

Introduction: [00:00](#) Welcome to the Wrighter's Way Podcast where we celebrate writers who have completed their books and inspire writers who haven't. Join Laurie and her guests as they talk about writing, books, and life in between chapters.

Laurie: [00:17](#) Hi everybody. It's Laurie with the Wrighter's Way Podcast here with Reid Kaplan, author of Let's Eat Together and goal maker to the extreme. So welcome, Reid.

Reid: [00:29](#) Thank you for having me, Laurie.

Laurie: [00:30](#) You're welcome. Thanks for coming on. I can't wait to get all this stuff about your book and the goals that first, can you share with everybody who you are and a bit about your background, which is so interesting.

Reid: [00:41](#) Yeah. Yeah. So my name is Reid Kaplan and well now, I'm a children's book author, but I started out as a filmmaker. I graduated from New York Film Academy in 2002 and I was doing a lot of independent films, writing scripts, a lot of behind the scenes stuff, a lot, a lot of video work, lot of video marketing for businesses, whatever anybody needed me to do. And you know, when my wife got pregnant, everything shifted for me, I started becoming a lot more aware of the whole children's book world and you know, it basically called my name and the rest is history.

Laurie: [01:24](#) I love that. Cool. Okay. And your book. How long did you work on that book?

Reid: [01:31](#) So, ah, let's see. It was probably about a two year process from start to finish. Actually. The idea idea came to me, probably, almost four years ago, but you know, I already had another book that I was working on and I ended up pushing that one a little bit to the side because I just feel that the theme of this book, Let's Eat Together. It's just more important and what the world needs more than. I mean I'm all for entertaining books, you know, books that entertain kids. That's great. And teach them, you know, because my other book, How Did That Mouse Get in Our House that I pushed to the side is more, I'm teaching kids about animals and the noises they make and it, it's, it's good. I liked the book. I just at a time where the world is so divided I'm trying to push the narrative of getting back together again and what better place to do it then at the table and we're all different. So like in this book, all the animals are different. Just like people are different, families are different. There's no one that is the same and we can all get along with, you know, if there's no food on the table, there's no reason for us to eat

each other or chase after each other. We can all get along just like the animals do.

Laurie: [02:52](#)

Don't eat your friends. Okay.

Reid: [02:55](#)

If they can do it, we can do it. So I'm hoping that the story rubs off on not only kids but their parents as well because, you know, in this world kids learn from their parents. So we as parents have to be not only parents but we have to be teachers and teach them the right things to do and how to treat others.

Laurie: [03:17](#)

That is a lot of themes in one book about eating.

Reid: [03:21](#)

It is. But you know, nowadays we, we have to do that. It just, it's our responsibility and I think as writers, you know, we have that opportunity to get out there to people and enlighten them on things that they know they shouldn't forget about.

Laurie: [03:42](#)

Mmhmm yeah love it. Okay. And since we're talking about your book and the themes and all that, why don't you share with us sort of the goal that you associate with this book and what's happening with that?

Reid: [03:50](#)

Absolutely. So it's great. We hit our first goal. I was telling Laurie before, this morning I was down at Washington Park in Bridgeport handing out flyers to a lot of the people that either live in the park or they sleep in some of the housing complexes around the area. It's a pretty rough area. We posted a lot of signs. We have a food truck Drubacue there. They're great people. They're going to be a pulling up. We're going to be setting up a shop there and pass it out as many hot meals or food as possible to people. We hit our goal of 100 families, but we think that we might be able to even feed some more people than that, so that's why I say as many as we can, we're just going to feed until the food's out. So, it just, it really is a smack of reality though when you go down there and you see how, you know, how some, some people are, are living. It's, tough. It's tough. So yeah, we're going to give back as much as we can. For uh, this month, for next month we hope to do is every month, through book sales and you know, that's, that's, that's my, my true goal is to do this every month. Whether it be January, February, March, April, without any holidays. I just figured the holiday is the best time to roll it out so for Thanksgiving, we're going to do. We did 100 families every Christmas. Our goal is 250 families.

Laurie: [05:23](#) So how does that work with your book? Are you taking all the profits? Are you just taking some of it? How's that? How's that working?

Reid: [05:29](#) Yeah, it's a great question. So what we do is with every book I sell through my website or if somebody buys one for me in person, people feed up to four people with, with that, the sale of that book, how I have it worked out for a plate you know, because everything is, you know, I haven't figured out per plate out much the plates are going to cost me to feed each person and you know, I have to obviously I have to make a living and I have to pay off the debt I incurred, you know, starting this, this publishing business and you know, so...

Laurie: [06:06](#) But you're not taking all the profits.

Reid: [06:09](#) No no no no no.

