

# 1261814-episode-197-changing-by-heart-with-kat-goheen

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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## SPEAKERS

Kat Goheen, Carla Long, Josh Mangelson

### **Josh Mangelson** 00:17

Welcome to the Project Zion Podcast. This podcast explores the unique spiritual and theological gifts Community of Christ offers for today's world.

### **Carla Long** 00:33

Hello, and welcome to the Project Zion Podcast. I'm your host, Carla Long, and I am so excited about our guest today. Her name is Katherine Goheen. And she was on another podcast with me and a panel of people, and I was just so taken by what she had to say. I knew that I had to get her back on the podcast again. So, I'm so excited. Welcome back, Kat.

### **Kat Goheen** 00:55

Thank you so much, Carla. And I'm excited to be here, too. It was a wonderful panel we had. And this is such a great podcast in general, so I'm very honored to be here.

### **Carla Long** 01:05

Oh, gosh, that just fills me with joy. So, Kat, tell us about yourself.

### **Kat Goheen** 01:10

Well, I'm from Independence, Missouri, and grew up in the RLDS church. And then got ordained in high school with some of the first batches of women getting ordained, and went to Graceland University. Then ended up in Canada, met this great Canadian, and I've been in Canada for the rest of my professional life, and ministry, and just life. I've got two girls who are fantastic. I sang professionally for say, a dozen years, and then went to seminary for a couple of degrees in Biblical Studies. And at this point in my life, it's all coming together. I'm in training to be a spiritual director, I've gone through the Community of Christ spiritual formation and companionship program as well. So really spent some time over the past four years focusing on deep listening. Of course, today is talking more than listening. I will put you on the spot. Carla, I promise not to deep listen to you too much. Is that okay?

**Carla Long** 02:10

Um, sure!

**Kat Goheen** 02:14

So it's a bit of a flip for today. But there's been so much wisdom in all this that I'm excited about and that I'm living with, so I'm really just sharing with you, Carla, and with all of you out there, my passion around this series of questions that we've come up with for today.

**Carla Long** 02:34

And I'm just so excited to talk about this because, listeners, when I asked Kat what she wanted to do a podcast on, because, as you hear, she has a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of academic study. And she knows what she's talking about. And so I asked her what she would do a podcast on, and after she got back to me, I had literally no idea what she was talking about. And I blame that fact on the fact that I was a math major, because well, I went through seminary and I have a master's in Christian ministries, but this is beyond me. So that's why I'm super excited. She said that she wanted to do a podcast on 'changing by heart.' It's the phenomenal art of oral transmission and storytelling and transformation. And I don't know about you, listeners, if you already know exactly what she's talking about, but I didn't. So that's why I really want to find out. So, Kat, if you could just tell us maybe even just an overview of what you meant by changing by heart.

**Kat Goheen** 03:30

Absolutely, I'd love to. And to me, changing by heart is simply adapting and riffing on that idea of learning by heart in a really old-fashioned idea, it seems in our culture today. And I mean, like everything that I'm bringing today kind of comes from a very simple place in my heart, because I have no desire to impress myself, no desire to impress any of you. Just a very simple desire to pull together some threads around change. Why is it so difficult to change? How do we change? And how can really listening to each other, really listening to ourselves, and speaking our truth, how can that get us to a place where we are able to change and to make change in the world? So that's it.

**Carla Long** 04:25

Oh, gosh, that sounds pretty phenomenal. So, let's just jump into that. How is deep listening or listening to each other, how can that change who we are as people?

**Kat Goheen** 04:42

Whoa, the biggest piece to deep listening - and it's way harder than I thought it was - but the biggest piece to deep listening is to get out of the way. So I think it's almost getting to the finish line, before you even begin. I've found deep listening to be very healing when I've experienced it. When I sit down with someone who's very interested in who I am, and is interested in my wellbeing, and is genuinely interested in what I have to say, I know it! I just know it. There's a mysterious quality about someone who is so receptive to me as a person, that I just respond to that, and it's very easy to open up. And that has led to incredible healing, and crazy stuff, like all of a sudden seeing an old pattern, and then really putting light on it, like having a conversation about it, and then walking away feeling lighter, feeling more free from that burden. So I mean, that's into the realm of the mystical or the mysterious, that's amazing stuff. That's, you know, it doesn't happen all the time. But yeah, the thing about deep listening is being out of the way, clearing, and understanding myself enough to just kind of sit back and

make lots of room and be hospitable for the other person. I imagine it's a lot like hosting a podcast, because if you're full of your own thoughts and questions, it's hard for you to be responsive to the conversation as it's happening.

**Carla Long** 06:16

I think you give us way too much credit. Because what you just described is, you know, it just filled me with so much warmth. I've gone back to those conversations of when you feel like you have a heart connection with someone, and the way you walk away from that conversation is so different than the way you started it. And is that kind of what you're talking about, you think?

**Kat Goheen** 06:40

Absolutely. And it's not even necessarily with someone listening, listening to me. I mean, I've read accounts of people who've been in the room with the Dalai Lama, and they just have felt that he sees me, like I'm his friend, like just feels open. And a personal friend of mine that met one of her teachers that she'd read several of his books, and without sharing a word with him it was a life-changing experience for her. So, it's just a quality of being, and the more true and genuine that you are in yourself, the less you're trying to convince people of things. The more true and genuine that you are, the more I believe the Holy Spirit can just connect you and just heal you through that presence. So, yeah. Is there more you have to say about that original question about deep listening, because I kind of got into the emptying yourself part, which is a big part of it. Go ahead.

**Carla Long** 07:37

Well, yeah, I do actually have questions about deep listening. I'm assuming that it takes a lot of hard work of the soul in order to get to a place where you can listen to someone deeply. What do you do? Or how do you get to that point?

