

[00:00:01.570] - Wynne Leon

Welcome to the Sharing the Heart of the Matter podcast, where we celebrate the why and how of creativity.

[00:00:15.850] - Wynne Leon

I'm Wynne Leon, and in this episode, Vicki Atkinson and I are talking with author Cheryl Oreglia. Cheryl has recently returned from attending the San Francisco Writers Conference. She shares her elevator pitch for her next book project. She inspires us to keep writing by talking about the symbiotic relationship between the gatekeepers and writers. In her inimitable style, Cheryl keeps us laughing alongside her as she reveals the mishaps, lessons, and successes of a Writers Conference. She also beautifully describes our personal stories and the way, and perhaps obligation, to keep writing them. This is a great episode that will leave you inspired by Cheryl's courage, ability to show up, and knack for telling a story. We know you'll love it.

[00:01:19.580] - Wynne Leon

Hi, Cheryl.

[00:01:21.280] - Cheryl Oreglia

Hi, Wyn. Hi, Vicky.

[00:01:23.230] - Vicki Atkinson

Hi.

[00:01:24.260] - Wynne Leon

Vicki and I are so excited to talk to you again. As we were talking before we started recording. I mean, it's just every conversation with you is so full of so much goodness and nuggets. We just love it.

[00:01:38.410] - Cheryl Oreglia

Oh, thank you. Thank you for having me back. I was really excited about this.

[00:01:43.130] - Vicki Atkinson

We're thrilled.

[00:01:44.620] - Wynne Leon

We're thrilled. We're so excited, too. You recently went to a writer's conference, and by the end of it, you said you had the perfect elevator pitch for your book.

[00:01:56.670] - Cheryl Oreglia

You know, I exaggerate when I write. But I did.

[00:02:02.880] - Wynne Leon

We don't need to go for perfection. Can you give it to us?

[00:02:05.810] - Cheryl Oreglia

Yes, I'm going to give it to you in all its raw format. But just in entering into this, Larry and I have been tossing around this idea of doing a book together in tandem. I love it.

[00:02:21.040] - Vicki Atkinson

I love it.

[00:02:21.610] - Cheryl Oreglia

And so he's been very resistant, and I've been very pushy. So we came together. One of the things I did learn at this Writers Conference is it's really important when you're starting a new project to have your pitch down because it directs you. It's like your roadmap to some degree. You have that pitch, you have it right in front of you when you're writing because it gives you that direction where you're going in. It's really important to format what exactly is this project going to be about, this book going to be about, and that's the pitch. Here we go, pitch. I'm reading it, by the way.

[00:02:58.320] - Vicki Atkinson  
Oh, good. I think that's That's my memory.

[00:03:00.970] - Cheryl Oreglia  
It's so good. All right. Get ready for the ride of your life with, wait for it, Peddle Damn It, the hilarious saga of two newly unemployed, pickleball avoidant retirees who decide to ditch their rocking chairs and travel the world. In this uproarious memoir, Larry and Sheryl bear their souls, sharing the challenges of cultural clashes, aging bodies, shocking revelations as they navigate the globe. But here's the kicker. They're doing it on a tandem bicycle. In the cobbled streets of Lisbon to the terraced rice fields of Japan, climb the majestic peaks of the Paranies in the spellbinding tale of two undaunted seniors, figuring out as they roll. Larry and Sheryl invite you to join them on this Unforgettable journey. So clip in, grab your helmet, and relish the adventure of a lifetime with Petal Damet. What do you think? Would you buy it? Yeah, Absolutely.

[00:04:00.070] - Vicki Atkinson  
Like now? So get busy.

[00:04:03.620] - Wynne Leon  
Yeah, we love how you roll.

[00:04:06.880] - Cheryl Oreglia  
Yeah. So we're playing with the wording in there, and it might be a little too long for an elevator pitch, which I think is supposed to be more like three or four sentences, but you could cut out one whole paragraph and it'd be fine.

[00:04:18.550] - Vicki Atkinson  
Yeah. But it's awesome.

[00:04:20.670] - Wynne Leon  
Having that elevator pitch and coming up with that at the conference, did that change Larry's... Has that motivated Larry in any way?

