Faber 26:53

I'm imagining, as you're sitting here talking with me, that your community of support is sitting right around you, and you're having conversations with them to metabolize. That's a very strong word that's sticking with me from this conversation already, metabolizing your experiences and your big experiences. And then what you said about so so compassionate like, of course, you're going to feel this stress as a leader, and then what do you do with that? Not to make yourself wrong for them, but like, okay, so what I need to do is go right that peloton, or find a way to let your nervous system know



that it's okay, and find that place of okayness again, so that the Jenga tower doesn't topple over. Yeah, and, and I think that is that is just beautiful in terms of how you how you describe that. What I'm curious about is what this actually do when it gets really tough. I actually talked with you, I think a week or two ago, and you're in some big event and all kinds of stuff was happening. It was the eve of before the big event, and I I relate to that sort of feeling of anticipation so strongly, because I lead workshops all the time with sometimes a lot of people, and there's always a lot of variables. This thing about the one where recently we had 20 people, and the rooms in the chair were not in the right place. And we discovered that the evening before, despite lots of communication. So what we did with we did it ourselves. And, you know, finding so tell us about what do you do in those moments where the bear roars in your in your face? Yeah,

Ashley Reid 28:53

um, I'm trying to manage that with more grace. I do want to before I move on, your comment about, how do you metabolize stress? One of the best resources again, Meg mele, she had me on a long drive listen to the upside of stress. And if you haven't read the book, it's all about stress isn't necessarily bad. It's actually how you think about with your mental framework about stress. And if you can get to a point where you're telling yourself that your body is giving you the energy it needs to address something that you really care about and not digest it as a signal that something is wrong, but that you're getting resourced, you can fundamentally change some of the like health and mental health impacts of what is it just a very natural human experience. So I think that ties somewhat into how I am trying to have more grace in those moments. Is changing the narrative about what those big feelings mean. And so instead of having that feeling in my body be like something. Wrong. Have telling the story of, oh, you actually really care about this. Like, I care a lot about this going well. I, I think I told you, I my the ugly underbell, Ashley, they're early too, like, and you, learn as you get older what they are. I can be righteous, and, you know, and all of these things also, you realize, like, some of this was conditioned in but like, I have that coaching as not criticism, but like, I can be condescending. I can ask not not condescending in my words, but condescending in my tone. And there was a moment where I was talking to my close, it's always your closest person, right? And I was like, Where is this, and what is this? And have we even, have we even thought about this, right, like, and I would say the difference between now and and that doesn't feel good for me, that doesn't feel good for her. I think I now get to a point where I can name like this is happening when I feel like I'm not showing up in the way I want, because I'm really scared and I'm really under resourced. So a bunch of things that happened three weeks prior that everything went wrong, and I had not gotten a lot of sleep, and I had not done the things that keep us on track, and the meetings that we have to stay close fell off the books for other, you know, more active and proactive planning. And so that's how we got to this moment. And I would say the thing I'm probably most proud of, still deeply mortified that that ever shows up. But we have a relationship that's really strong and like we can rebuild, even when this is my marriage, like we all maybe work together forever, so we can be humans with each other, and I owe a debt of gratitude to her for giving me that grace. But I would say five years ago, I would have stayed in that mode because I would have felt, I would have felt fear and lack of belonging or whatever, saying disconnected with like the investors or whatever, and that would have lasted a week or a month, or I would have made people feel shame and small for like,



