

34 The biggest weapon of storytelling with Fred Wauters

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SPEAKERS

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I love today's conversation with Fred Wauters because we talked about storytelling, about vulnerability, Authenticity, about working with cancer. How does that affect you and your work about managing your energy and we had a lot of tears. I have to warn you. There are a lot of tears in this podcast, but a lot of fun also and laughing moments. So be sure to listen to this podcast. If you want to improve your storytelling Filner ability and your energy, this is really a great conversation. I'm Murielle, CEO mum and educator, I used to work really hard and sacrifice the important things to me until I lost my motivation. Fast forwards passed many failed attempts and lessons learned. And I found a way to reach great results while working less. today. I'm obsessed with helping other leaders build meaningful lives. So each week, I'll be sharing inspiration to change your life and organisation. This is rebel leader with a heart. So welcome here in my beautiful house, podcast house,

I finally get to see the little love sign.

Yes. You see the real studio which is in my living room, in fact, so it's a really nice we know each other now for I don't know how long . 20 years?

Don't ask! I think it's more than 20 years.

Yes, more than 20 years because we studied together. So maybe Fred's, can you tell me a little bit more who you are and why you started specialising in storytelling?

Ah, that is a big question. Who am I? I'm asking that question to myself everyday. And identity is a moving concept. So to make it briefly, my name is Fred. I have been working in content. And writing for the last 15 years before that I had a very wide range of interests. Let's put it that way. And I've also been a journalist, a high school teacher, and Krav Maga instructor and a professional musician. Wow. But I have been focusing more and more on everything related to producing content. And that includes Of course, storytelling. But my vision of storytelling is that it's something that's been around for as long

as we humans. So there is nothing really special about it. But somehow we lost our way. And some people are not able anymore to tell stories, but it's supposed to be second nature. It was.

Yeah, yeah. That's what I was going to say. It used to be normal and no, it's special again, because it's like humans become more and more like robots focusing on facts and rational things. Well, we should go back to being humans again. And that includes storytelling,

of course. And also, we know for a fact, from at least 10 years that decisions are based on emotions and not on reason. And storytelling appeals mainly to emotions and not to reason. Well, there is reasoning. We, we we put it there after it happens. But the basic is we rationalise our decisions afterwards. And it's the same with storytelling, we we are told a story we feel the emotions of the story. And then we rationalise these emotions and take a lesson out of it. But the basis and why storytelling is powerful is that it is based on emotion. It is arousing emotions, and it is arousing emotions that we all feel. Yeah. And so we can also relate to each other in on a more personal level. That's what makes TEDx speeches, for example, so so powerful is because it's people coming to tell their stories. And these stories have a message because every story also always has a message. So it's that's why TEDx speeches are so powerful.

Yeah, yeah. And I often tell the leaders of my courses, how important it is to tell stories because when you want to trigger change, and a lot of leaders and managers there are facing resistance to change. And if you want to trigger change, you have to work with the two other areas then of your brain, then the neocortex, you have to work with your limbic brain and your reptilian brain because that's where behaviours are situated.

That's where resistance to change is also situated, because it's resistance to change. It's primal fears, it's the reptilian, the limbic brain that, that tell people who danger. Yeah, exactly are going to unknown territories. We're scared, because we're wired to be that way.

Yeah, well, when you tell a story, you're talking directly to the limbic brain, and that will trigger change, and people will remember it and will be inspired by it.

I'm totally with you on that. Also, I've been a high school teacher for I think it is in a very difficult school in Brussels. And I realised Also, sometimes it's the little things you say it's the little efforts you do to help your students gain a bit more confidence that the trigger changes that go way beyond what you imagined, because it's just, they needed someone at some point to show them that someone had faith in their potential. And, yeah, just the fact that you know that there is a story linked to that, but it's not linked to school. Yeah. But as I told you, I have been a cover gate instructor for a few years. And one of my specialties as a cosmetic instructor was giving lessons to young children, not young children, or children also, but also teens between their 12 and 15/16 year old. And one of my students at the time, was a very shy boy. Also, we had in French, we see a big dude. Yeah, I don't remember the name but

a Hazel lip.