[00:04:29.470] - Cheryl Oreglia  
So, Before the conference, I would say it was still in the womb. It was incubating. We hadn't even really laid out a format. When I was playing around with this idea, because the conference was like everything else in life, I entered into it unprepared and all these other things. When I got there and started to see like, Oh, I could utilize some of the expertise that the people have, and I could start working on this stuff and start playing with it. A little bit. So I started playing with that. When I got home, I sat down and I laid out a whole new outline, what you do when you're starting a new project. And I had all the things because I wanted to not just look at travel, not just a travel book, but a book about courage and overcoming the fear of what is this stage of life going to look like? And the fact is, 20 % of the population are baby boomers, and we're all hitting this right now. We're hitting the decision of when and where to retire. Is it right for us? Is it wrong? Finances, health care, your physicality, your mental ability.

[00:05:41.870] - Cheryl Oreglia  
And the thing is, a lot of times we wait, like everything else, until it's too late. We go, I love my job. It's my social outlet. That's all great, especially if you're a writer. It doesn't really hurt to keep going. Some people have physical jobs or jobs where it's time to let go and start doing a few things, but before you hit those years where you're going to be dealing with your own health care needs. We're all going to go through the same blah, blah, blah. Some of us are going to make it to 100, the people that eat like rabbit food. But other people are not. We all have to make the decision that's right for us. So the book is meant to be more universal in that we're going to explore all those topics with bare nakedness and where we're struggling, how we've struggled. Also, the whole time commitment commitment. All of a sudden, you're together 24/7, and that can be a little.

[00:06:37.910] - Vicki Atkinson

Yeah. And then you add on top of it the idea of having adventures together. I mean, there's the day-to-day in the house. But then when you commit to something, like you said, that has physicality associated with it, the unexpected things that happen with travel and being in groups of other people that are being brave and adventurers, it's unpredictable.

[00:07:03.530] - Cheryl Oreglia

There is a tension in travel that we all know about. You've been doing it when with your kids. There's a tension there when you remove yourself from your normal little routine that's uncomfortable. So that plays into the relationship for sure.

[00:07:20.080] - Wynne Leon

But what else I love about this as you talk about retirement and all these adventures is there's a Dr. Peter Attia who specializes in longevity, and he talks about health span in addition to lifespan. How long are we going to be able to do the things that we want? He has different categories, strength and mental abilities and emotional health as well. And what you're talking about is enjoying this, is pushing out that health span in these adventures Yeah.

[00:08:02.190] - Cheryl Oreglia

Exactly. We know. We've read those things where it says 60 is go, go, 70 is slow, go, 80 is no, go. So we're thinking, okay, we're in the go, go. You can take that tandem bike. It could be a wall hanging with candles on it or something down in the no-go stage. But right now, we're going to work it. And we're going to have to be... That's going to be another one of those things. We're both not going to fall apart at the same time.

[00:08:31.990] - Wynne Leon

Yeah.

[00:08:33.530] - Vicki Atkinson

Right. But what I love about your pitch is knowing that a lot of people are envisioning those stages, what you're describing and what you outlined and sketch for us just now is the storytelling about you and Larry seeing the urgency and wanting to step forward. I think a lot of people feel a lot of what you said, but they don't know where to begin and they don't know who to follow. You write such humor and honesty that you really need to get busy, girl, because I think people want to read what you have to offer because it is that incentivizing that people recognize now is the time to go, go, but people don't know how to get going.

[00:09:17.940] - Cheryl Oreglia

Right. And we do explore the mishaps. We're looking at decision making, the dilemma that you hit. Maybe one spouse isn't ready at all. We're going to look at all that. Like, Larry and I didn't retire at the same time. But once I did, then he was like, wait a minute. Now, really reevaluating what exactly the decision was that he was making by not... Because Everything we do is a form of decision. We play with that. We want to keep it entertaining, humorous, honest, and a book that anyone could actually pick up and read. They just wanted some ideas for what else you could do.

[00:10:02.140] - Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

[00:10:04.020] - Wynne Leon

Speaking of writing it, how did you decide to go to the San Francisco Writers Conference?

[00:10:09.640] - Vicki Atkinson

Can I add a part, too, to that? You decided to go, but then I'm also curious, as you made the decision to go, did you know you were going to be thinking about this particular project, or were you open to just, I'm going to see what comes up that I want to work on?

