

# Talking to Change: An MI Podcast

## Glenn Hinds and Sebastian Kaplan



### Episode 48: MI in Schools, with Andrew Williams, NPQH

#### **Sebastian Kaplan:**

Hello everyone. Welcome to another episode of Talking To Change: A Motivational Interviewing Podcast. My name is Sebastian Kaplan and I'm based in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. And as always, I'm joined by my good friend over in Derry, Northern Ireland, Glenn Hinds. Hello, Glenn.

#### **Glenn Hinds:**

Hello, Seb. Hello everybody.

#### **Sebastian Kaplan:**

Hello everyone, indeed. We are going to talk a bit about our conversation we just had with Andy Williams, but before we do that, Glenn, orient everyone to the ways they can reach us.

#### **Glenn Hinds:**

Of course. So, on Twitter it's at @ChangeTalking, on Facebook it's Talking to Change, on Instagram it's Talking to Change Podcast and for anyone who wants to ask us questions or find out more about the change we offer, you can contact us on [podcast@glennhinds.com](mailto:podcast@glennhinds.com).

#### **Sebastian Kaplan:**

Right. And we always welcome rate reviews, questions. Please send us any feedback. We're joined today by Andy Williams, who is an educator with over 30 years' experience working in the schools, both as a teacher and as an administrator. He's based right now in Wales in the UK but has worked in other parts of the UK as well throughout his career. And just a fantastic conversation that covered a lot of really important topics pertinent to educators both in general but even in this day and time, as schools are beginning to wrestle with the challenges of students coming back amidst there's still a pandemic that's very much with us. So, Glenn, what are some thoughts that you had after our conversation with Andy today?

#### **Glenn Hinds:**

Yeah. It was a wonderful conversation and I suppose some of the things I'm taking away is just that reminder that change isn't just something that happens to us as individuals, it also happens to us as collectives, whether it's an organization or a community, and the way Andy referenced that in relation to schools and what it is that individuals and leaders within a school community can be thinking about in relation to support and that whole series of individuals and collectives in this new transition back into teaching while the pandemic is still in place. I guess the other thing he talked about was really important was



that there are people who really thrived during the lockdown, thrived being away from school while they're also kids and individuals who probably found the lockdown quite traumatic. And what's equally true is that there will be kids who will find the return to school very, very positive while other people will find it very, very difficult.

**Glenn Hinds:**

And just for, again, those who have responsibilities for the support and the wellbeing of individuals within a school environment to be conscious of that, that nothing is ever all good and nothing's ever all bad, and just to pay attention to that and to identify by listening to the needs of an individual, whether they be expressed verbally or more particularly as he often referenced, was being referenced or being communicated by their behaviors and how do we understand what a child or an adult's behavior is trying to communicate to us and how do we meet that need.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Yeah, a great reminder to be careful of our assumptions. And so many people are assuming rightfully so for a lot of people that this pandemic was a horrible experience for anyone. And while it brought challenges, it may not have been traumatizing for people, maybe for most people. And to also be aware that we can be open to those who may have had a positive experience throughout the pandemic, for whatever reason.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Absolutely. And what would yourself Seb what did you take away?

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Two big things. One, so as listeners will hear, Andy talks a great deal about the work he's done in schools really de-emphasizing the role of punishments and rewards as vehicles for behavior management. And that is just still quite a radical idea. And it was so interesting to hear how both just in general and from a theoretical stance of how and why he's done that, but also the case example that he used. So, I think listeners will enjoy hearing that. And the second thing is he listed several practical places where classroom teachers could implement some of the MI skills such as affirmations and open questions and giving feedback in effective ways. And as I was listening to Andy, I think because a teacher who has one of the most important jobs on the planet and is so busy, so much pressure on his or her professional lives, the prospect of learning something like MI might feel a bit daunting or might feel like they're going to change everything about what they do.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

And it was just a nice reminder I think of the content of their algebra lesson, or their Spanish lesson probably doesn't need to change much. Really what we're inviting people to consider is either changing or enhancing something that they're already doing in terms of those conversations with their students, not necessarily completely overhauling everything that they do as an educator. So those are two of the things that I really found exciting to listen.