Laurie: [06:10](#) You're feed four people on the sale of one book and also make a profit for yourself.

Reid: [06:16](#) Absolutely. Yeah. You know, I have to say in this, in this business of, of publishing, there can be a nice profit margin if you know your numbers and really do your research and you, you hire the right people to do the jobs you need done that you can't do yourself because, you know, I think that one of the most important things is delegating responsibility to people that are stronger than you in areas that you aren't. And where I'm strong, I do do those jobs, but where I'm, where I'm not like my illustrations. I have a girl do those for me. I have somebody do my formatting. If I had to do all that stuff, the book would never be done. We were having this conversation and I would be daydreaming.

Laurie: [07:12](#) So you delegate it out, it gets done fast. I gets done better.

Reid: [07:16](#) Absolutely. Absolutely.

Laurie: [07:20](#) So you're one of these people has always wanted to write. Yes?

Reid: [07:23](#) Yeah.

Laurie: [07:24](#) So since you were a kid you were writing?

Reid: [07:26](#) So I've probably been writing since I was 17. I met my journey was a little bit different. I, I, I was actually big into sports. I played football, I played college football and a lot of my friends

were more like the artsy, the artsy kind of folk. And I don't really think that, you know, any of them I can really bounce ideas off of for stories. But they're great people though, but, you know, great friends, but not, not really, you know, as creative. So, I began reading stories when I was about 17 years old. Actually I have to go back, I was actually cleaning up. My wife is yelling at me because, she's, she's pregnant and we were having a baby in December next month. Congratulations. Thank you. So we're cleaning I was cleaning the basement out because you know she's nesting. She's in the nesting phase, so everything's gotta be ready. Right? So I was cleaning the basement out and I stumbled upon a story I had written when I was in third grade and it's about a kid and his magic shoes and I'm actually going to take it and I'm going to turn it into a story. It's a full story, but it was from a third year, third graders money, which is even cooler I think.

- Laurie: [08:47](#) Yeah, I think that really helps us sell books when you have the language that kids use and the actual old language from when you were eight.
- Reid: [08:55](#) It's crazy. So I stumbled upon it. I remember taking it from my mother's house a while ago and saying, you know what, one day I'm going to take this story and just maybe update it a little bit. Or not update it, but you know, like fix, fix around a couple of things, tweak a couple things and then release it because I think it's a good story.
- Laurie: [09:17](#) That's incredible.
- Reid: [09:18](#) It's pretty cool. So I have been writing for a long time.
- Laurie: [09:23](#) Yes you have.
- Reid: [09:23](#) I'll be forty December 15, so yeah.
- Laurie: [09:28](#) For 30 years.
- Reid: [09:30](#) 30 plus years. Yeah, absolutely. I love writing.
- Laurie: [09:33](#) And did you always feel confident about it? Like did you always feel like, yeah, I'm going to be good, I'm going to sell. That's not an issue. I just have to get it done? Or did you have some doubts?
- Reid: [09:42](#) Oh yeah. And I, I don't, I still have doubts. I mean I think that doubt is just one of those normal things that everybody has. It's

one of those things you have to it's a daily thing you have to conquer, you know, especially for an artist, you know, you can listen to the main the people. Because the people, most people can't, don't understand what we are doing and, you know, it's a, it's a different mindset. I think, you know, there's nothing wrong with having a nine to five job and doing anything, you know, normal construction, real estate, whatever. But when you're creating things, it's a whole, a whole 'nother ballgame. You're putting your heart out there, you know, and if somebody doesn't like it, I mean it, it's tough. And you know, there's so many people that can't understand what we're doing. So they're like, you know, maybe you shouldn't do that. Maybe you should be doing this. Maybe you should get a job doing this. So when they started saying that, of course doubt is going to creep into your mind. I mean, it's natural, but if you really believe in yourself and what you're trying to do, you have to just find a way to shake that self doubt away and just get through. And, and tomorrow's always another day. Even if you have a day where, you know, it's just, it's just not right. You know, tomorrow, tomorrow always comes. And it could be the best day ever and you'll be like, well, you won't even think one one lick about the day before. You'll just be, you know, living in the, in the moment. And that's how you should be. You shouldn't dwell on the past. The past is the past. It's meant to be the past.