[00:10:26.700] - Cheryl Oreglia

Such a good question. Okay. I decided a year ago that I was going to do something every year that would expand my information, my skills, my talent in writing. I figured, I'm going to go to a writer's conference. That would be the place where I would get exposed to other writers and meet maybe some literary agents, some publishers, figure it all out. I did what I do because I am not the detail planner in this relationship. I am the one that gets on the back of the bike. I'm the stoker. I just power things 20% of the time. The rest of the time, I'm taking pictures and looking at this. I have a tendency to not... Anyway. I looked up, there's writers conferences all over the world all the time happening. There happens to be one that's been going on for decades in San Francisco called the San Francisco Writers Conference. It's 40 miles from my house. I thought, Oh, this is a good fit. This early bird I'm talking months and months and months ago, and I sign up, I pay for the registration, and I mark it on the calendar. We don't have any events going, and I'm like, I mentioned it to Larry quietly, like a little women's conference.

[00:11:45.170] - Cheryl Oreglia

He probably forgot about it. The decision to go to a conference was really just to improve my own skills. The problem is I never invited anybody to go with me. As the conference drew I started to realize, I have to rent a hotel room. I have to figure out how to get there, which might include telling Larry about the conference again. I have to. Then they started sending me notes like, You need to sign up for your pitches, and you need to sign up for your this and that, and the other thing. I'm like, What the hell are these? You have consultation appointments and all this stuff. I bravely go in, I read all the people. I try to stay on the non-fiction track because even though I am non-fiction. I started to line myself up with the thing. That's funny. But of course, like everything else in life, I get this note from the person that is my consultation person that tells me how to maneuver through the conference. She broke her foot and she's not coming. Really? But she's like, You know what? I'll meet with you via Zoom if you're okay with that, and we'll meet prior to the conference, so you'll be all ready to go.

[00:12:56.070] - Cheryl Oreglia

I met with her, and that was good because she was the one that said, This is a conference about connection. You want to put yourself out there. I'm like, I'm an introvert. I'm a writer. She goes, I don't care. You're going to put yourself out there. You're going to talk to people. You're going to bring business cards. You're going to connect and network.

[00:13:17.400] - Wynne Leon

Okay. You were like, Wait a minute. I signed this up because I wanted to improve my writing skills.

[00:13:24.420] - Cheryl Oreglia

I don't want to talk to people. I don't have people.

[00:13:27.170] - Vicki Atkinson

Come on.

[00:13:28.220] - Cheryl Oreglia

I know. To answer your question, Vicky, no, the book was not... The book was a tease at that point. I had been saying, We should write this book because it's so timely. That's the big part of a success of a book. If you're meeting the needs of the community in a timely manner, unless it's one of those, what they call the pickleball novel, which is an unexpected phenomenon, which it could be. You never know. But no, we did not have it ingrained. I had suggested it, and he had rejected it. I had suggested it. Had rejected it. That's where we were. So of course, we're going to do it. And so, of course, I'm still incubating the idea.

[00:14:07.550] - Wynne Leon

Because you're the stoker.

[00:14:09.630] - Cheryl Oreglia

I'm the stoker. I was locked on him. You're providing the power from the back. Yeah. I talked with this Nina Gal. Again, to emphasize, the most important thing about this conference is networking. It's your chance to stand out. One of the things I want to say is I have this little business card with Sheryl

Aurelia, my email address and my phone number and, Oh, this is the name of my book and this is the link to my website, blah, blah, blah. Anyone can find that out. It's 2024. Anyone can find your blog and find your website and find your book at Amazon, whatever. Your business card is your brand. So this is something you want to give a lot of thought to. Do you have an image or logo that represents you and the egg cracking open? I don't care what it is. I intend to be a crow, which turns a lot of people off. But your brand, what is your platform? And really think about your business card as not just like, Oh, here's my contact information. You want that business card to be the one that they got. I'm putting that freaking thing in my wallet because it's so inspirational, right?

[00:15:17.090] - Cheryl Oreglia

And it's so cute. And look how pretty it is. So business cards take out a whole new platform or idea in this. But the idea is you're networking. And I didn't quite get that until day two. I'm always a day, what is it? Start a dollar, whatever. I was slowly grasping that. So for anybody else out there listening to this about thinking about going to a conference, which I highly recommend, but take a buddy because it does feel a little bit less daunting. I would have those business cards ready. I would research all the presenters and find out what their gig is, what their niche is, which ones you want to contact, which ones you want to get a hold of and use your pitch and have that pitch ready. I don't care if the book is not even... It's just a little starry dream. Sit down and write your pitch about it and at least play with it with someone and pass it off to one of these people that listen to pitches all day and get their expertise on it. Yeah.