**Glenn Hinds:**

Yeah. Again, very consistent with the idea of Motivational Interviewing was just building on what people are already doing, rather than simply replacing it with this new way. And that's really quite exciting.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

For sure. Well, off we go to the episode and hope you all enjoy it.

**Glenn Hinds:**

So, it's good to see you Andy and we really appreciate you coming along today. And we always ask a guest at the beginning of each episode to tell us a bit about themselves and their own journey and to a relationship with Motivational Interviewing. And if that's okay, can we start there with you?

**Andy Williams:**

Yeah. Well, 'Prynhawn Da,' Good afternoon from Wales. Delighted to be part of this webinar. Little bit about me, I taught for 30 years, fifteen of those thirty in inner city schools in Cardiff, Plymouth, Birmingham in the UK, and then the last 15 years in a school in Monmouth, Southeast Wales. And the vast majority of my career has been supporting culture change in schools, trying to move away from using rewards and punishments to change behavior to a perhaps more sophisticated, developmental approach around supporting young people's needs and understanding the needs behind behaviors. And it's that work that connected me with Steve Rollnick. Now I remember going into one of his two-day introductory sessions, and I was blown away by it in part because of the content of the workshop, but also in the fact that there weren't any other teachers at this event and yet so much of my time in schools was having conversations with people about change.

**Andy Williams:**

And so, it was surprising to me that there were no teachers there. And when we dug deeper into that, Steve's workshops in Wales weren't attracting the teaching profession for some reason. So, he and I connected up. I mentored him on his book, MI in Schools and we struck up a very close friendship. And since leaving teaching in July 2018, I now work with schools across Wales and the UK, exploring how schools may develop a culture which supports quality relationships. So that's my work and that has obvious relevance and pertinence to how schools now return and reintegrate post pandemic in the UK and of course across the world.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

So you can imagine a lot of the natural places of overlap between MI and some of the philosophy that you had that you brought with you to that workshop that Steve was giving this focus on needs and how to understand and communicate around those needs and then to provide whatever the professional landscape is for the practitioner to find a way to meet those needs. I was wondering if you could speak a little bit more to some of that early teaching history, maybe some of the context, what age groups, subjects, anything



like that, because the idea of minimizing use of punishment and reward, that's pretty radical idea. I'm sure it certainly was in your early years of that 30-year career that you described, but even to this day. And so how did you come to that? And maybe just share us a little bit about that part of the story.

**Andy Williams:**

Yeah, well, what we were finding when we were doing some research in schools and my early days, I was very interested in neuroscience and what neuroscience was saying about teaching and learning particularly and how teaching and learning was being transformed by our understanding of young people's brain development with the advent of fMRI scanning, et cetera. So, it was revolutionizing teaching and learning in that learning was more collaborative, facilitative, where the learner was taking control of their own learning. And it was very developmental in the sense that it was focused on the young person in their ways of learning. And yet that same research was not being applied to behavior management and into behavior development.

**Andy Williams:**

And that for me didn't make sense because behavior is learned. And so, we weren't applying the same approach to learning when it came to behavior. And so, when there was mistakes being made in behavior, it was a call for censure and punishment and isolation and exclusion and detention. All of those words we borrowed from criminal justice, which actually wasn't working in the criminal justice system. And we weren't paying attention to what modern neuroscience was telling us around developing empathy, asking the right question, listening, being holistic about seeing behavior in a context, depersonalizing behavior. It seemed to me that behavior management was still 50 years out of date. And so, the work that I was really keen to develop in the schools that I was working in, both inner city and rural schools, was how behavior change and conversations about behavior change might align more appropriately to what neuroscience was telling us in and through research.