Yeah. And he was exactly. And he was very unconfidence. And very shy. And, well, I always try to make my my students feel at ease and feel good with me. Because it's important that to create an atmosphere of trust, especially if you're working with the body. And especially if you're working with dangerous techniques. Yeah, people have to trust each other very much. So I create, try to create that. That atmosphere of trust. And also I, I try always to, to, because that is the essence of cover guides. applicable in real life. Yeah. And one day, that guy came to the lesson and that he was 14 or 15 year old, I think, at the time. And he, he came to me and he said, You know what? The Defence your total, you told us last time, you know, when someone grabs you, and takes your head like that? Well, I had to use it. I was like, oh, tell me what, what happened. And he told me that he was going to whichever multi school events and there was a bully there that wanted to hurt him. And he used my technique, while he first as I told him, told him quietly to go away, but the guy wouldn't go away try to go away himself. The guy followed him. And at that moment, at certain moments, the guy grabbed him, he applied to defence, not till the end, because the end can be quite violence. But I always say my to my students, you have a choice. You have to choose when you stop when you think that the other is not a threat anymore. Because when you think he's not a threat anymore, then you have to stop. Otherwise, it's aggression. Yeah. And they told me Yes, I stopped and blah, blah. And what happened was, as he was telling me the story, I could see that something had changed in him. And it was never the same after that he was a lot more confident, because suddenly, he had been able to stand up for himself and get himself out of trouble without doing something that he would regret afterwards. And it has changed him totally. He was, he became a very confident young, young adult. I have had a conversation with him on Facebook the other day, and he's in Polytechnique now. So yeah, making quite difficult studies. And he feels as ever, he told me that the whole it was indeed that even that triggered that and he went to thank me for that. Because he told me somehow change his life.

Yeah. Wonderful. And I'm sure now that people that are listening are moved by both our stories, probably, yes. Your eyes and so I get the tears also, but I'm sure that For instance, if you would want to sell Krav Maga or if you would want to help the son of a friend or your son, it would help them better by telling the story you just told. Then just saying you know you should do Krav Maga because it will increase your confidence. It's not the same

story. Oh, no, of course. Of course. It's it's like it's why this way all these trial periods at the gym. With the software or whatever is so powerful is because when you experiencing yourselves it's it's it's getting you you get to know really what, what it can do for you. Yeah, the only real substitute for the for for experience is through the experience to reliving the experience of someone else.

Yeah, exactly

exactly what storytelling is about.

Yeah. Thank you. And what would you say to people that think, okay, yeah, no, I understand the power of storytelling. I'm never or at least, I'm not going to only use facts anymore. When I have to talk to my team or to my customers, or to my shareholders, or whatever. I'm going to start telling stories, how what would you advise them? How should they start?

I think there are three main points that you have to take into account when thinking about crafting a story. The first one is truth and honesty. So the story has to be true, you can make the facts a little better. But the the essence of it has to be true. It's something that's you have to have lift because it's very difficult unless you're Stephen King, to, to make to recreate feelings that, that you have not felt so, so it's important that that it comes from from a place of truth, that would be the first but it can be a

story or, or the truth, or someone else can be

the truth of someone else as well. But it has to come from a place of truth. Sister in law has something incredible that has happened to her and that holds a lesson that you can use. It's perfect as well. Yeah. And actually, that takes me to the second point, which is a story. It's always a difficult task when you when you make a story about yourself, because you have to, to avoid making it about yourself. If you see what I mean the difference. If you are bragging about something, people will feel it and bragging does not bring you anywhere we saw that saw the champion, the world champion of reading has just been kicked out of his job. It's normal, it's not relatable. Yeah, I mean, most people don't Kindle 3d quite relate with what Mr. Trump is telling because Yeah, because it's not it's not something doesn't arouse good feelings in us. It doesn't make us feel positive. It doesn't inspire us to change, which is what storytelling is about. And why is it so because He always makes it about himself, even when there's a press conference about a COVID-19 epidemic or whatever. It's not like, I have to introduce you with Mr. Fushi, who is my head of Coronavirus task team knows that I have selected a guy who I think is the best and I am to take credit. Yeah, instead of saying this guy is

a personal story, but with a message that is for the others.