[00:16:17.360] - Vicki Atkinson

I love your points about preparation, but you didn't take a buddy with you. I did not. You went solo. So do you think some of your observations about the relationship between writing and agents and attendees, do you think it was a better experience for you because you didn't have a ride-along, you didn't have your person with you?

[00:16:42.270] - Cheryl Oreglia

I would say I might have been a little more relaxed and maybe been a little more social had I had a person with me to drag me around and meet me down at the bar or whatnot. As it was, I met Sarah, and she really changed the trajectory of the conference for me because it was somebody that says, Oh, I'll meet you down at breakfast. Oh, when I go into that gigantic conference, it's a fearful thing. Every freaking day, you got to walk through the door and look for a place to sit. It's like it's been being back in high school. Where's the A table? I'm sitting in the A table. Oh, no, the A table is full. You're walking in looking for some lonely soul to sit next to, right? All of a sudden, you have your person I'm waving you down. And you're like, Oh, there's the A table.

[00:17:33.100] - Vicki Atkinson

It means so much because it's like force socializing. But then you also need to be feeling like your most confident self because you're supposed to be making connections with people that feel like gatekeepers. I need to win you over. And I don't know about you, but when I'm nervous like that, I overdo it. It's not the best me, right? I probably scare people. So you've got to find your lane.

[00:17:58.990] - Cheryl Oreglia

Calm down, Sheryl. Calm down. No, I agree. But what it did do, I do have to say, is it put on my writer's mindset at the beginning, and I was observing like an owl just watching everything that was happening, writing it down, not really getting the best impression sometimes because I was being a little cynical because I was by myself. But I think it also forced me into looking around and really observing what was happening around me. And so by day two, three, when the conference is over, I'm like, I got it. That's the way of the world, right?

[00:18:37.780] - Vicki Atkinson

I love that.

[00:18:39.170] - Wynne Leon

We're so glad that you got it so that you can tell us.

[00:18:43.560] - Cheryl Oreglia

Really, because just a couple of little things that I would have really maybe tweaked a little bit or looked at or went into the experience slightly different, more prepared, really definitely researching who was going to be there and how they could help me instead of just walking in and going, I think recognizing the fact that this is your opportunity to network with people not only in the industry, but your co-writers. This is a way... There are people that will be lifelong relationships that I met at this conference because I finally got it by the second or third day, and I started making those contacts and started meeting people and getting to know people as somebody that could advocate for me. Yeah, right.

[00:19:30.380] - Vicki Atkinson

Yeah.

[00:19:31.070] - Wynne Leon

But you talk about the symbiotic relationship between writers and gatekeepers, and you touched on that there. Can you tell us how the conference reshaped your view on that relationship?

[00:19:42.240] - Cheryl Oreglia

Well, I quickly noticed that the people that were the presenters, well, I didn't quickly notice, they have a different name tag. They have a color. They have a color on the name tag, different from the attendees. They are the presenters. They are like the movie stars of the conference. They're up there talking. They know you need to know. They hold keys that you want to have access to. They are definitely the royalty of the conference. Again, they're signified by their name tags. One of the things about the conference is that if a presenter is down and about in a public space wearing their name tag and no one is gleaning it onto them, you are allowed to go up and pitch and talk to them. They are there for you to do that. That to the entire conference. I caught on to that like day three. I didn't realize that. And so a lot of them stay up in their room, I think, because who wants to be the Beehive? So The other thing that I noticed is some of them let that go to their heads. Not all of them. Some of them are really there because they wanted to give you the information.

[00:20:53.260] - Cheryl Oreglia

They wanted to reach out to you. They wanted to inspire you. Others were more like, I'm the royalty and you are the attendees. One morning, the second morning, I think I was there, we were at one of those group breakfasts, and one of the presenters says, If you self-publish or use a small boutique publisher or a small publisher, and your book does not do well, which she did not define, but your book does not do well, no one will ever look at you again or consider you for a contract. I'm like, No one. What she meant was the big five. I don't know who those are, but the big five. They won't look at you. They're not interested. You have failed. I said, I was depressed. I was sad. I didn't have my friend yet. I hadn't met my friend. I'm like, Why am I here? I looked at the track for that morning. Everything's in a track. Your non-fiction, your poetry, your fiction, your science fiction. So you could follow a track all day down. So 9:00 to 11:00 is going to be how to write a memoir, 11:00 to 12:00 is how to publish and whatever.