**Andy Williams:**

Now that's quite a lonely journey because it's a big ask and it's a slow burn actually, because it very much depends on culture and the mindset of leaders and teachers within that culture. So mindset change is a slow burn and it challenges people to ask yourself a question around the purpose of education and learning and whether or not it was focused purely on cognitive outcome, whether we're just looking at exams, test marks, credentials, or whether actually there was far more to learning than exam results and how learning is helpful for leading lives within many different levels and in reference to COVID, how learning can be very therapeutic when we get it right.

**Andy Williams:**

And I know that there's some people who dislike the connection between learning and therapy. But from my experience, wellbeing comes in the slipstream of good learning in schools, feeling successful, having good feedback, that affirmation that comes with success in the classroom, but it's affirmation that you feel within and in front of your peer



group that really gives us a sense of deep well-being and acceptance and feeling of belonging within a community. So, I think that that was helpful within changing the school culture to one of community rather than compliance, was really helpful in building mental health wellbeing as well as actually, examination success.

**Glenn Hinds:**

That sounds like you've been very determined and patient with what you've been doing, given the nature of the fact that for 50 years, people have been used to, I suppose, what could be described as classical behavioral, part reward and punishment. And when you got this new information, you began to explore, how can I enter just into a well-established culture? And I was just wondering, what did you notice and what has been working and what responses have you been getting from the schools, teachers, the leaders about these new modern best practices? And what has been working?

**Andy Williams:**

Any form of change brings resistance and concern, dangers but also opportunities. So, for me, what was important at the start of the change process was that we were very aware of the data, both hard and soft, within a school community of whether or not an approach was working. So, what kind of data do you look at to assess the effectiveness of what you're doing in the school? And what was clear was in terms of response to behavior that relied on merit or punishment, was that actually it wasn't meeting need across the school in terms of young people's needs. It wasn't a particularly sophisticated approach to mental health and supporting young people who need to feel included. And the data, both hard and soft, what the children were saying, what the staff were saying as well as the data in terms of exclusions was that same people were being excluded time and time again. And the kids didn't quite understand what the purpose was behind the punishment. And in reality, not many of the staff did too.

**Andy Williams:**

So, looking at the hard and soft data and starting with that, and then having change conversations with people about what would it look like if we were getting this right? What would we hear from the young people? What would we hear from staff and what kind of data would we look to see whether or not we're being successful? And thankfully in the last school I worked at over a period of 10 years, that data changed significantly. So, exclusions dropped by 91%, the referrals to youth offending by 78%, antisocial behavior in the community by 48% dropped with a youth tag. And at the same time over that period, the school had its greatest success at examinations. You have to be able to hit all of those datasets, because what you can of course do is drop exclusions through allowing inappropriate behavior to take place in classrooms across the school.

**Andy Williams:**

So how is that achieved? Well, it's through many different and very complex ways that you will achieve that culture change. And like I said, not least amongst that is reminding ourselves of the purpose of education and why we went into education in the first place, because I think in many schools, we've lost that. I'm not sure the recent rate of young



people leaving teaching who wanted to make a real go of learning and they end up going into a culture which is all about examination results and they leave, quite rightly they leave. So, some of this is reacquainting ourselves with why we went into this profession in the first place. And that is because we love learning and learning comes in many different forms and guises and examination results is just one part of that.

**Andy Williams:**

Another part of it is behavior change. And some young people take longer than others to change their behaviors for all kinds of reasons. But it's the same in learning a language. When you look at the German department or the Spanish department in Monmouth, some young people made more mistakes than others and they needed more support, they needed more guidance, but they also needed a recognition that you do get there in the end, but it can take many different forms and can take longer for some. So, it's that going back to that recognition of that all young people are different, that they all have different needs, but essentially through good learning experiences and the right level of support, young people are able to be successful in their own way.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

So much there to unpack. One thing I'm struck with is when you were describing the culture shift and some of those questions that you asked of yourselves as a group or as a school staff in essence, what would change look like? A fill in the blank change. And that is such a classic MI kind of question. If you're working with someone who's thinking about cutting back on their drinking, it's very typical to ask early in that conversation, well, what would that look like for you? And here you are asking a very similar question but as a school, as a whole or as a school community and what would it look like to have different outcomes to focus more on the developmental needs as opposed to punishments and rewards? And just quite impressive at the broad scale success because you're right, I know in the US, so much focus is on those test scores and rates of improvement.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