**Kat Goheen** 07:54

Definitely. I think I would call it effortless effort. Because at this point, I'm in training to be a spiritual director. I've started spiritual directing, like actually doing it outside of the practice room. And it's actually effortless, because I can see that the Holy Spirit is this person's spiritual director. And it's really my job to be out of the way and listen for currents of Spirit. So most of the work that I've had to do, other than living my entire life, and bringing all that experience to bear, but the actual work, the actual attention that I have to do, is to be aware. When I'm listening, anytime, something that you say triggers an emotion or a reaction in myself, so just awareness, like flags going up to be like, Oh, wow, you're talking about something that happened in your childhood, which is reminding me if something from university. But see, the minute I get that emotion, then my attention goes into my history, or my discomfort, or my reaction. So a lot of it is simply being aware of that. And then sort of judging it and saying, Is this about me? Or is this about the person? Is this something that needs more attention? And then being able to let it go. So meditation is huge for that, because that's where all these things bubble up. That's why it's tough. That's why our brains are so busy. But to get past those hurdles, to get into the quiet space, to really like a quiet space, to find solitude restful. Rachel Held Burton (Rachel Held Evans) said that and I took that. I just got back from a five-day silent retreat, and I took her quote on silence: "Until solitude is a place of rest, and not of hard work and human striving." I learned that by heart before I went into five days of silence, because I'm just so convinced that knowing it in my heart, knowing it by heart changes me. So yeah.

**Carla Long** 09:59

I kind of want to jump into that as well. What do you mean when you say learning by heart, or knowing in your heart?

**Kat Goheen** 10:07

Oh, I think we call it that, we call it learning by heart, knowing it by heart. But really, we're talking about repeating it enough times that we can recall it in our brain at will. I mean, I think that's actually what we're talking about. But I think the name is accurate. I'm thinking back to the 80s, and being on road trips with my family. We didn't fly anywhere together, so we were sort of forced into a car. And we drive as far as we could, without harming each other. So that was something. But one thing that we did, especially when we drive a long day, is my dad would be driving and he'd say, Okay, we're going to memorize psalms. And so that's what we do, my brother and I in the backseat, and we're going to memorize psalms. So Psalm 100. And he would just say it from memory, and we'd have to line it back to him. And we would do it until, you know... We couldn't stop doing it. And we wouldn't stop memorizing it until we had it memorized. So if it took 200 miles, or 300 miles, we weren't off the hook until we had it learned by heart. And at the time, of course, you can guess that this might have felt a little bit like being trapped, or a little bit like punishment. However, it's such a great gift, I can say at this point decades later, that these words are still written on my heart. We did Psalm 139, that's a long psalm! "Lord, you have searched me and known me." Now, of course, I do have the Inspired Version, King James Version words. So I have to go back to the NRSV when I'm preaching on it, because I do prefer that translation. But to spend so much time with it, not only do I have the gift of retrieval that I have it to cling to in immediate moments of distress, I don't have to stop and I don't have to look something up. It's just right there. But I also have a connection with all of the people who have made this a priority, who have written this on their hearts, that there's a sense of connection across time, and across locations. And that it's almost like learning hymns, that you can recognize people by the hymns that they know, or that they might hum. It's that sort of thing that it goes beyond, it goes beyond my mind, it gets into my body, it's into my heart, it's into my gut. And I just have that as part of me, it sort of changes me. So learning by heart, there's that. Now there's something else. I find at this point in my life, it gets harder and harder to memorize, either because I learned faster than I did as a kid, well, maybe not. Or just too distracted or too much coffee, I don't know what it is. Actually, I'm off caffeine now, I shouldn't say too much coffee. That's an old excuse. There's something about it, where it's just hard to do that. And I'm in a fiddle group with high school kids. So we memorize everything, we memorize everything. And we play very difficult music. And the hardest part isn't always learning the notes or playing them fast enough, but remembering the roadmap. We're going to do an A and a B, and an A and a B, and a C, back to A and then a B. And so every letter designates eight or 16 bars of music. And so it's remembering: we're doing a double chorus, then back to the verse, then two choruses, then an extra piece and then back to the verse. And that's tricky. That's tricky. So once again, this is learning by heart that I forced myself to do. Either that or I get lost, and it's highly embarrassing. And I find that there's a gift that comes from a total freedom of having to look at anything of being able to look up and out and around, having the music in my fingers, having the music in my mind, and being able to remember the roadmap, to bookmark anything that's tricky, to just say, I'm going to focus at the end of this section here and make sure that I get it all right. I'm being able to rely on the people around me, to look at them, and to respond to them in the moment. It's very powerful. And it's different than playing in an orchestra with everyone looking down at their stand and glancing up

at the conductor. You're kind of in more of your own world, even though you're still participating. You're still a group. When you get it by heart, you've got freedom to react and to move in different ways. Yeah.

**Carla Long** 14:29

I mean, I don't know if this is exactly what you're talking about - please correct me if I'm wrong - but it kind of feels like there are things that I want to know, basically like, what's the population of Wyoming? Right? So I google it, I look it up, and now I know the population of Wyoming, and then it's gone in like two seconds after I look it up. I feel like we might have been losing, or have lost, or maybe not completely lost, the ability to do exactly what you're saying. We want to take in so much information that there's no way we can hold on to it all. And so it's kind of the opposite of what you're talking about, it sounds like to me.