[00:22:09.870] - Cheryl Oreglia

So you stay in your track in general, unless there's something over here that you like. And the other thing my consultant said is, if you're sitting in a session and it's not speaking to you, you're just like, you get up and go out. That's what the conference is for. No one takes offense. It's not speaking to you. It's not what you need. Go to something else. You're only here for a few days. Get what you need. So have the confidence to say, okay, I sat in the back of the room most of the time, just in case, because I'm not really big about getting up in the front seat and walking someone. That would be hard for me. But I was given permission to do that. I give you all who's listening, get what you need out of this conference. I went back in and I started taking a few notes. I really wasn't listening much. I was just like, huh? Because I didn't have a best seller, so I'm done. I'm toast. I'm over. What am I even doing here? And what I kept hearing over and over again is keep writing. Those are factors that the big five will look at, but not everybody.

[00:23:11.880] - Cheryl Oreglia

We are people that need writers, literary, literary, literary, literary, agents, editors, publishers. If we don't have writers, we don't have a job. We need you as much as you need us. It's a, what's the word? Relationship. It feeds each other.

[00:23:26.080] - Vicki Atkinson  
Reciprocal?

[00:23:26.940] - Cheryl Oreglia

That's it. So don't give up. Don't stop writing. Writing is a practice. You got to keep writing and keep writing, honing your skills, going to conferences, meeting people, putting your work out there, getting feedback, trying pitches, and cleaning them up and getting better at what you do. Never, ever give up because everyone's story is so important and keep practicing your skill. And everybody, it doesn't matter. So In some senses, I was way ahead of a few other people because I'd actually published a book. A lot of people at the conference were looking to do this thing and how to do it. In some sense, I had already had a little bit of experience that others were trying to still attain. Yeah.

[00:24:19.860] - Vicki Atkinson

But that gatekeeper word is such a good one because I think that vulnerability for people, whether they've written and published or they're aspirational about it, Probably for everyone there, there was some element of risk about being there. It doesn't take much for some people to get discouraged. It's so wonderful to hear you say that beyond that deflating information about, if you're this, you're done, you're over before you started, that what you got out of it more than anything was writer's right, and so get to it.

[00:24:56.500] - Cheryl Oreglia

I like writing. Again, they're all looking that pickleball novel, turk that's thrown around. At first, I was like, What are they talking about? A pickleball? No, the unexpected phenomenon. Then one night, we had a speaker, and her talk was called My 10-year overnight success. I love it. Here was a woman that started writing at my age, which is more mature than some people who start writing. Her name, I'm trying to find her name. She wrote The Hannah Artist, and her name is Alka Josie, I think. Alka Josie. What happened was she decided that she wanted to write. She was a teacher. She had some spare time. She was always interested in writing, and I think she taught writing. She was going to write. She's working on writing and doing a blog or something like that. Then her mother took her back to India and started to share with her all the traditions from India from her childhood that she didn't remember because she migrated to the United States when she was a very young child. She didn't remember the spices and the markets and the aunties and all the things that happened in India that are just so culturally rich and unique.

[00:26:16.230] - Cheryl Oreglia

She started to develop this book around her mother's character. The main character in the book is her mother to some degree. She started exploring all these things that were happening. She creates this charming little novel with all these characters and all this information about India. She starts doing it, but she's fairly well off. She has enough money to pay for a content editor, and she's working the book and reworking the book, and then her mother dies. Now she's writing the book really for mom, in some sense, puts the book down, goes through all that process of grieving. And then her husband, who doesn't want to see her let go of her dream, says, Why don't you take a graduate course in writing? So she signs up for the graduate course in writing, and she continues to work. She picks up the novel again. She has a literary agent friend that's working with her. They work with... Now we're into year six now. She does this three-year writing conference, picks it up, sets it down, picks it up, sets it down. The literary agent says, Let's try this again. Switch this around. Put this over here.