Exactly. And to which others can can relate to it has it has to be a people relate better to to other people's flaws than they relate to? to other people's strong points? Yeah, I remember having various

flaws, or also

shortcomings or, or stories that are things that you will

see the calls or negative emotions or things that

you test to start from a place where it's bad and go to a place where it's better. Yeah, because that's that's where the lesson lies. And I remember it making your flaws visible making your vulnerabilities visible. Apply to principle that applies to many shields, and I have a friend who was also with us. Diversity. Yeah, doing one man show and the stand up committee. And we had a conversation once about what makes humour and standard relatable and what what what is it that makes people like you if if you are telling horrid jokes, because he's a he can be quite harsh in what he said in what he tells. But he told me that he realised that the secret was that he has at the same time to show that he is vulnerable that also he can be ridiculous. And most of the horror stories he tells has a personal element in it that makes people say, Ah, it's okay. It's not it's not a guy, I'm belittling other people. He also has his flaws and so and so people can better relate and feel important that we we relate to other people

through the vulnerabilities we know of them. The fact that they recognise that then we are not alone. Exactly. That's it.

Also why superheroes, they always have their kryptonite. It's like,

Yeah, because otherwise they couldn't be superheroes, because if they didn't have any weakness, we couldn't relate to them. They have to either they have the kryptonite or they are tormented by something. Like, who's that super Marvel superhero? Jessica something? She's tormented by by your previous relationship. And yeah, it has a terrible effect on her and that that's what makes her relatable. Yeah, this is a she's a super strong chick. Yes, the egg. Yeah. So just a review. So

it has to be a true story has to be personal, personal, but not all about yourself. And you said you had three elements.

That was the third elements, the fact that it has to show vulnerability.

Yeah. Okay. Great. Thank you.

I think that would be the beginning. about storytelling.

Yeah. And what are the mistakes that you often see in storytelling,

not respecting one of those three principles? And, and especially if we're talking about marketing, the use of storytelling in marketing or convenient, showering, or in change management processes as well, when you want people to do something? I think one of the biggest mistakes is to not take into account your target audience. What do they think? How do they feel? Where are they? What are their fears? What are their hopes? What are their flaws? And if you if you do not think enough about that, you can't build something that is relatable, because the whole point of that relatability thing is, you have to tell them, it's okay. I'm not you. I have fears. I have known failure. I have no no problems, and we are all in the same boat. And we'll try to get better but it's that it's okay factor is really important.

Yeah. And I love what you say there because I noticed a big difference not only in the storytelling, but I used to pretend that I was the Superwoman

Yeah, I did too. Yeah. Not that I was a superwoman.

I used to quit. And even to myself, you know, I've always been this good student in school, and I don't make mistakes, I try to control everything and, and then I climbed the ladder, and I became the managing director of a company. And I, I felt I had to continue showing that strength every time. And so everything was always okay. Even if I wasn't feeling okay, I was pretending that everything was okay, I'm going to fix this. And people could not relate to me when I was like that. And also, even friends. I even had a friend who at a certain point was really angry at me and started crying and saying, but you are perfect. Everything you do is perfect. You are pretty and intelligent. You have a great career. You're a great mom, you, you exercise. Well, when she was saying this, I was on the verge of burning out, I

wasn't perfect at all. But it's, it's opened up something in me to realise I cannot continue to pretend like this anymore. And I was even pretending to me, I was hiding it to me. And it's only when I started sharing that vulnerability through storytelling, that people could really relate to me and would follow me and my and my vision there. Before I had to push and, and to argue and to it was a lot of efforts. But when I started sharing stories with vulnerability, people would relate and move mountains for me.

Makes sense. there's a there's a show on Netflix. It's more of a reporting thing than the fiction show about the Medal of honour and love, you know, it's a medal that they give to a soldiers who have shown incredible

bravery bravery

under fire. And there's only I don't know, two or 300 people that have got it since the since the Civil War in the US. So it's very, very difficult to obtain because it's it really, but but it has a sense because people who have that they make all the soldiers around them proud. Of course already because they did something for them. It's about that too. But it It tells a very relatable story about ordinary people with ordinary flaws, suddenly showing extraordinary courage and some died while showing it in service of it. But the whole point is always that they did it for the others that they did it for, to protect their fellow soldiers or to, or to. Yeah, it's mostly that's Yeah. And so it's it's very powerful storytelling because it tells people that Yeah, soldiers, you can do

it soon. And

ordinary people can suddenly do extraordinarily

extraordinary

things because they are put in the circumstances that makes them rise. Yeah. So it's a, so is about that it's always about that that ability to to be a normal weak person. That weaknesses normal, but I mean, a normal person with weaknesses with strength. So of course, yeah. But it's the difficulties that if you think about the story arc of any any story in the world, it's always the same. It's about someone who embarks on a quest, in external quest on an internal quest. But he or she embarks on a quest. And that quest leads him or her to obstacles to obstacles, some of them are interrupts the calls, it's their own past, coming back to home them or it's their own character flows coming back to on them, or it's the circumstances that are really against them. Yeah. And it's always about how they can we can relate to them, because they start as ordinary people, and then they become ordinary through the extraordinary through the storytelling process.