And I can imagine some of the most well-intentioned people in schools saying this developmental shift, those are all nice. Those are great. If we can find better ways to connect to some of these students that are struggling, but if we're not getting the test scores, we can't do it. And so to have an intervention that meets both of those needs, which it's unfortunate to distinguish them as different needs, it's all needs within the same students ultimately, but Andy, I was curious if you could share maybe an example, because again, I'm thinking about someone who may be listening to this podcast for the first time perhaps and not knowing what MI is or this idea of focusing less on punishment and rewards. How did this translate into an example in one of your schools where someone may have done something wrong, they misbehaved in some ways and the typical response would be a stern talking to and a detention or a suspension and how your approach was markedly different?

**Andy Williams:**



Well, I think a good example is how restorative approaches blends with MI and a more inclusive school culture. A very quick example, a young lad takes a cup from the canteen, and he starts playing rugby with it. This is Wales. So, we're rugby mad. So, he plays rugby with this cup, throws it to his mate who misses this mug, and it goes through the back window of a member of staff's car. The member of staff has spitting feathers and very angry and actually comes to my office demanding exclusion. The important thing to do at that point of course is the listening. And listening for needs in what that person's telling you and then allowing the right time and use of reflective listening to understand the anger and the frustration, but then asking permission to deal with this event in a slightly different way.

**Andy Williams:**

And this young lad was looked after. And we know in Wales, the statistics of young people who are looked after in foster care ending up in the criminal justice system or homeless. We know what exclusion might do to that young person if we're to press that button at that time. But getting the right time is important, asking permission of that member of staff for me to take a different route and then sitting down with this young lad and getting his perspective on what happened in a non-judgmental open-minded way to just hearing his stories, listening to his thoughts and his feelings about what had happened both before, during, and after the event. And to cut a long story short, we sat down, the young lad, the member of staff, the police liaison officer, myself, and the young lad who was offered opportunity of somebody being an advocate for them, just to sit next to them as a support.

**Andy Williams:**

And by the end of this session, the member of staff understood what had happened was an accident, that that young person had been very nervous, hadn't been to school since the event. And then the young boy was able to listen to the member of staff explaining the impact of that going through the back window, not being able to attend a hospital appointment, that car was her pride and joy. And it took some time. But if the mindset is that school is where you learn to get it right, well, then you give that time to a behavioral mistake as much as you would give time for that young boy learning how to write an essay properly. So, the time is important, the investment is important, but in valuing each member of the school community is important. And the young lad was asked, "What do you think you need to do to repair the harm?"

**Andy Williams:**

Now in normal circumstances, the punishment is done to that boy, it's not done with. So, in this sense, the question allows the boy to take control of the response and the repair. And to be fair to him, he said, "I need to pay the excess on the insurance and write a letter of apology." That came from him, didn't come from me. And he paid every penny of the £75 that the excess of the insurance, and he got a job to do it. Another member of staff in the community found a job for him in the chip shop. That's a success story, but what's more important is the connection between those two people was remained. And they're good friends, as far as I'm aware to this day, even though they both left the school. Now there's lots in that that is MI aligned in terms of asking the right questions, getting the right time, but also essentially the spirit of it, the mindset of it is what's key. If you don't see



behavior as learned, if you believe that children should be compliant and obedient and that they should sit and just get their results, well, then you're going to be on a loser with this approach.

**Glenn Hinds:**

What strikes me is that your approach to this episode really magnifies the point you were making earlier on about being the teacher, that this was an opportunity for everyone in the encounter to learn something about themselves and about everyone else and to identify how to take the best out this set of circumstances and that idea of using restorative approaches where both the victim and the perpetrator have an opportunity to speak and to be listened to. And I was struck, first of all, by your response to the teacher coming in, obviously very, very angry. And the first thing you did was listen and to understand in many ways it reinforces that whomever we're speaking to maybe consider the client, they may be talking about an event that somebody else did but it's their own needs that they're describing, and you paid attention to that. And again, just the emphasis that I guess listeners will be aware of that you've been reinforcing is the importance of the spirit of the practitioner, that effort that you took to see a broader picture.