**Kat Goheen** 15:08

And you're right. We have so much beautiful information that's available to us. I mean, especially those of us who grew up without the internet, and having to dig for facts, but suddenly it's all at our fingers. It's so beautiful! But it goes by at the speed of our mind. And it just doesn't get into our hearts, like, it's gone. And I think about, you know, have you had the paralysis where your cellphone crashes, and you don't have anyone's cellphone numbers. And then you realize - I've had this happen before - I only have three cell numbers memorized outside of my family! I have to go begging for all this information. Do I even have it written down? It's just all outside of me. It's all external. And that's one of my questions. I wonder, what do we lose by not holding more important things close to heart? Like if I'm at an outside computer terminal, and I want to email someone? Do I have my mother's email memorized? Yeah, Mom, I'm pretty sure I do. However, usually, I just auto..., I just call it up. Passwords, do I know all my passwords? Well, they just sort of come up. And we rely on that. And it's wonderful to have that help. It is so different than life in the 80s and 70s. And it's probably better in a lot of ways, and easier. But it's just so easy to give over. Important things. And to not have them available to us, on our own.

**Carla Long** 16:38

Well, I actually completely agree. When I was at Graceland, I went to Barb Mesle's Shakespeare class, and she forced us to memorize either a sonnet or some parts of a play. And I was a little annoyed by it, because I'm like, I can always find it, why do I need to memorize anything. But then I was in England, and we happened to be at Shakespeare's birthplace. And all of a sudden, those words from his sonnet bubbled up within me. And I stood in front of his house, and I recited this entire sonnet, and people were there, and clapping. And I was like, Well, that was really cool. I had a bit of a moment there. So I kind of understand. I feel like, what we're saying right now is that with the internet and with all of this stuff we have at our fingertips, it's a really wide, but shallow knowledge. And what you're talking about is maybe a smaller, but much deeper knowledge. And maybe that's what God is calling us to. Or maybe that's what you're calling us to, or anybody is calling us to.

**Kat Goheen** 17:47

You're reminding me of this word 'connection,' that also, every time I hear it, it makes my heart warm. And I think it's what we're searching for, we're searching for belonging, we're searching for connection. And when I say we, I sort of mean this North American fast-paced life that we live. And I won't say it's only North American, but I won't necessarily out other places and cultures as having this thing happening. I won't call it a disease, but there's a sense of rootlessness or there's a sense of transience

that we get. And I spent some time thinking about the Hebrew Bible before our visit this morning. I spent some time thinking about it. I was like, okay, because this is the big question that kept coming up in seminary, and it's hard to answer it, which means it's a good question. It's a question you could stick with for a while. You could live with this question for a few decades. But it's like, how do you really get a sense or get a handle of the differences between my life, my reactions, or my culture's movements, and the lives and reactions of biblical peoples. And of course, 'peoples' (plural), because it's over 1000s of years, you know, Iron Age, Bronze Age. I mean, you go through technological changes, you go through shifts and family systems. But how do I connect, as a minister, as a person, a person of Spirit, how do I connect with biblical personages? Or with groups of people, or with people whose stories aren't mentioned, people that are sort of under the radar of scripture, whether it's women or foreigners or, you know, fill in the blanks. People who didn't win the right to tell their stories as it comes through? Because the Bible is so important, because scripture is so important. Not to everyone, and not all the time, but the experiences that are in the Bible. So what are the connections that that bring us together. So back to that word connection. And it seems to me I have to be aware of all the differences, before I can sort of dig through and get to similarities. Because I'm hungry for there to be similarities. I don't want to say, Oh, it was so foreign, that situation could never happen today. There is nothing there that applies to my life, or my time and my culture. Go ahead.

**Carla Long 20:24**

I think that's really important. I was reminded of the spiritual practice Dwelling in the Word, when you take this passage, and you read it two or three times, and you ask questions in the middle. And I remember hearing about a church, not a Community of Christ church, a different church, that was doing this Dwelling in the Word. And they used one scripture, one passage of scripture, and they were doing a Dwelling in the Word on it for six months. The same passage! And then after six months, they're like, Okay, well, maybe we can move on. And this older woman raised her hand, and she said, You know, I feel like I'm just starting to get it. After six months of the same scripture! And for me, who moves pretty fast, I'm like, That's ridiculous. But it's not though, is it? If we talk, if we look at that word 'connection,' and what that woman was understanding, doing a group spiritual practice, maybe she's understanding the connection with the other people, maybe she's understanding that scripture, maybe it was all coming together, because she had that. And I mean, that's a pretty big story for me right now.

**Kat Goheen 21:39**

And it sounds like she was rooting into the scripture. And you're right, she was rooting into it in community, which is so beautiful, too, because you're not alone. She's not on her own. And she's like, Hey, guys, I don't want to slow you down, but you know, would you hang in here with me? Like let's stick together and stick with this. And that's the thing that I think is hardest for me, to get with a biblical people. To really sort of put my imagination, my heart, to try to get there. I mean, there are a lot of difficult things. But for me, it's that idea of the connection to the land, and the connection to the patrimony. The land that's handed down through the family. And the idea that God gave this land, not just any random piece of land. It's not like me saying: Temple Lot. It's not me saying something outside of myself, but the land that my house is on, and the land that my father's house is on, because his house is joined to mine with this wall. And not the house that my children live in, because that's joined to mine with this wall. But this land was given to us by Yahweh, like this land that we're living on, that we're standing on, is our heritage, our spiritual heritage, our physical heritage, that, until things got kind of sketchy in the Hebrew Bible, until we got it sort of into Kings, and monetization, until things started

really shifting in the society, it's like, it wasn't for sale. Like your relatives would bail you out. Like this land is connected to you. So I mean, I just can't get my imagination around the idea of being so rooted in a place that's also rooted into my heart. Like my relationship with God is connected with this land. And I have to think that so many decisions around the environment, around how these resources have to come back to that, would come back to that. I can't imagine you could just sell out the land, physically, knowing that it's your spiritual connection to God.