Yeah, and talking about storytelling and about vulnerability. I wanted to go back to you, because you shared something vulnerable with me as well, the fact that you, yeah, you're, you're having cancer.

I am a cancerous patient. Yes, yes.

And unfortunately, you healed from cancer once and then it came back. So you're now you're fighting it for a second time. And yeah, that's, that's not easy, especially if you have to run a business because you have your own business that is called exhibit x. I booked. Oh, so I was wondering, how do you deal with that running a business while facing and battling cancer at the same time?

As far as business goes? The first question I asked myself when? Well, was not the first question I asked. No, of course, the first was, am I gonna die? But the really the first business related question that I asked myself was, what do I do about that? Do I tell my clients do I tell my employees? Do I tell the people I work with or two way, keep silent and pretend everything is alright, you know, yeah, pretend I'm a super strong guy, and bla bla bla. Well, at some point that wasn't even going to tell my parents. So yeah, it was a very

well, your own

quest and journey. So it was an internal crystal didn't last long before I came to an answer. And the answer I came to was, since one of my core values is truthfulness, and honesty, how can I maintain that this is a core value for me if I stopped lying about something so fundamental? And also I was thinking, Okay, just imagine that one day, you're not feeling good at all, because of the treatment because of chemotherapy because of whatever happens, because cancer is a exerts a terrible toll on your body? How I'm going to explain that to my clients. When I say who have cool, it's Yeah, and then it's lying. And then again, it's not honest. So So I was thinking, Okay, I think the best policy, the ones that will, because I was very stricken when you were telling your story about your friend that was crying and telling that you were the perfect women, and that you felt like shit inside because it was a moment where you were nearing burnout. And I was thinking, yeah, and on top of that, maintaining that appearance takes a lot of energy. Yeah, it's probably taking more energy than everything else you're doing. And so I was thinking, Okay, if I have to maintain appearances, it will take me a lot of energy, and a lot of effort and for what shows I shouldn't be using that for something else. Like, I don't know fighting cancer. And so I decided, Okay, now I'm going to be honest about it. I'm going to tell my clients about it, tell my prospects around it so that they know what they're entering into when they're entering into a business relationship with me. And and try to make to do my best but also be honest and say, Okay, I cannot do that for that time because I have chemotherapy and I know what I'm going to be for three or four days out, and so I cannot. So if you want to have that delivered at that time, I cannot do it. I can point you to someone else, but I cannot do it. myself, but you know, most of the time emergencies are quite fake in the business world. So yeah, there is always a negotiating space, but you have to be willing to negotiate. And to negotiate that kind of stuff, you have to be willing to tell the real reason behind Well, that's what I think.

And how is it your customers or prospects react?

They had, most of them had a very, very healthy reaction and a very supportive reaction as well. And sometimes when I when I promise, deadlines or whatever, some of my clients, he said, you can take three more days or four more days or one more week if you want. Because not that urgent, and I know you're still having chemotherapy. And I'm very thankful for that. Because really, it's really approved that also they care about in some Yeah. And a business relationship is a relationship. So there is always

caring in it. And but all that wouldn't have happened if I had decided to lie about it. Yeah. And so not lying about, about what I had was, I think, one of the best decisions I ever made in my life.

I agree. And I see the tears again. Yeah, I have them again. Also. Sorry about that. No, it's okay. It's great. And