**Glenn Hinds:**

And I guess that's one of the things that has been going through my mind my mind as I've listened to you, Andy, that this idea of changing the culture is about broadening the practitioner's, the leader's perspective on what it is that has been presented in front of them and how to become more open-minded and accepting of circumstances and then approach them in a different way. And given the fact that when you first started talking about MI you said about how infrequently you would see teachers at MI trainings. Is that something that you have noticed change or is that something that you have begun to introduce into the schools that you're in contact with and how are teachers responding to that offer from you or from other MI trainers?

**Andy Williams:**

The appetite for MI processes and skills when I introduce it in a school's training day is huge because they immediately see the connection between those processes and skills and what is in effect, good learning. If you could take any one of the usual open questions in learning, it's a key part of a young person's ability to explore and research areas of interest. The effective use of feedback is a component of excellent learning, affirmation rather than praise in schools. Young people have become praised junkies. So, this overuse of praise in order to spark this interest in learning isn't helpful from my perspective, but the very careful use of affirmation, not just verbally, but in books, when you're bookmarking, you don't need a page full of red pen to motivate the young person. In fact, it does the opposite, even though it's full of platitudes and praise, but a two liner, which is on the money and which sparks motivation is all you need in feedback.

**Andy Williams:**

So, this use of feedback is really important as well as affirmation. Evoking, good learning starts with the experiences of the young people in front of you. So, whatever the topic,





whatever the subject, you start with young people's experience and a good question will evoke a response from young people. And from that, you build the wider learning principles and concepts. So yeah, teachers are already skilled at many of those skills and processes that MI develops. And so, MI allows for better conversations with young people, both at classroom level but also when teachers call up student back after class or they have what some schools call it detention, what happens in that space when teacher and pupil come together, that's the key, whatever you want to call it. I don't like the word detention, but whatever you call that afterschool session, what goes on in that space is the key.

**Andy Williams:**

And my concern is in some schools that the member of staff where the relationship's broken down is not the person in that space after school. So, they've been referred to a different member of staff who does have the relationship, a head of year they're called, who has a pastoral role. Actually, these skills, a member of staff who has a more academic role but even that name in a school structure where some staff are pastoral and some are academic is not helpful, because behavior and academic learning are the same. And if we divide them through our staffing structures and we call heads of year people who deal with behavior and pastoral and looking at, well, then we're already creating a dichotomy in mindset. "Actually, that behavior has nothing to do with me. I teach physics." Well, you're going to struggle with it because we're not building confidence as well as competence at the point of delivery, we're removing children because of some behaviors they're displaying in their learning process.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

That dichotomy description of behavioral and academic reminds me a bit of this movement in healthcare called integrated behavioral health or integrated primary care where the idea is that the mental health practitioner and the physical health, traditional healthcare provider can work together because it's not separate. It's all about health. And here what you're saying, it's all about learning, whether it's about calculus or not to throw a mug through a window. Maybe you're going to have your own roles within the broader efforts or goals, but you're all working in the same lane towards the same direction. Andy, I have a two-part question. One is you made this distinction between affirmation and praise in the educational world. And that's something that we get a lot of questions about in trainings, regardless of what the conversations are about. So, if you could offer maybe an example of praise versus affirmation and why the affirmation might be more powerful.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

And then I guess the second question has to do, if we can transition to the current events that all schools are wrestling with, at least in places in the world where schools are returning, my kids just went back to school this week. What are some things that educators should be focusing on right now, both for themselves, because they're going through it just as well as the students are, but how to make that go as well as possible.