- Laurie: [11:34](#) Yeah. It's a real roller coaster ride. Hey? You get one good review and you're on cloud nine and then you get a mean review. It's like err...
- Reid: [11:39](#) Absolutely. Absolutely. You know, it's tough. So yeah, I, if you, if you believe in your project and you, I mean you should before you release it, you should show as many people as possible. Before I came out with Let's Eat Together I had at least 20 strangers read it. And, and, and I used some different strategy when I was having them read it. I, for half of those, those people or more I told him that it wasn't even mine, that it was my friend's book. And they had written it. And I was wondering if what they thought about it, you know, so that they wouldn't feel that they were hurting my feelings.
- Laurie: [12:27](#) And did your feelings get hurt?
- Reid: [12:27](#) Actually, that's, that's actually what really prompted me to get going and get this thing done because all the reviews and what people were, the feedback was great and they were getting it. People were getting it. They're like, you know, I would read to the kids and they'd be looking for the pictures. And it was great. I was like, wow. It was very encouraging. That's why I, I couldn't

stress it enough to just read your story to as many people as possible. It goes, it goes so far.

Laurie: [13:03](#)

And to children.

Reid: [13:06](#)

Children. if you're writing, if you're writing books for children, that's your audience. So if you can't keep them, you can't keep their attention for as long as the book how long your book's going to be, then, you know, you probably have to do a little editing. So I did a lot of my work with my daughter as my practice person and you know, and it was good. I, I recommend doing it for everybody out there

Laurie: [13:37](#)

Was she honest with you or did she just love everything because daddy did it?

Reid: [13:39](#)

Well, I think. I think most four year olds actually at the time, she was probably like three. So most three year olds are honest because they don't know how to fib or you know...

Laurie: [13:50](#)

They don't care about hurting your feelings or not.

Reid: [13:50](#)

Well, they don't care about that. They'll just do it. They'll just say, you know, when you're, when you're a newborn to about what, five or six, and then when you're 75 or 80 and above anything comes out, right? They're allowed. They get a pass.

Laurie: [14:08](#)

No filter.

Reid: [14:09](#)

No filter pass. Right. So, yeah. So yeah, she, she really, you know, she was actually more helpful than hurtful, you know, whereas, you know, she would say, Daddy, I remember when we were doing the, when I was going over the illustrations with my illustrator and one of the illustrations came in and it was for the page where it's, a Grandpa, grandpa goose and grandma duck and grandpa goose. And the duck actually looked more like a goose. And my daughter was. I was like, what are you thinking? She was, she, she was like it's a goose but said he said duck. And I was, oh, you are so right. So I had missed that and she caught it. So we sent it back to my illustrator. I said can you shorten the neck and make it more like a neck? And she did. And my daughter was correct.

Laurie: [15:09](#)

Cute. And you use your daughter in a lot of your sort of videos online and stuff, don't you?

- Reid: [15:14](#) I do. She's my, she's my partner in crime, my partner in everything. I love her. She's, she's the best thing that ever happened to me and she just, you know, she makes my day. I could be having a bad day. And I talk to her and I'm like, there's nothing wrong. Everything, everything's Okay and everything will be okay.
- Laurie: [15:40](#) Oh I love that.
- Reid: [15:40](#) And that's a big thing with this book I have out right now Let's Eat Together. As you know, I, I have a four, a four and a half year old and another child on the way. And, and I'm, I worry about their futures with all the stuff that goes on, you know, nowadays with all the violence. And if I, I, I think that this book offers somewhat of a solution to people because people need to get back to talking again. They need to get back to conversing with each other again. I don't want your kids, I don't want other's kids. I don't want anyone to have to deal with the things that have happened and we are the ones that can change that. So that's why I pushed this book ahead of the other one because, you know, I don't want to fear my daughter going to school. I don't want to have the fear that her going to the movie theater, go into the mall, going to the grocery store, going to work, you know, I don't want to fear for her or anybody else's children. So I just think, you know, it's great to have entertaining books out there, but you know, these kids need to learn morals and now more than ever do they need to learn, you know, certain aspects and ethics in life so that they're - They contribute to this world as good citizens. And, and you know, we can put an end to this, this violent, violent trend that's going on. It's horrible. I can't, I just can't sit around and do nothing.
- Laurie: [17:15](#) Yeah. And that first step really is just talking to other people. So I love that. So why not talk while you eat? Would you like to be, you know, calm. Like it used to be just what you did. There was no other option. But even now in my children's school at lunchtime and snack time very often they put up a video on the smart board. And I get the idea behind it. It's because they want the kids to be quiet and eat. Right? But it's a skill that we have lost somewhere over the past 10 to 15 years, we've lost the skill of just chatting. Right. Just small talk.
- Reid: [17:51](#) Interaction, human interaction. It's essential for humans to talk to each other. I mean that's what we're supposed to do.
- Laurie: [18:00](#) That's what we're supposed to do. And that's how you get to know people and understand people and accept people. And it's

just the very basic level. So I hope that teachers watching this will buy your book and read it to the kids and then hopefully, you know, like implement that idea. Let the kids talk. It's noisier, right?

Reid: [18:17](#) I completely agree.