[00:27:21.990] - Cheryl Oreglia

They love the characters. The writing is not that great. It's a cute book. The characters are rich, but the writing... So So she pitches the book, she gets it with a big five, of course, and the book becomes an overnight success. The characters just carry the book, apparently. And so then, a year or two later, Netflix goes, We want to make a series out of this. And I'm like, Really? So over a 10-year period, it looks like she was an overnight success. But this was up, down, over, under, in the drawer. So that's

the point. Hold those manuscripts out of the drawer and clean them up and keep working on them because you just really never know when that novel, when that message that is uniquely yours is going to hit and it's going to be needed. And it's going to happen. Just keep taking those baby steps towards your dream. Oh, my gosh.

[00:28:18.360] - Wynne Leon  
What a story. You could be a writer's conference speaker.

[00:28:22.270] - Vicki Atkinson  
All of this is evidence. Exactly.

[00:28:25.720] - Wynne Leon  
One of the things that you wrote that we love is it's about changing the world One story at a time with that seed of hope hidden in you from birth and just waiting to bloom. Yeah.

[00:28:40.130] - Cheryl Oreglia  
What?

[00:28:40.730] - Wynne Leon  
So good.

[00:28:41.900] - Cheryl Oreglia  
Oh, my gosh. Thank you. I really feel strongly about that. There's this quote, and I wrote it down here because every time I read it, I always think, That's why we write. That's why we do it. Let me see if I can find it. Here it is. Okay, I don't know if you've heard of them, but Sir Ken Robinson. Well, it looks up. He all these really great things. He says, The arts, especially, address the idea of esthetic experience. An esthetic experience is one in which your senses are operating at their peak. When you're present in the current moment, when you're resonating with the excitement of the thing that you're experiencing, when you're fully alive. For me, the act of writing pulls me into that esthetic experience because I start writing and suddenly I'm remembering, Oh, how the grass smelled. There's some birds chirping and, Oh, those crows are trying to get the dove eggs. I feel the breeze. You feel the sun and how it's warming your skin. You feel your feet connecting with ground and grounding you in a sense. With the tree, all these things come out when you're writing because when you fully engage in some experience, you're having what this Sir Ken said, you're having an esthetic experience at your peak.

[00:29:59.290] - Cheryl Oreglia  
That's what writing Writers do. Writing helps us make art out of every day. Those ordinary moments that we might otherwise overlook, they actually are a privilege to look at the world through the eyes of each other because we've given this fresh perspective, like a new way of thinking. We are able to expand each other's ability to empathize because we're showing you that inner feeling, and you have the privilege of seeing that. And it closes that gap between our division, because often what we find is those things that are really deep and interior and basic to a person resonate with each other. And that is our key. That's the ticket, because what we're trying to do is take our abilities and talent and match them up with what the world needs. And I've always felt that the people born in this day and time have exactly what the world needs. So it's like our sacred a responsibility to figure out what are your talents and gifts and how do you improve the world? Because doctors, they heal the physical. Teachers, they teach you what you need to know for life. Psychologists, they do the mental thing.

[00:31:13.070] - Cheryl Oreglia  
And ministers, they do the spiritual development. I'm at the limit. Writers have the ability with the right word to transform the world as only we can do with their unique experience.

[00:31:25.820] - Vicki Atkinson  
Well, and what I love about what you just shared is this blending of it's okay It's okay to have an outline, back to petal, damn it. It's okay to have an idea and what you want to tell, but then you have to let everything about yourself, your memories, your sensory experiences, all that richness, You have to



populate all of that storytelling, even if there's some structure to it with your essence. You've got to be true to that and let it roll, let it be, and trust that it's worthy. Otherwise, it's a one, two, three, follow these steps. There's no heart to it.

[00:32:04.050] - Cheryl Oreglia  
Right.

[00:32:04.780] - Wynne Leon  
And that goes to what we wrote as our last question for Sheryl, which is, how do you find... We're talking about the vulnerability of the conference, the characters that you met there. How do you find the courage to keep showing up?

[00:32:24.550] - Cheryl Oreglia  
Tell us. That first night of the conference, I get there and I register and I get my little tag and I'm all excited. I'm looking around. I'm at the Hyatt. I have a room that overlooks the Bay. I have a room to myself. I am so happy. Because Larry and I are glued at the hip, at least on the bike together. I have this room all to myself. And it's quiet. I have a coffee maker, a big, gigantic bed, space, room, the whole bathroom. I'm in I could just stay there. I can call room service. I'm so happy. But that's that really annoying consultation I had with Nina. She says, you got to go down and meet me. Okay. So I get dressed, I brush my teeth, I put on a little lipstick because I'm not big in the makeup thing. And I walk down there and I scan the bar for females and I see a seat next to one. And I'm like, okay, I'll go sit there. I sit down and I'm the worst. I tell you, the worst conversation. I say, Oh, hi, I'm Sheryl. I see she's got a name tag.