**Andy Williams:**



Yeah. Thanks Sebastian. We hear a lot of praise talk in schools which is subjective and dependent upon the teacher's mood. So, "You're a good boy. Well done. You've done that really well." It's nonspecific and it's dependent on the teacher's mood. And that praise can be removed very quickly. So, the young person may want the same response the following day for opening the door but doesn't get it. So, it's not consistent. It's not stable as a means of supporting a relationship between two people. And it can leave some young people feeling confused and it can be destructive because if you're not getting it and you're only doing something in order to get it, well, then you feel a little bit bereft when that praise hasn't come from the work that you've put in. And what I was finding at key stage four, particularly, which is 14-to-16-year olds in the girls in the school particularly, that they were wanting to please the teacher.

**Andy Williams:**

So, they were redrafting pieces of work time after time after time, not for the inherent developmental aspect of redrafting, but in order to please the teacher who would give them praise. When that praise wasn't coming, those girls were in some instances self-destructing. They become so needy of praise from particular teachers. Affirmation is far more precise and it's shining that spotlight on precisely what that young person did, a characteristic, a strength, a skill that they showed in that lesson or on the field or after school, whatever. They are shining the light on something that cannot be taken away. And that is allowing not just a better understanding for the young person in terms of their relationship with themselves, but also a better follow-up conversation so that the young person might ask a little bit more about what was it in that skill that led to that outcome. And the teacher then can have a far more sophisticated, far more nuanced conversation that praise doesn't allow from my perspective.

**Andy Williams:**

And then leading on to how schools return and reintegrate this community. I think the word community is important. I said before, the restorative approach that I've been developing in schools moves away from compliance to community. So, a focus on understanding and recognizing that when young people and staff come back into schools together, some people in that community will have had very different experiences of the pandemic. So, some for example, they would have made some very deep connections within their families. They would have really been nurtured and nourished within those relationships. And there'll be missing that now they're coming back to school, and it was a very pleasant, very nurturing experience. For others of course, it was extremely challenging. And for some it's traumatic. So, all of that comes into the mix.

**Andy Williams:**

At a universal level as the school community comes back together, I think it's really important that we get back into the routine and the rhythm of the school day as quickly as possible. But knowing that as a school leader, this situation is still very fluid. Knowing that you will need to communicate change and doing that in a timely and a values-based way is important. And as a school leader, trying to be ahead of the curve, as much as you can so that you're able to communicate in a timely way any changes which are going to come to the school into the routines and the rhythm of learning. Learning is therapeutic. So



getting back to the routine and the rigor of good learning, knowing that shared experiences is going to help developing listening across the school, opportunities for people to share their experiences within the safe environment of the classroom, but also in making sure that relationships are allowed to develop through not emphasizing punishment and rewards because some behaviors will be expansive.

**Andy Williams:**

Developing in teachers the mindset that behavior is a means of communication. So, behavior is an expression of unmet need in some children. Knowing that, recognizing that, understanding that leads to empathic relationships around the community. And then at a more bespoke level, providing outside support when it's needed, providing professional support from clinical psychology, educational psychology, where and when it's needed, and communicating with parents appropriately and in timely fashion. And from my perspective this is central, developing some support mechanisms like mindfulness which allows teachers to be able to maintain equilibrium in the face of all of this turbulence, because the teachers are going to be frontline staff here. So senior leaders supporting teachers by offering mindfulness sessions that allows the teacher to emotionally regulate their responses to some pretty challenging behavior from parents as well as from young people and allowing them an opportunity to talk to their colleagues.

**Andy Williams:**

It's just that simple, talk and listen to your colleagues. Provide a space after school, short spaces maybe afternoons, where people can talk and listen to each other without there having to be an agenda, without there having to be an outcome. And one thing that the pandemic has done is it's allowed us as schools and the school leaders to review, reflect upon what it is that's important in school. And we got carried away in the UK, I think, with competition between exam results, competition between schools, competitions within universities you go to. And actually, this Japanese word for crisis involves danger and opportunity. And from my perspective, this pandemic gives us the opportunity as school leaders to renew our vows, to reassess what's important and to secure inclusive community that's focused on need and not one size fits all approaches to behavior, compliance, obedience, which I worry a school that has a zero tolerance approach, whatever that means, I've never taught in one, I never could teach in one.