not doing the thing. Now, I said to her, I was like, I need to we're probably two minutes into me asking questions on where are things? And I said, I need a minute. Like, I'm upset. I just need a minute, and so at least I can I know what, what ugly looks like for me, and I can like and then I realized I'd gotten so far out of my own sleep cycle, exercise cycle, eating cycle, like, just, unfortunately, there's no science here, like, you just have to do the healthy things. Like, you just got to do them. And sometimes that's easier, and sometimes that's not. And so I went to Miami, like, after the event, almost immediately after the event, because I was like, I need a change, to pull up and reset and and then you have really, you have to have the conversations about owning the hurt, like I didn't mean to hurt her, right? She was trying, and things fell apart. So you've done that, and then you also have to, like, also, this has been the nuance of my leadership. Is like, but you also can't do that where, because I feel bad about how I reacted, I don't address the fact that, like, serious balls dropped, right? And so, and getting curious, we use a framework called the after action review, which many people do, to be able to pull up and say, like, what did we want to have happen? How do we get so far off track? What are we going to do next year? But it's in a generative, adaptive cycle, not in a you weren't you were failing here. And so, in summary, like pulling up, taking space, getting perspective, being able to, like, say it feels like it's getting out of control before it's fully out of control, and then finding ways to take that and make it say or do something differently. That's the other thing I said. Like, when I have big feelings in my body, it's like, oh, I have to, I have to say something or do something. I can't live here. And so that's sort of how I am doing the work. But it is, and what, some ways I think I'm 10 times, 100 times better than I was even five years ago. But I'm still I'm it's a lifelong practice, I think of like, how do you show up in the worlds, in the way that you're always proud of like, if my grandmother was here until every moment of my life, would she be deeply proud of me? So what

Hylke Faber 35:17

if they could break in a moment so much that you said, Ashley, that this resonates so deeply with me, this overarching theme of understanding going from self criticism, I shouldn't have stress, I shouldn't have these big feelings, to actually coaching yourself to be more generative, to have this bigger view, to not get stuck in the big feelings, but find a way to change the narrative around them. I love that you mentioned that stress isn't bad, it's so interesting that might makes things right and wrong. Isn't it interesting, something I deeply care about. What do I do with this right? And then find the grace to be with yourself, to pull yourself back up and at the same time, not be pollyannish like wait, stuff fell off the rails here. So after the break, what I want to do with you, actually, is take a look at how do you do those after action reviews with maybe fierce grace. How do you do that? How does Ashley do that? Because I'm fascinated by that. We've been talking with Ashley Reed, CEO of well list, I mean, host hokofarber, at root and unwavering. See you after the break.

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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 37:02

Welcome back to root and wavering. We're speaking with Ashley Reed, CEO of wellist, delightful human being so vulnerable, humble and strong and metabolizing. That's the core word that I am learning from this conversation, I think back of this conversation, five years from now, I think metabolize with Grace is what will rise to the top. But who knows. So, Ashley, tell us more about how do you have those after action reviews and maybe go to the specific event that maybe didn't go well or didn't go the way you wanted it, like, tell us about it, and how did you process it, yeah. Or how are you processing

Ashley Reid 37:49

um, yeah. So we were putting an event in New York, um, event logistics like, sites fell apart. My head of gross father passed away, and she was not coming to the event or able to support the upfront piece of it, speaking of not belonging, this is, this was a big swing for us, because, as an ex consultant and I can't, at least have stolen many things from our time together in the session that you've facilitated. And so I feel confident in in, I would say, building community and alignment and seeding the discussion generally as the as a personal competence, but I was doing it in HR. And so unlike I've spent most of my career in healthcare, if I were doing this with our patient business, I would know everybody in the room. I would know everything they were going to say. I would be able to, like, piece everything together. And this was the first time that we've ever done anything in HR as we've expanded our business to serve employers. And so I asked a bunch of people, do you want to would this be an interesting use of your time? They said yes, and I put it on the calendar. But I'm new to HR. I didn't pre vet the date. I had no idea that, like, the first week of February, the second week of February is like exec comp and board week season. Someone described it's like tax season for HR and so nobody came. Nobody came. I mean, like, that's not true. I in my head when I planned this, I was like, oh, we need, like, the right people at like, 40 to 50 executives, so that these executives so that these executives feel like it was worth their time. And in the end, we had having about 20 and so I was already coming into this event, feeling like a little kid. This is how do I do this? I like, get my get my people help me process. I did a lot of work. They finally made. He's, like, actually a little kid who threw a birthday party that no one's coming to. Yes and like, and not only that, like, some of my friends invited their friends. So I'm like, oh my goodness, I'm gonna, they will have invited a CEO from a big company to come to this event. And not only am I gonna like flop, I'm gonna like, they're gonna look bad. That was where I think my big pain point was like, and so I had a narrative in my head that was like, I'm not going to meet expectations, and I was afraid and I'll be honest. I every time I say I'll be honest, I want to double click and be like, am I being honest? But I think honestly i i have done a lot in how I've structured wellist and re thought about capital and choosing our clients, that I don't feel scared in the same way that I think I did when I was first starting out. But I was scared. I was like, legitimately going into this, and because people weren't responding, we were just spending more time trying to figure out how people were going to come. And so I was working at two or three in the morning. And so my personal thing is depleting, right? And I'm not helping my team think ahead, like, and so we got to a point where, like, we're about to go to New York, and it is like falling apart and, and, so what did I do next? Right? Like, so I was, I was, I was short with the person who i i care, who makes my life work,