**Carla Long** 23:47

That's so interesting, Kat. You're taking me into a lot of different places, which I appreciate you doing. So, at the very beginning of this podcast you wanted to talk about the phenomenal art of oral transmission, and storytelling, and transformation. And I feel like we've touched on a little bit of storytelling and transformation. But do you want to talk a little bit more about what you mean by that?

**Kat Goheen** 24:13

Absolutely. Ah, now, I'm growing right now. I know you can't really see that, but I'm growing right now. And whether you're a kid or a grown-up, when you're in a growth spurt, you sort of take in a lot of nutrients, like sort of behave differently. So for me when I'm in a growth spurt, I'm suddenly reading six books at a time. And I just sort of follow the Spirit. I'm looking for synchronicity. How does this book connect to this book. Normally, I'm a one book kind of girl. I'm going to start something and just finish it. But right now, it's a growth spurt. The problem with it is sorting out what did I read where, because they all just sort of turned into one epic thing. But what I read recently in a book called *Blue Mind*, which I really have to highly recommend, by Wallace J. Nichols. Sorry, I want to make sure I get that in there: Wallace J. Nichols. He said, what's really interesting when you study the mind, so when you get into neuroscience, is that when anybody is confronted but with an idea that challenges a cherished belief, that the areas in the brain that lights up for them is not the intellectual center, but it's the emotional center. And I read that and I stopped, and I went back and read it again. And it was like, oh my goodness, that makes so much sense. So Carla, if you were to tell me some specific thing about something I'd said already that was wrong, my reaction to you would be emotional. It wouldn't be intellectual. I wouldn't say Oh, good point. Carla, thank you so much for telling me that. That's probably not - unless I was at my best - that's probably not how I would react to you. I would be more defensive perhaps, or justifying myself, or changing the topic, or attacking you for coming at me with my cherished belief, or not even cherished belief but just an idea that I believe is true. Just anything that gets close to that heart of belief. And when I read that I thought, okay, so that kind of explains a lot of the rhetoric that we're hearing. And when I say we're hearing, I mean, sort of like news reports, and not just politics, but you know, anything around the environment, around science, women's rights, just so many areas, immigration. That it gets emotional really fast. And it gets emotional, and it gets hot, and the rhetoric gets really high. And it's not very reasoned, there's not a lot of room for listening, there's a lot of room for talking and talking loudly. So coming back to this blue mind idea, I followed it out! Because he's passionate about oceans and water and being close to oceans and water. And what that does for our mind, how amazing it is, it's like, cool, that's good! So he says, if we have these emotional reactions, then the way to get at transformation and change is to approach the emotions. So not to approach with a rational logical argument, you know, well thought out proof, but to approach with storytelling, and that's sort of his prescription for finding transformation. So do you want to jump in there? Because I've got examples.

**Carla Long 27:33**

Oh, I want to hear the examples. This is awesome stuff. Keep going, please.

**Kat Goheen 27:37**

So I tried. I mean, I loved his examples, but they're his examples, and you can read them. And we're doing podcast today. This is talking and listening. You get to hear me in real time. You could skip ahead, like, go ahead, but you're going miss stuff and you'll have to eventually go back and listen to it, if you want to make any sense out of what's going on today. So I came up with three stories. The first one is sitting down with my friend Wassan in her living room, and watching the Hajj. This is last year. Here she's immigrated to Canada, and we're friends. And I'm seeing all these people dressed in white, circling in Mecca. And just circling, walking, just 1000s of people, 1000s of people, and you can hear the prayers. You can hear the gaps in the prayer, you can hear random noises. And she's telling me about the Hajj, she's telling me all the rituals that go on around it. And obviously, she's homesick. Obviously, it's a tough time to be in Canada, and not to be closer to home. But I'm sitting here and I'm hearing her emotion around this very holy festival. And I'm caught up into it. Now, it doesn't make me Muslim. No, not by any means. And it doesn't give me special insight. It doesn't tell me everything there is to know about Wassan. No, but it opens my heart to see the beauty, just the rich beauty of her religion. And to put that and hold it next to my appreciation for my own religion, and my own spirituality, and God's movement. I see God's movement in what's happening with her, and in her passion around her tradition. And in a way that I really couldn't get from just being told to be open to others and open to other traditions. That's something that reaches right in and shows me how my tradition is valuable, no less valuable, but how I can also honor her and honor her tradition.

**Carla Long 30:04**

Oh, that is beautiful story. I loved hearing that. Thank you! And I mean, hearing about how someone else feels about something changes the way you feel as well. I'm into this. Okay, two more examples. I'm ready.

**Kat Goheen 30:16**

Two more examples! Super good! So, this is something I'm doing through my spiritual direction program. But I've been going into, we'll say, the toughest spot in Vancouver. So for us, it's the Downtown Eastside. Every city has an area like this. For Vancouver, it's been this way for like 200 years, because it's always were the men who had come to Vancouver, they go out and do resources. They do timber, or mining, or fishing, or whatever. They don't come into Vancouver to spend their money, and where they would go for bars, or to find women, was this area. So it's never been a nice residential area, it's always sort of been a kind of rough, free for all, sort of thing. And, yeah, it's kind of a place where you go, it's like Skid Row, it's a place where you go when you don't have any other supports to fall back on. And people there take care of each other after a fashion. But there's a lot of addiction issues, a lot of mental health issues. So there's this wonderful place called The Listening Post, where we meditate twice a day, and just have snacks out. And people can come in, whether they're business people who work in Vancouver downtown, or whether they just need a place to go, a third space, a safe space to go. And they just come in, and the volunteers just sit and listen. And we make tea. We serve everyone tea, we have snacks, and then two times we stop and meditate for 20 minutes. And so one of the guys came in, and I'll call him Jay, and he just sat down and he just looked like he'd been living pretty rough. He brought in all this stuff with him off the street. And he's sitting. I