Laurie: [18:18](#) It is noisier. I was a teacher, so honestly, snack time, lunch time was hard because it's noisy and you don't have that control over them. So I, I understand that, but it's a skill that we are lacking and we have to teach it when they're children, they have to talk.

Reid: [18:33](#) We have to instill this in our kids and they have to pass this tradition down to their kids. It can't go away. This is- You can't take conversing, talking to each other out of the equation. You can't do it. You just can't. It's one of the basic traditions that we're all taught first. I mean, I, I'm sure that you were the same way that when we were younger we had to be at the dinner table. As soon as it gets dark, you could play until it gets dark, as soon as it got dark, we all came inside. And even if our father had to work late, you know, because usually back then, you know, both parents didn't have to work, but now it's a different day, you know, so whether a parent has to work late or not, you know, and you wait and then you eat together. You know, it's, it's, it's not good when somebody is eating in one room and somebody is eating in another room, you know, somebody has got their phone in front of them the whole time. When you're all together, you bond. you know, you strengthen your relationships, you talk, and if there is a problem you can, you can talk about it and you know, it's just an easy, 'How was your day?' 'Well, it was all right.' 'What's wrong?' And then when somebody talks you diffuse, you can diffuse the situation before it even happens.

Laurie: [19:50](#) Yeah, and it's like you said you have a bad day, you talk to your daughter. All the problems disappear. They go away. So that's right. And it's the same with kids. Once they talk to mom and dad...

Reid: [20:00](#) Right when they talk to mom and dad, you know and they have a problem and they get it out. You know, there's people that understand them. There's nothing better than being understood. When you don't feel like you're alone, and the next day you wake up and you know, you feel a little better, you're not harboring that anger or that ... you're not upset anymore from what happened the day before. You know, it's a clean slate. It's more of a clean slate. So, you know what I, I think that the part of the big problem that's going on is these kids are

harboring anger and they have no outlet, no one to talk to. They're just by themselves and they just isolate themselves. Then what happens is we've seen the result of that and we, you know, we as we as parents need to do our part to stop that. So I hope that people will read this book to their children and hopefully you know it, it seeps into them as well because, you know, we have to treat each other better too. We're all different. We're always going to be different, you know, whether it's politics, religion, whatever it is, we can all put it aside, you know, and sit at the table, eat together, laugh, joke with each other. Remember the good times, you know, you don't - no one has to get political or you know or are talking about something that people are not going to agree on. There's, there's no way in this world that everybody is ever going to agree on everything. And the world would be so boring if that was the case.

- Laurie: [21:36](#) Yes. That's so true. I love all of that. I really helped that parents and teachers and politicians get your book right?
- Reid: [21:45](#) They don't do anything. They just want our vote. Look, I don't buy into any of that stuff because you know, that's, that's another whole discussion.
- Laurie: [21:58](#) Yeah. That's another...
- Reid: [21:59](#) That's a whole 'nother discussion.
- Laurie: [22:00](#) Well I love it, the premise of your book.
- Reid: [22:04](#) We have to fix what we can fix.
- Laurie: [22:06](#) Yeah. And that's it. And start young and start where you're at, which is talking and eating together and that feeling of connection and being heard. So I love it. Tell people please where they can find you so they can buy a book and help you feed four more people.
- Reid: [22:21](#) Yeah, absolutely. So the book is available in a couple of different outlets. You can either go on our website, which, which is the best method for helping to, to our cause because we can feed more people, which is at letseattogetherbook.com. And so either that way or you could go on Amazon, you can look up our book, Let's Eat together and you can buy off Amazon. Through Amazon we're still donating part of the proceeds to feeding the hungry. We just can't with the royalties, you know, it's not as much as what it, what it is from direct, from directly through

our website or if you see me in person and, you know, through our website, you know, we sell signed copies so I can address it to the, to whoever it is, make it a little personal for Ya. It's a great book for the holidays. So whether you see me in person or on Amazon or our website, that's where you can find the book.

- Laurie: [23:13](#) Okay. Awesome. Thank you so much for sharing a bit about your story. I love that you shared about the money already. We talked about everything.
- Reid: [23:20](#) Yeah, yeah. No, no. It's great. I love doing these. Especially with great, especially with great people like you.
- Laurie: [23:26](#) Oh, thanks. Great. Awesome. Okay. Thanks so much.
- Reid: [23:30](#) Oh, absolutely. Thanks for having me.
- Laurie: [23:32](#) You're welcome. Bye. Bye.
- Reid: [23:33](#) Bye.
- Outro: [23:35](#) You've been listening to the Wrighter's Way Podcast. For show notes, links to guests information, and to learn more about the Wrighter's Way, check out Lauriewrighter.com. Until next week, enjoy this chapter of your life.