right? Like, and it was her fault to her, because she's like me, like she hears that criticism as as core shame. And I know that about her, and it was, you know, she's in her own life journey on why things fall down, but um, and so after the event, we did a lot of talking, like I did work with my coach, I did work with my team. I did a lot of work with Molly. And, um, a couple of things came up. I was scared, and she was convinced that it was going to go great. PS, like everybody who attended said that they really loved the size of the event and how intimate it was. So when we do the next one, we will do a smaller event. The case that was the first one that fell apart, that I had to run through New York on a rainy day. The second event space was much better. And so I do a lot of like, Maybe yes, maybe no. The Chinese parable of like, the course runs away and all the neighbors say to the farmer, oh, what bad luck. And he's like, Maybe yes, maybe no. Of course, comes back to wild horses. What good luck? Well, the kid gets on, gets bucked, breaks his leg, What bad luck? And then the draft comes through town and the kid is spared. And the neighbors are saying, what good luck? And the farmer just keeps saying, maybe, yes, maybe now. So that certainly was the case. But what was clear is she was she had seen a lot, and was sure that like this was going to work out. So my fear wasn't necessarily something that she saw or understood or why this felt different to me, and I really realized how, like some of the things, like moving our daily meetings, where we align every day, or she usually gives me an end of week summary if I had gone back, like that's what keeps us aligned. And when we focus on Tactics versus pulling up. We break the bus right, like we we break this. So it was really multifactorial of like, how do, how do I pull up? And part of that was literally going to a hotel in Miami to like, be in a different space for a couple of days to, like, reevaluate, like, what did I happen? Then it was getting curious about what was happening for me and being able to name, like I was genuinely scared, and getting curious about what was happening for her, which is, you know, she's a perfectionist. She's so good that, like, if she doesn't feel like she can, knows what great looks like, that's challenging, right? Yes, yes. And then having a my coach who, like, not only coaches me, but like, helps my whole leadership team think, like, Okay, what do we need to do? And then. So she and I did an after action review which goes through, I'm happy to share it if you want to post it after like, what, what did you intend to happen? What actually happened? Did we learn? What do we need to do about it? We did that together, and then we did it with the broader administrative team and so. And then, literally, right after that, I was like, Okay, well, let's think about doing another event. Let's see if we can put this into practice. And the nice thing about at least my partnership with Molly, who's my Chief of Staff, is like, we cycle real fast, like we can get back to healthy and so. And part of that's just a real testament to her. And how do you take something and implement it and just continue to grow like in our trust, but also in our performance? So yeah,

Hylke Faber 45:59

maybe yes, maybe no. And then look at all the learnings that happened, and here you are. And then people saying, Oh, we love the intimacy of this event. Now. I so appreciate, Ashley, how vulnerably you shared what was going on between your ears and in your body leading up to that, and I can relate to it personally. I feel that fear when things don't follow my expectations, my perfectionist expectations. I can totally relate to you. I love that you said people are not showing up to my birthday party. Like it always comes down. Like those fears always come down to some very simple but very powerful, debilitating belief, right? And so what do you want to say to somebody who may be in that space before



the event where you were working until two and 3am, not taking care of themselves, scaring themselves, frankly, with all those horrible thoughts that you might have had about this, is going to fail. It's terrible. Everybody's going to be disappointed. Yeah, the feelings that come with that is are horrible for my experience. Doesn't feel good. What we say to a person who is in the midst of that, oh,