the other thing I did, yes, sorry, is I decided very quickly to have a blog, where I would be sharing my experiences because what I realised at the beginning of cancer, and we're again, at storytelling level, what I realised is that you feel terribly alone with with that sickness, because it's not possible for someone who doesn't have cancer, to understand how terrible it is to have the weight of your, the possibility of your own death in quite painful circumstances. And not in a distant future, but in kind of very near and very present and very frightful future. Because the first thing you you think when people tell you tell you, well, you have that little tumour, is I'm gonna die. Yeah. And so. And afterwards, it's very difficult to everything is very difficult to explain to someone who doesn't have cancer, we have a kind of a cancer support group with a with a few friends who also have that, and they have become friends, because they were acquaintances, but they became friends, because of my blog, because they read that and they contacted me, and they said, Oh, I read what you wrote about your cancer, and you know, I have a cancer too. And, and when it's called Estella, Victoria, that be with a stripe between hasta la and Victoria, yeah. And it's, I write, I try to write personal things, but every, it's sorry, telling you with a lesson that that everybody can relate to. So and I'm also when I'm, when I'm writing, I'm always trying to think, Okay, what can I say to people who have cancer, what can I say to close relatives of people who have cancer that would help them. And it's, again, the same thing, to show them that they're not alone to live them, to show them that they're not alone to have that. I wrote a blog post, in, I think, September, October, about the fact that I did, I found it very difficult now that I am in the process, whether the cancer is back, and chemotherapy doesn't work that well. And so it's a very frightening process again, and it was very difficult for me to find the right way to distance myself from that and get back to a normal life that wouldn't be haunted by, by negative thoughts all the time. And, again, it's because of the blog that it's that happens because a guy who, whom I discovered through my blog, name is cool, nice. He also has the same kind of cancer as if, and at the time, I was feeling deep down and he, he sent me a message because he had tests and he sent me a message that the test will not go to me that he had developed metastases in his liver. I do have medicine, I did have at one point. Now it's my loans, you have to have a bit of variety. But what what happens is that he told me that he told me that he was totally devastated by the news. And so as I called him, and I spent some time propping him up, you know, because sometimes when you feel bad, kind of helps you also to

help others

oppose because then you feel a bit better. And actually, while helping him I realised what I had to do to help myself so it was a good thing. And so I wrote a post about it. And also, I wrote To post to, to let cancer people know that and then and their relatives know that it's normal to, to feel discouraged that it's normal to, to think I'm not going to die. I'm not going to survive that thing. It's going to get me Yeah. And it's normal to have those moments where you where you feel totally disappeared. And I had a lot of positive reactions about that, as well. But then again, it's because I went out and I told my story, and I told about my doubts, because I knew that sharing these doubts with other people would help them as

well. And then it helps you. Yeah, it helps me to because, of course, what goes around comes around. But it's, I stopped writing that blog for quite a while. And then I decided, no, I have to get back at it. Because it helps me also writing a book about that with two other people who suffer come from cancer, well, then we're writing a book in the same spirit. Yeah. Which is telling cancer patients, everything that that they need to be told that we need to be told at some point, but we're not told because nobody knew that we needed to be told that Yeah, and even you know, doctors, I have my oncologist is wonderful. She's a wonderful woman. She's very empathetic and everything. But these guys, they are not trained in medical school, about the psychological aspects. And she's, I have the chance to work with someone who is very empathetic. And so I feel very good with her. And I can also see that she she feels bad about telling me the bad news, you know? Yeah. And she tells me because I have interviewed for the book, and she said, Yeah, one of the most terrible things for me is the two terrible things for me as an oncologist is one way to tell a patient that he has that his cancer is back. Because at that point, I have already been here with him for 234 years. I got to know him. I got to like him. And so it's terrible to tell bad news to people you like. And then the the other the most terrible thing, of course, is to tell people okay, it's nothing we don't have. We have nothing we can do. Yeah. going to die. Yeah. It must be terrible. Yeah, to have to tell it to people. I can't. I cannot even imagine how she manages to do that without

crushing. Yes. But I also know, thank you for sharing. Thank you for sharing this. And what I really like also here is that by sharing what you feel, it helps you to feel better. And you you are more connected to people. Yeah. And, and okay. Yeah. And to yourself, directly. And because, you know, it's

on things. It's a process that helps you thinking and feeling differently. But yeah, but mostly accepting, we get we get back to the net feeding thing.

Yes. Yeah. And that's, that's what I would encourage people because no, you what you're going through is, is really bad. Of course, it is. But I, I would encourage people to, to share things with their colleagues and with their customers and with themselves, because we are here to be there for each other and when you can help someone and when when you can understand someone also, from where certain things are coming from.