[00:33:38.830] - Cheryl Oreglia  
I don't know they're color-coded. I didn't know. I said, So how are you enjoying the conference? Or whatever. She's like, Oh, hi. I'm a presenter. I'm a royalty. I'm like, Oh, lucky me. She's like, gives me the look. I'm trying desperately, search for things to say. I think I said, Oh, are you enjoying the quiet of the room? She's like, Yeah. And then I, Do you have kids? I mean, I'm desperate. And she's like, Oh, I do. And she shows me. Then she turns to me after a couple of these really strained and awkward me questioning her trying to ignore me. She says, No, I'm going out later tonight, and I'd really like to finish reading my book. And she pulls the book from on her lap that I didn't notice. And she starts reading. I'm like, Oh, The bartender just hands me my Espresso Martini. I'm like, Oh, for goodness sakes. Now, I just sit here sipping this drink next to Mrs who's reading her novel and ignoring me. I thought, Oh, my gosh. I ordered some fish tacos. I went back to my glorious quiet room, and I thought, That's what I'm doing.

[00:34:48.480] - Cheryl Oreglia  
But the next night, the next night... Now, they're these group dinners. They were both sold out. The lady at the pinks says, Well, just go down and mill around, see if you can find someone to eat with. I'm like, I am not. I'm going to do that. So the next day, I'm sitting in my room. I got my feet up on the bed. I'm going through all these notes, and I'm just so happy. And I'm thinking, Okay, go down one more time. Just give it one more. If it doesn't work, I'll Larry, he can come in tomorrow night and have dinner with you if you're getting lonely. And so I got dressed again. I went down, scanned the bar, saw a seat next to this woman, sat down, checked her name tag. Now I knew the color thing.

[00:35:35.100] - Vicki Atkinson  
Yay.

[00:35:36.160] - Cheryl Oreglia  
The secret. She's an attendee. I'm like, what? I start chatting. And then she couldn't have been the nicest person in the entire world. Her name's Sarah. We just hit it off right off. And that was it. We were glued at the hip. She was in a totally different track. She's actually written a book, a science fiction. And so she was following that track. But we would meet up in between after, over, under for breakfast, compare notes, encourage each other before we're doing pitches, and all these fun things that you do with someone at a conference. We'd have lots of wine together at the end of the whole night. It's 10:00. We're like, Do you want to go get a big week of coffee? We sit down there and

continue to get to know each other. So it was really nice. And in fact, recently, her husband, Daran and her, came down and had dinner with us in Campbell, so we got to know them a little better. So anyways, another again, you're going to meet people at these conferences that you're going to know for a long time. Keep trying. Don't give up because you meet one person that wants to read.

[00:36:36.540] - Vicki Atkinson

But it's like navigating. It's like the traveling that you do with Larry, right? It's like you've landed in a different country, and there are these cultural more ways about how to navigate and what to do. But once you've done it, you've done it. Now you know, right?

[00:36:50.250] - Wynne Leon

Now you know. We are so grateful that now that you know that you came and told us. It's so great to hear your experience and inspiration and wisdom.

[00:37:02.290] - Cheryl Oreglia

Oh, thank you.

[00:37:03.250] - Vicki Atkinson

What a treat. We could go on forever, but more to follow another time. But thank you, Sheryl.

[00:37:09.870] - Cheryl Oreglia

Thank you, Sheryl. Thank you for having me, guys. It's always so much fun. You prepare everything so well, and it's so comfortable, and just talking to girlfriends over a cup of coffee.

[00:37:19.620] - Wynne Leon

We love it.

[00:37:20.710] - Vicki Atkinson

So good.

[00:37:21.820] - Cheryl Oreglia

Thank you.

[00:37:27.040] - Wynne Leon

Thank you for listening. Our music is composed for Sharing the Heart of the Matter by the exclusively talented duo of Jack Canfora and Rob Koenig. For show notes and more great inspiration, please visit our site at [sharingtheheartofthematter.com](http://sharingtheheartofthematter.com).