Ashley Reid 47:25

so I, actually, I go back to a couple of different things. Um, there is a surrender meditation by somebody by the last name of Stevenson, which I will plan to go to sleep because I spin at night and so really, being able to get clear on, like, what you own and what you don't right to your point, like, the more life I have. Like, I built a business in patient care, and then covid hit, and now we're in HR, and it's way better. Like, maybe yes, maybe no. And I'm doing this at a time when I've been managing to cash for like since March of 2020. And my friends, who base amazing businesses 10 to \$30 million in revenue, are now getting not only just wiped out with these cram downs and these preferences, but literally losing their like personal investments in life savings. And so maybe yes, maybe no, like, I am deeply grateful that my life has shown me that you don't know the story like you don't know the whole story in any moment. And so just growing up like we had a candidate that I really wanted at the beginning of the first quarter, and in the end, she took another job before she even finished her interview process. I was bummed. I was really, really bummed. And then my friend gave me another candidate. I was like, Oh, I said, Oh, I needed this or this. She gave me another candidate who I have an offer out to now, and if we're able to close her, maybe yes, maybe no. Like, how cool is it that we didn't close the first candidate, right? Yeah. And so, um, I think you got to get to a lot of life under your belt to, like, be able to really believe in that, um, and then I would say, like, figure out what you need to pull up. Like, if you're if you can't get ahead of how you feel like, finding the stop when you're in that cycle is really hard and so really understanding and naming like, what does it look like when I'm off track? How do I show up for other people? What does my life look like? How do I measure it? And then what? Do I do to recover and to be proactive, like, I can do it now because I, like, actually know. And then the other thing I do, because it's here, hold on to the point of, like, what's enough, especially with all of us being humans, I've become obsessed with the self journal, which is a 13 week planner. And so what it does, it basically pulls forward. Warren Buffett's like, what are the three big things? And you take that from the quarter to the week to the day, so that there are three things I need to do today. Maybe it's get on the peloton. Maybe it's focus on raising cash. Maybe it's nailing a client pitch at the end of that that's enough, like to really measure, like, what are the three big things? And so this has been your point of, like, how do you get it, get clear on what actually is important, and then have a tool do it. And so what I love about this journal is, not only does, is it a forcing function for that strategic clarity, but it also tracks on a daily basis. Like, what are the behaviors? There's a place where, like a tracker, and it's like, what's important. So I track like, did I sleep? Did I was I chem free today? Like, did I rest? Did I read? Did I connect? And so having having a monitoring system that, like, can be an early warning signal there is also very helpful for me.

Hylke Faber 51:39



So prioritizing serenity, however you do that serenity meditation, being clear about in the core of that, being clear about what you can control, what's within your control and what's not, being clear about pulling yourself up, whatever that looks like. And we both know that in the sprint towards the finish, taking yourself off that is heroic, and it may not happen in the way that it's prescribed, but it may be as simple as take a walk around the block. You went to Miami. No, get on that peloton, whatever you need to do, whatever you need to do, and then practice Warren Buffett's what's really important to you. Yeah? And that's enough, and it's so beautiful. You say that because I hear that also a calming of the criticism, because, of course, the criticism says it's never enough. You're never enough, yeah? And enough doesn't mean you don't do anything. It just means you focus on the things that actually matter to you, and don't get distracted by the rest. Yep, beautiful. It's beautiful. Ah, so as you were looking ahead, Ashley, you've talked about these different chapters. Do you have a sense of what the next chapter of connectedness looks like for you.