was new, so one of the other volunteers said, Hey Jay, tell your story. And I'm like, you don't have to tell me your story. It's okay. I'm not a voyeur. I don't need to know. But he was just happy to say, I moved out to the suburbs. I come in. When I come into the Downtown Eastside, I get a meal. And that's good. But when I come in, I see my old pushers. And it's more tempting to you get a fix, and I'm trying to stay clean. And it's like, you know, just that much. And he stayed the whole time I was there, four hours. And, during that time, we'd stop and we'd meditate together. And there's something really beautiful about just sitting quietly, even when we're visiting, by just sitting with people, and having nothing else to do. There's zero multitasking. I'm not at home, I don't have to answer phone calls, do emails, get ahead of anything. I'm just there, I park it, I park myself at the door. And I'm just available. And to be in meditation with Jay, you know, when we're sitting across from each other, the candles and the bells and everything. We're sitting across from each other. And it just was so impressed on my heart that God didn't love me one speck more than God loved Jay. That we were just both sitting on the floor, meditating. And God was just so pleased, utterly pleased with both of us. And it was a ridiculous sense of wellbeing that came over me at just seeing myself human sized, creature size. Ah, it was just wonderful. And his happiness to share his story with me, his happiness that I was there. And we were just both there together. So, yeah, there you go.

**Carla Long** 33:45

That's a really good example, too. You're reminding me of some times I've had in our house church in Utah County of people who have come in, and they just have a story that is begging to be spilled out. Like they desperately need someone just to listen to them, because they just don't have anyone who will listen. And when those stories need to come out no matter what. And you can be there, and you can be part of that. That is such a gift that you're offering. And that is a real gift that you're offering those people, Kat, that's really awesome.

**Kat Goheen** 34:22

Oh, and it's holy space. It's not just holy, because we meditate there and because it's there intentionally. But anytime there's a sharing like that, I almost can't breathe sometimes. I just want to hold my breath, because it's just so full of Spirit. You know, it's just like I don't want to disturb anything. And I know you know what I'm talking about. Yes, it is. It is amazing to be there.

**Carla Long** 34:48

And then those sacred moments. Those are so incredibly important.

**Kat Goheen** 34:51

I know it! We don't just live for them. But aren't they nice when they come along?

**Carla Long** 34:56

They're what keeps me going in ministry. Those moments are pretty important and special. Wow, what a great story. You made me cry. You made me cry just a little bit.

**Kat Goheen** 35:08

I'm sorry. Well, I don't know if you like the next one or not.

**Carla Long** 35:12

All right, hit me with it, I'm ready!

**Kat Goheen 35:13**

Okay. And so the third piece is the environmental piece. And this one I've had such a hard time with, because I'm convinced that we make changes. We don't change our behavior, unless it hits us close to home, unless it hits our hearts. That if it's just our minds, like, oh I know I'm not supposed to throw stuff away, and I know I'm not supposed to drive my car too much, we could feel guilty and stuff, but I don't think we change - I don't think I change - behavior till it gets closer than that. So if you can picture this, and I got permission from my daughter, so it's okay to tell the story. I get in trouble about that. You're gonna have to watch that, Carla, as your kiddo gets older, you always have to ask permission. But we're driving in the car. And my older one says to me (she's sitting in the backseat and we can't see each other), she says Mum, so what's - oh my gosh, I can't even say it - What's global warming really gonna look like? And so I talked about temperatures rising, and what it's going to look like. Some possible effects of sea levels rising, what it means for places like where we live, where we're close to the ocean. We've been having lots of wildfires in the summers, the last few summers. So I'm like, that's not going to get better, they'll get worse. And then issues of food sovereignty and water sovereignty, having access to water. And how do we take care of the least among us, when it's getting harder for everyone? You know, just compassion. And she's just sort of taking it in. And so we have this little chat. I said, I'm not an expert. This is what I know, this is what I've heard. And at the end of this, we keep driving, and I realize, Oh, my kiddo has just dialed back. She's just dialed back her expectations for what life's gonna be like. You know how every generation wants their kids to have it better than they had it? And she's doing the opposite. And it broke my heart. Well, it's still breaking my heart. And I think that's the power of storytelling, when things become so real, and so personal. And it's not necessarily statistics and numbers. And it's no offense against math, Carla. Not at all. It's just that I feel that that's not how we reach each other. And that's not how we change.

**Carla Long 37:56**

I agree. And yes, that made me cry also. That's hard stuff, Kat.

**Kat Goheen 38:02**

Yeah, it's hard stuff. And then I have my younger one, who now I don't have permission for this, sorry. And she'll say things like, Mum, do we really have to drive to the store? Could we walk? I'm like, no, we actually do have to drive. Well Mum, I don't think we should drive! I think we should ride our bikes! I mean, they're actually starting to judge every decision that we make. Do we have to have the air conditioning on? Could we just go with windows? I mean, they're getting so aware of things like power usage, extra packaging. And I mean, it's like having two external consciences that are with me, that are around all the time. It's amazing! I don't think we all have the benefit - or curse - of that to us. But I'll say that I'm living with it. And I'm getting much, much more mindful about all sorts of decisions. But that's how we change. And I think about just on a general level, that prayer and testimony service. I grew up, you know, anytime the church was open, our family was going. That was just the family rules. So we were there Wednesday nights, Sunday night, Sundays, you know, kid stuff, whatever was going on. And the power of those testimonies when someone talks about how they were healed by God, or how they heard a voice just at that dark moment, when they needed something. How someone was there for them, or how a hymn reached into their heart at just the right time and gave them what they needed. And I think about sermons. Whenever we talk about worship in our congregation, it always comes up.