And also you put unnecessary pressure on you because yes, if someone has, I don't know, a sick relative or a sick child, which is even worse. Yeah, they are worried about the child. It's normal. I mean,

they think they have to return Yeah, they think they have to hide it because otherwise people will think they cannot perform. Well, I believe it's the other way around. It's by sharing and of course, you have to have an environment that is safe, where you can share that and having a safe environment is again the basis in an organisation to transform and to link and to be successful. But sharing helps people to relate to you and to take into account what you're going through and it's it helps everyone become better at the end.

Of course and also anyway you know when you're doing that, somewhere deep down you know when you're doing when you're saying I will meet that deadline you know that you will not meet it. The fact

that you accepted it you say okay, I will not meet it because I am too worried about my sick child to to be able to perform

because I am just too tired or whatever. It doesn't have to be some people out there they are exhausted after our second Corona wave. They were already fishing Oh yeah, they were already exhausted before Corona started because going from one meeting to the other one. A lot of things to do everything changes so fast, then Corona hits, you don't have all the means to find your energy back. But I believe you also have to share that with your colleagues, I am now tired, I need to rest or, and it's okay to share it because if you don't share it, it will come back to you. Worse, probably, if you just continue continue, it will explode in your face at some

point, that's all. And on from all sides will explode. Yeah, we'll make a lot more. It's always the same. Truth is the best policy and most, in most cases, not, if not, in all cases, because the cost of hiding in lies. There was a guy who wrote a book about that 10 years ago, was called radical honesty. I don't know. If you heard about that book or read it. It's kind of an eye opener, you know, it's the guy has a very, he's a psychologist, and also, he's very knowledgeable about all it all of it, but he has that bluntness that makes you think, because you cannot be as blunt as he is no, no, but somehow, and actually, that book, when you think about it, it's also him telling a story about himself, how he hid behind him behind his lies, and how we learn to overcome that 10 that tendency to, to hide behind his lies, and then to and to start speaking the truth at all times. And always. And so well, we're back. Yeah, like, it's again, like,

it's because I it's funny, because I had the conversation about honesty, with my son year yesterday in the car. And I was telling him, you know, in the past, sometimes when I would be really tired, and I had to go to a party, and I was really tired, I didn't want to go, I would come up with an excuse not to go where I would say I'm sick, sorry. But now I've decided for for quite a while not to tell the truth to just say, I'm too tired, really need to rest I'm sorry to cancel last minute. And I believe that good friends, they should accept that from you. And if they don't accept it, maybe they're not good friends on the other side, if you cancel every time, of course, then you have to look at yourself.

If you cancel with honesty, it's going to go a bit a lot better than if you cancel with a Yeah, nice. That's for sure. Exactly. Because people can tell when you're lying most of the time. I mean, either that's Oh, you have to lie to yourself at the same time. Yeah, that's we were talking about that also. But that's the best way to maintain a lie is to is to somehow come to believe it yourself. Yeah, exactly. And I know I know. So enter, you enter hell yes. Telling us because you are taken by taken up I don't know if you read the book back to the French writer called domainer. Pasta, Thomas, the imposter. No book, a better guy was a pathology, pathological liar. And of course, it leads him to terrible situations. And the end of the book. It's during World War One. And at the end of the book, he's in the trenches, and it's fighting, and this German soldiers coming towards him and they shoot him. He said, Oh, I'm shot. I better fake I'm dead. And then he dies. Of course. Yeah. But he was always thinking about like, yeah,

yeah, and and talking about that, I've had some people like that in organisations to, because lying is also a way of, of keeping that sense of belonging, you lie. Because you're afraid that if you tell the true people the truth, people will not accept you, and you won't belong in the tribe anymore. And so I had a

girl in my previous organisation, she lied a lot, but she really had this problem of belonging, she felt like she didn't belong, and she would then lie so that she could, well she was too afraid to be excluded. But what I realised at some points is that she didn't realise anymore that she was lying,

because that's, that's the biggest danger.

Yeah, she was lying to herself. She didn't realise she was lying. And, and I would I'm sure that if she would pass a lie detector, probably because she didn't we it it was such a big need for her that she didn't realise that anymore. And I see that. Yes, sometimes with people and when we manage, instead of reacting to the behaviour, when we managed to see the need behind it and then to, to answer to that need, it can become quite which sometimes, because then the person doesn't need to live anymore. If you make them as you you make them feel as though they really belong.