Ashley Reid 53:06

Yeah, I think it's finding balance with running a company and like building a life. So I'll be, I'll be going. We actually started with the this off this event in New York with the spider chart exercise, as some people call it the wheel of life, and it was important for us as a group that's trying to address employee well being to really think about the heterogeneity of needs and what we know versus what we don't know is really going on with individuals. But I have my own circle, and I think one of the things that stood out to me is like, what, what is important? And like, am I aligning my time accordingly? And one of the things that I've always been very grateful for, because I think it helps me think differently. Is I had the privilege, as we talked about, of working globally when I was with Phillips, and I used to go on two big trips a year. And since the pandemic, with the exception of hiking from France to Switzerland in 2022 I have not really traveled. And so one of the things that came out of New York was I actually really need to put that in for me. So next month, I'll go to Rome in London to spend time with my best friend to, like, make sure that I'm doing the things that aren't just about autopilot and making well as to success, so that people don't have to suffer in the way that they're suffering today, but that also I'm living my life and appreciating all of this privilege and sort of tapping and owning the joy of of being here. Mm. An equal measure, and so I'm starting to be much more disciplined about what that looks like in the next couple years. So beautiful.

Hylke Faber 55:13

Amazingly, our conversation is almost at an end, Ashley and I know I could talk to you for hours about this. I've I've learned so much already about metabolizing with grace, not falling for the deceptiveness of criticism, and actually finding a way to coach ourselves, to pull ourselves up, to uplift ourselves to what we're capable of and who we are and taking care of ourselves, also not getting this saying, Well, I can be critical, so I can't talk about anything just being in it. I heard so much about how you have this web of connectedness around you, of people resources, whether they're with you or not with you, and the self accountability. So last question, what would you like to say, by way of closing, maybe to somebody who's somewhere in that journey, but maybe feel slightly disconnected from themselves



today, like they're like, we're we're in it like maybe in the stress cycle, without having that deep sense of why. Yet, what would you say to them? I

Ashley Reid 56:30

mean, I would probably go back to my the piece I go back to most, which is this is water by David Foster Wallace, and if I don't want to give it away, but it just is really about that that experience is a shared humanity, and that our perspective on how we look at this, and the choice of how we choose to look at it, will determine everything. And so the I have hit that at least 100 times, and every time I go back to it, I take something else out of it. And so that would be where I would start with the work.

Hylke Faber 57:12

Really prioritize how we're looking at this, whatever is happening, and what I'm hearing from you actually not making it wrong because it's human, it's it's every experience is a remembrance of our own humanity that we're all in. It's been such a delight actually, to speak with you today, again, metabolizing experiences with grace, prioritizing how we look at that in a way that is life giving that supportive and being clear about what's truly important to us. But thank you so much for speaking with us today. Ashley,

Ashley Reid 57:48

thanks for having me. Thanks for your work. I think it, I think it is the work. So I really appreciate it. It's

Hylke Faber 57:56

my it's my privilege. This was episode 39 we'll be here again in two weeks with episode number 40, with John Antonucci, who's a senior leader and also a coach dedicated to servant leadership, also talking about the Forgotten managers, the frontline managers, the middle, middle level managers, and how do you take care of Those? We're speaking with them. If you're enjoying this podcast, you can find them on Apple Spotify and everywhere else you find this podcast. Of course, it also on LinkedIn and on YouTube. Of course, if you want to connect with Ashley Reed, you can find her on LinkedIn and her company wellist. I'm sure she'll be happy to entertain your connections, to learn more about their beautiful work, and that's it for now. I hope you found something today that helps to maybe shift your perspective, or whatever the experience was and is for you today. Thank you so much for listening. This was rooted and wavering, and where we help leaders connect more deeply to their innate potential. I'm your host. Hylkel Farber, see you next time.

Diana Belluomini 59:14

Thank you for joining us in today's episode of rooted and unwavering leadership conversations about courageous connectedness presented by the leadership development company, growth Leaders Network to learn more. Subscribe to this podcast. Connect with growth Leaders Network and hilka Faber on LinkedIn, or read hilka's award winning book, taming your crocodiles. Now, take a moment and appreciate something that is great about you. Celebrate the gift that you are and enjoy connecting more deeply to your best self today, see you next time on rooted and unwavering you.