People don't really like sermons per se, but they love the stories. They love it when someone's honest about something they did that wasn't quite awesome. Or when people make connections between a scripture and their own personal experience. I think we love this; we react to it; we respond to it. It's like, why we go to theaters, why we go to movies, so we can see this connection to some either epic tragic story or beautiful story or a love story. That that's so close to us, like a fairy tales. Why do we read our kids fairy tales? You know, some of them are terrible, but there's just such a deep wisdom that comes through them. And stories of transformation that we can see. And sometimes we catch the wave, or we get touched, we get touched deeply enough or closely enough that it really matters.

**Carla Long** 40:41

Oh, for sure. I really appreciate the quote from Blue Mind, and bringing that to the forefront. Because even though I think in my mind I knew that, what you're talking about, how we react emotively, it's really good to remember that because I have some very, very strong opinions about what I think is right, and what I think is good about politics and church and all of that stuff. And when somebody disagrees with me, I feel it in my whole body. I'm like, go! Why are they so stupid? And you just almost can't stop it. But maybe you can stop it, now that you remember. I don't need to react to this in such an emotional way. I can walk my way through this. Why? Or was it responding to them, their emotions, or my emotions?

**Kat Goheen** 41:40

Both! Because I mean, a strong emotion will tend to trigger a strong emotion, or a strong reaction. Absolutely, absolutely. Well, and so it's being aware of it in myself, like my own reactions first. And then being aware, this person is having such a strong emotional reaction, oh my goodness, this is close to something major for her. This is close to something major, like this is close to a nerve. This is really close. Oftentimes, those emotions are connected to fear. It's like, oh my goodness, this person is so afraid right now. Okay, how can I be here? How can I be present, not hide myself, not protect myself, not put up a bunch of armor? How can I be here and be non-threatening? And try to help defuse? How can I help her step away from that edge? And maybe people are very happy exercising themselves that way. But when you think about it, you think about trauma, you think about how the body reacts to trauma, how the body reacts to going up and down a hill of intense spikes of emotion every day. I mean, it's so exhausting. And it's just not good for us. And you're carrying all this extra cortisol and all these extra hormones in your body. I mean, it would be ever so much nicer, not to be Vulcan - I'm not saying we get rid of emotion - but we just see where it is, and honor it when we have it, and move through it, and move on. And don't just get stuck in a loop, either trying to avoid it, or deny it, or just being in it all the time.

**Carla Long** 43:20

And that takes a lot of energy to do that, and to be in that space. I actually think it takes - I'm assuming this is right, you can tell me if I'm wrong - but it takes a lot of preparation work to get into that space. I know that when I'm meditating on a regular basis, and when I am mindful on a regular basis, then my emotions are a little bit easier to control and handle. And when I'm not, oh boy, step out of my way!

**Kat Goheen** 43:52

And it depends how often you're confronted with adamant views that are very different than yours. Because you can get worn down, you do get worn down. And the other thing is, see there's a balance.

I've been doing this, like I say, this inner journey, which is also an outer journey. But the inner journey really focused on that for like the past four or five years, on top of forever. And there's always the danger of navel gazing, of just being concerned with myself and trying to sort myself out. Now you have to go through it, you can't skip that part. But it can take over in an unhealthy self-help way. So that's the one piece of it. And the other piece, let's see, getting stuck in yourself. Oh, this idea is so close and it's just frittering away. The other danger about this is that I feel, after having a few successes, like actually being able to wave away a few thoughts during meditation, I start to have the feeling I can do it myself, that what I'm describing to you, Carla, is simply be aware of your emotions, move through them, slip through them. And I could describe the whole thing with no context of God, or God in my life, or the Holy Spirit, and sort of give grace back to God and say, don't worry, God, I got this one covered, I got myself. I can just be a self-actualized person and go on into the world, and be a force of good. And I believe in my experience, that that is not true. I know it's not true for myself, that there's always - whether I see it or not - that I feel like I'm swimming in grace and swimming in the Holy Spirit. And that God charges this whole world with grandeur, that God charges the world with magnificence. And it's only if we have eyes to see that, that life becomes different. So I guess I would say, yes, absolutely. Meditation practice, totally! Centering prayer, all of these things help to smooth out our souls, let our hearts relax a little bit, give us more space, helps us feel from our heads into our hearts into our bodies. And just be creatures, like be whole creatures the way God made us, and not just be heads running around. But there's also this compassion that God gifts us with, especially if we ask for it and look for it. And that when I'm face to face with her, my shadow side, the person who's triggering a bunch of stuff in myself, that this her, this other person, is so beloved by God, is so beloved by God, the same way Jay is, the same way you are, Carla, and you on the other end of the speaker. And that if I can remember that, so much of this work is just remembering. It's not making stuff up. It's just remembering. If I can remember that, then God's compassion is actually free to flow into me. You know, if I don't block it off, if I don't say yes, God, compassion for everyone except her. No, everyone except them.

**Carla Long** 47:09

Everyone except for someone who believes in this way.

**Kat Goheen** 47:12

Oh, I know. I know! It gets hard.

**Carla Long** 47:16

That was, I think, a really good segue into my next question, which is a question that we talked about before, actually. It's: what is the connection - and we may have already said it - what is the connection between love and transformation?