Yeah, we don't we do not tell. It's okay enough to people I think yeah, it's okay is a very powerful message. It's okay to suffer. It's okay to fear it's okay to not perform at the level you used to. I had the thing yesterday with one of my clients, I delivered him a text was the first version. So I knew that there was going to be feedback and everything. And I didn't want to admit it. But I didn't really wasn't really my best writing it's and so when I started receiving feedback on the text, as I believe about honest feedback, it was quite harsh. It was like, Oh, no, that is not good. And you didn't really do well there. And but I'm grateful if you did that, because of course, what I do when I get that kind of feedback is okay. Anyway, I will answer it tomorrow. So I have time to digest it. Well, I didn't even look at the feedback. I looked a bit and I thought, Okay, I'm going to have a bad reaction here. Let's sleep over it. And then take it back in the morning. I took it back this morning. Because also I was feeling powerless. Like how can I improve that text? Because I really don't know how to do it. And then of course, today, I admitted that I was not at my best. I read the text again. I read the feedback. And I was thinking okay, yeah, well, he's right. And she's right, because there were too. Yeah, giving the feedback was like, yeah, this is not a good text. How can I make it better? But of course, you have to, to admit to yourself that you did not do as good as you're supposed to.

Yeah, but what you said before is even more important, what you did there was you managed your energy first. And then you you have to get something, of

course, because you cannot react correctly. If you don't have the energy to I think accepting the truth and accepting feedback. That's feedback about what you did, because it's not feedback about you. But that's when you don't have enough energy. You take feedback personally. You think it's feedback about you? Well, it's just feedback about what you did, which Yeah, totally different. And so and so yes, of course, it's managing energy.

Yes, for sure. And, and coming back then to your otter story about cancer, how do you manage your energy? No,

I it's was very difficult for me. Because I am. My I have a tendency to be an overachiever to believe I can be one at least. And, and so I have always had these very ambitious goals for myself. And I was always a slasher, doing tonnes of things at the same time. And over the years, that the last 10 years,

I've tried to cut back on the tendency, but of course, it was still there. And cancer made me aware that I had a limited amount of energy and that there was no way I was going to achieve everything I wanted to achieve. In the time, I thought I could achieve it. Yeah. And so I learned to step back, I learned to say no to jobs, I learned to say no to evenings or drinking with friends. I learned to learn to accept that my and I'm still learning, of course, because I'm learning to accept my my limitations, the limitations that have been put on me by the disease. And once you accept them, then of course, you'll find the freedom to take the right decisions. Yeah. But it first has to be you first have to accept Yeah, what's happening. And so that was the the most, I think it's also the most interesting lesson that I took out of all that batshit is that it's, it has transformed me in very positive ways as well. So there is a well, it's like every painful life experience it always. I don't know who said that, because there is a controversy about who said it, but someone said that what's really important is what's really important. It's not, it's not what happens to you, but how you react to it. Yeah. And so I've learned to focus in about about the reaction and see how I could transform a seemingly negative events in something positive that would help me lead a better life and be a better human and also be a better provider for my times.

Nice Well, thank you for that.

You're welcome.

It was a really a nice conversation. We covered a lot of topics we covered storytelling authenticity, managing energy cancer.

And we told a lot of stories.

Yeah, we told a lot of stories. So I hope the listeners got a lot out of it. I really enjoyed it. And thank you for your tears also, because I believe that these are important and gifts that we should cherish because it means that

I'm a very emotional person.

Yes, me too. Me too. I'm a crier. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you for that. And where can people find you if they want to find you? We talked about your blog, but also ex-abrupto.

Ex-abrupto, that's my company. Yeah. It's latin. When I created the company, I wanted to have a fancy latin name. A fancy latin name. Now I struggled with explaining to my clients how you write it when you send me an email.

I will put it in the show notes. If you look for Fred, Fred Wauters on LinkedIn, you will find me.

Yeah. Thank you for that. You're welcome. Well, I enjoyed the conversation.

So did I, as always,

thank you. I hope you enjoyed this conversation as much as I did. And so in next week's podcast, we're going to talk not about IQ, not about EQ, but about aq and also about living lighter and working smarter with Rudy Franken and Tim for me. So tune in, and be sure to subscribe if you want to receive the next episodes automatically or subscribe if you want to have a meaningful life and organisation. Yeah, you finished another episode of rebel leader with a heart if you want more, go to rebelleaderwithaheart.com for show notes and past episodes. If you love the show, subscribe, leave a review and share it with a friend The more the merrier. Thanks for tuning in and have a great week you rebel leader with a heart.