**Kat Goheen** 47:30

Yeah, here's a thing that's close to home. So part of the work that we've done in understanding ourselves in my program of spiritual direction, is the Enneagram, which we can't get into, that's okay. But a basic understanding that I got right away is that I'm a heart person. That's my strength, that's where I come from. And yet, I went into this program saying, I feel totally separate from my heart. So many times, I feel like I should be feeling something. And it's just cold and empty inside. I'm like, where's my heart. And I felt I had to manufacture reactions, or manufacture emotions, just so that it came across as human and not alien or something else. So where does love come into it? It's been a

sustain for me. My homework, my self-imposed homework for all this time has been to find my heart. And it's been quite a journey. I felt like the Tin Man in Wizard of Oz, you know, if I only had a heart. Well, Tin Man always had a heart, overflowing with compassion and stuff. But it's a matter of getting there. And sometimes, the parts of us that are the strongest are also the most blocked. They're the most remote from us. And when I came to understand that truism, and actually believed it for myself, it's sort of started this healing. And I sort of started this conversation with my heart that's actually been very fascinating and life sustaining. And, yeah, we're getting to be friends. And that takes a bit of the pressure off the head as it were. Our heads that try to do too many things, all the time. So what is love? What is this connection? I believe when we tap into this, when we tap into our hearts with love, that all of a sudden, the things that hold us, the structures that hold us, whether it's - I don't know, I hate to put names on things - whether it's patriotism or sexism or racism or just any ideological constructs that hold us, they don't disappear. But I believe they lose their force. I believe they lose their force. And I believe that love is like the power of the ocean. It's like the saltiness of tears. There's something about love that breaks it down. And there's something about love that puts us into our bodies, and helps us be creatures, and helps us see ourselves for who we are. And once again, not just disembodied heads floating around above the earth. But it helps us be real. like the Velveteen rabbit. I mean, just all of these ideas that come together. And that's why I believe that storytelling in being able to journey with another character - whether it's Harry Potter, or whether it's Moses, or I don't know, just take your pick - when you're journeying with another character, I think it reminds us, it reminds me, that I'm a character in my own life, that I have choices to make, that I'm an actor, that I have the power to do, and to act, and to be, thanks to the grace of God, not all due to my own merits. But yeah, I think there's so much in our world that wants to make us scared, and wants to make us small, and wants to make us passive and reactive, in every sense of it. And that through stories we can jumpstart our sense of adventure, and our sense of autonomy, and just remind ourselves of who we are and what we came here to do. And yeah. I just want to tie it up with this wonderful quote I read in one of my devotionals that said, "Life is like a road, would you want to build a house on a road?" Like, if you were on a trip, would you build a house on a road? And I thought about it, like, oh no, of course not. And it's like, yeah, life is like that. So try not to invest all of yourself in the road of your life. Remember, it's a destination. And we have a hope and promise that there's more to life than just this, just what we see. Just the material.

**Carla Long 52:00**

Absolutely. You're literally just taking my mind and shoving it in tons of different places. I was thinking about, when we live in our heads, we can control what happens in our heads for the most part. We can control our thinking, we can control a lot of that stuff. We cannot control our hearts, it feels like. Maybe I'm wrong. Would you say that that's true, we can control our heads, but we can't control our hearts?

**Kat Goheen 52:33**

I think that's true. You know, there's that saying, "The heart wants what the heart wants." And that's a place where it feels like dangerous territory. It might be easier for us to listen to our bodies than to listen to our hearts, which I know sounds weird. But we get far afield. We travel a lot farther than our hearts do. I think our hearts are a bit more grounded. But I've just had too many experiences of meeting God in my heart. And God's just been waiting there. So it's the opposite of that oil painting image that I saw as a kid, where it's Jesus knocking at the door of your heart. I know we had one of those in our congregational building, just leaning in and knocking at this door covered in ivy. It's the opposite. It's almost like Jesus is inside my heart knocking for the rest of me to pay attention and to get there. But

the heart is tricky, because the heart is vulnerable. The heart is vulnerable, the heart is connected. The heart is not too big. The heart might say, hey, I need to make big changes, I have too many things. You're too attached to things. My heart kind of loves peoples and creatures, and loves the planet. And that's countercultural. It's hard to set limits, when your heart starts going. It just kind of keeps going. And it has its own energy and it's beautiful. But it's a force of nature. That's what I'm experiencing. And I find myself dancing with my heart. It's like a partner, right? But I'm learning to follow. That's the trick, the heart wants to lead, and heads what my head doesn't like to follow. It would rather lead.

**Carla Long** 54:28

Well, I think that's probably true for most people. That's certainly true for me, at least, too. My head is very powerful and very strong. And my heart says, let's try this! And my head is like, that sounds ridiculous, we're not doing that. Everyone's gonna look at you weird, Carla, if you do that, or say that!

**Kat Goheen** 54:46

And you know what I say, Carla? I say, God bless your head. I say, good job head, excellent work. Excellent work. You keep it all together. Look, we're here today, doing this conversation, because you manage it all. Good stuff. And so, once we acknowledge that this is wonderful, look at how capable I am. And then in the next breath, do I have to carry that energy into every aspect of my life? Is this the only Carla that I know, is there more? Is there more? What's there for me? I don't know, those are fun questions.

**Carla Long** 55:22

Those are fun questions. And also thank you for blessing my head! I appreciate it. So another question that we had talked about previously, and I think it's a good place to ask it now is, how can we live in our thinking hearts as people of faith? Like how can we live in our hearts and yet let our heads still have part of that as well, as people of faith, as Christians or as Muslims, or whatever our faith is?

**Kat Goheen** 55:47

Absolutely. And I put this question in... Okay, first I have to tell you this little bitty story that I love. So this guy has a burning question, travels over huge distances, big obstacles, gets to the holy man, asks the holy man his question. The holy man slaps him across the face. He's shocked. So the pilgrim leaves, but one of the disciples has pity on him and comes over and says, the master only meant that your question is like the meaning of your life. And why would he do you the disservice of taking that away from you? Like, your question is very valuable, so hang on to it. So this is maybe for me the most precious question that I'm bringing into our time today: how can we live? Because it's not just *be in*. How can we *live in* our thinking hearts as people of faith? I don't have the answer to this all the way. But I love this idea of 'thinking hearts.' And I get it from Marion Woodman, beautiful Jungian analyst. Once again, one of my half a dozen books that I'm chewing on at the moment. And so this idea of the thinking heart, it says that we don't live only in our heads. If we live only in our heads, then we're thinking minds, and we are thinking heads. But that we learn to drop into our hearts, first to know where it is to actually feel it in your body and say, oh, there's my heart. And it's cool. I mean, it's cool. I've learned to do this, it's very cool. Who's good at that? Robert Sardello, "Silence" and "Heartfulness." He's got beautiful meditations for trying to actually find that sensation of your heart in your body. If it's tricky for you, like it was tricky for me. So first we just learn the geography, we just learn the biology, like a bit of spiritual biology. Here's my mind, I'm going to drop into my heart, and just feel there. Just be

there. Just feel what it's feeling. And just observe, and honor my heart. And you learn to drop into your body too, all those gut feelings. Like you say, it's so easy to dismiss them. Oh, that's silly. Why should I think that about so and so, it's so silly. And then you find out later, oh, there was a good reason that my body knew things my mind didn't actually know. We learn to listen to the wisdom, and honor the wisdom that we get from other ways of knowing beyond our heads, and what we can see, and hear, and smell. Once we get that spiritual biology that we have within ourselves, then I think, it's simply a matter of actually using all of these ways of knowing, at the same time of slowing down a little bit, because it does take a bit of coordination. But there's something about being genuine, there's something about being fully present, about being grounded. And by grounded, I don't simply mean grounded like meditation, but actually feeling connected to the ground, like really feeling that your body takes up space, and that you're right here, right now. You've got weight to your body, and that weight is good. It's not just something to fight against, and try to lose as much as possible. That the weight of your body is good. There's a weight of your feelings, a weight of your soul. And at the same time a lightness. It's that effortless effort-thing again, that there's a joy. There's a space in your body, that there's music almost, like it can actually feel quite beautiful. So I think what we're going for, what I'm going for, with my big question that I would get slapped across the face if I tried to just get it answered, just willy nilly, is to let my thinking be infused with feeling, to react to my reactions when I have them, to notice them. Let it happen. Let it go by, oh my goodness, I'm angry. Oh my goodness, I'm sad. And not to go to numbing behaviors or distracting behaviors, not to go to Facebook, not to go get a snack, not just to run away from what's happening, but to learn habitually, to learn in my body, to be present, and to let the good come, and let the bad come, too. And try not to get hung up on any of it. Just kind of let it be there. And I think that God has lots of grace to pour on us. I think God has extra grace to pour on us, when we live in our hearts and our heads, because we can't receive all that grace, if we're just in our heads. If we're so busy hiding from parts of ourselves, we can't receive that grace, that there's a grace that comes when we're open. And it's automatic. It's like breathing. If you breathe all the way out, if you exhale, the air comes rushing in. And it's like that with God's grace. But if we try to hold our breaths and not take anything in, then it's way harder for God to get at us. Oh, I think it's all there, Carla, it's all right here.

**Carla Long** 1:00:59

I completely agree. But that tiny little word that is so, so, so, so scary, called vulnerability, that's the scariest word for a lot of people, myself included. You have to be a little bit vulnerable in order for that to happen.

**Kat Goheen** 1:01:17

And there's that wonderful scripture, "be vulnerable to divine grace." Thank God, we have that scripture, and I love it. But that's exactly this work. Be vulnerable. We're gonna live in inner-thinking hearts, with our thinking hearts, and be vulnerable to divine grace.

**Carla Long** 1:01:36

Oh, well, gosh, we have covered a lot of ground in the last hour or so. And I feel like there's still so much more to say. But I was wondering, we should probably, unfortunately, close off the podcast, because you know, after an hour, people get a little bit, what's the word, fussy?

**Kat Goheen** 1:01:57

I was going to say antsy! It's time for snack, right?

**Carla Long** 1:01:58

That's right! Or Facebook or some sort of distraction. Is there something that you wanted me to ask that I didn't ask, something that you wanted to say and make sure that people heard from you before we sign off?

**Kat Goheen** 1:02:11

Oh, no. Those three stories were so close to my heart. And I'm so glad we had time to get into those. I would simply just speak from my heart to you, and to everyone out there. Just words of encouragement. And I know from my own experience, that there is no straight line forward. It's always two steps forward, one step back. But I've always experienced encouragement, even when I'm bad to myself, when I get very critical, slip into old patterns of perfectionism. I mean, it happens. Of course, it does. But to discover self-compassion, and to allow God to love me. Oh, my goodness, it's the same life, but it is a totally different life. It's richer, it's more meaningful. And it connects me. Anything that connects me with the people around me, the creatures around me, with this beautiful world that we live in, is just a sign of blessing. It's a sign of blessedness. And then I don't have to focus on our differences, I don't have to focus on everything that keeps us apart, but just look for that life and that flourishing, and give it love and give it attention and support. So I would just encourage y'all to just really feel that you have it in you to be so happy in your life, and find meaning and connection. And I just wish the best for you.

**Carla Long** 1:03:51

Well, thank you so much for those wonderful words, Kat. I really appreciate talking to you. I appreciate what you had to share with us. And I'm just so grateful.

**Kat Goheen** 1:03:58

And thank you, Carla. I loved being in conversation with you and God bless with everything.

**Carla Long** 1:04:05

And you too.

**Kat Goheen** 1:04:06

Thank you.

**Josh Mangelson** 1:04:14

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