**Andy Williams:**

But I wonder and I worry for young people returning from the trauma and challenge of COVID that goes to a school that's zero tolerant. Where do you go? The school community and the culture has to encourage young people to talk and to listen to one another. And all of the answers don't come from the senior leaders or the teachers. A lot of the answers come from the other children who listen to their peers, who support their peers, who play with their peers in a supportive and inclusive environment. It's not about competition and it's not about compliance to regulations and rules. This is about community working together.

**Glenn Hinds:**



Very optimistic message that you're offering us here Andy. It strikes me the idea of the school as a community. To paraphrase it, I think it is, it takes a village to raise a child. And it's recognizing that the village in this instance, it's the school as part of a wider community. And that within that village, everybody has a part to play and recognizing that everyone else has needs as well as opportunities to support each other. It's not just the teacher supporting the kids, its teachers supporting each other. And sometimes it'll be the kids supporting the kids as well. And it's just about how to foster that and it sounds like it's so important that is it needs at least one individual to bring that into the mix, to bring that into the opportunity that is now being offered, that reset. You mentioned that earlier on, to go back to, why did we become teachers and what opportunities exist for us in this moment where in parallel to this pandemic, where we seem to be moving towards a place of healing, of recovery, of stability, how do we bring some healing, recovery and stability into our school environment as well?

**Glenn Hinds:**

And I know that you and some colleagues have developed a website that I think a lot of individuals who are involved with children or skills would be interested in. And I was wondering, can you tell us a bit more about Restore Our Schools?

**Andy Williams:**

Yeah. So, a group of professionals, headteachers, consultants, support workers, charities that I work with got together during the first lockdown, because we were concerned about how schools might need support when communities come back together and you can access it for free, [www.restoreourschools.com](http://www.restoreourschools.com). And RESTORE has become an acronym for Recognition, Empathy, Safety, Trauma, Opportunity, Relationships, and Engagement. And under each one of those letters, the website gives you examples of how you may go about building relationships, recognizing what's happened, supporting senior leaders, staff as well as parents and students in coming back together. And the work that I'm supporting schools with is around reflection.

**Andy Williams:**

A key aspect of learning is reflection. And this has given us time for reflection. And so how is that reflection being used in schools and many senior leaders are contacting me saying, "You know what? It's time for us to renew our values and go back to where and what's important." What is important here? And are our values shared values or values shared? That significant difference between are we collaborating around what's important here or is this just six people sitting around a shiny table telling other people what's important? So, this sense of collaboration and sharing what's important. And that's the starting point for some leaders, they just want to go back to that. Let's go back to our values. Let's go back to our conversations with each other about what's important here. And then that of course feeds into that vision for learning, for young people. But young people need to be involved in that conversation so do parents, and so do governors and so do the staff. Otherwise, it's just a vision shared, it's not a shared vision.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**



Wow. We'll definitely share that website on the episode page. I'm sure people will be interested to look at it. Andy, as we start to transition to the end of our conversation today, we often ask our guests what is on the horizon for them in terms of maybe professional interests, could be personal interests that is piquing your interest right now. So, what's on the horizon for you?

**Andy Williams:**

Immediately on the horizon I've got a dissertation to hand in by October the 26<sup>th</sup> on mindfulness research with young people in schools. So that's my master's. And then I'm hoping to start my PhD in January, again, looking at school culture and how we develop a school culture that supports effective, quality relationships. And MI is a key ingredient in that work. In addition to that, I work two, three days a week supporting schools, school leadership teams mainly, around quality relationships and building connection.

**Glenn Hinds:**

So again, it offers a lot of examples of as a teacher, your love of learning has been manifest in your continuing development around your Masters and then onto your PhD. One of the things we also ask our guests then, Andy is after today's episode, if people are interested to hear more about you, what you've talked about today or to discuss the needs for themselves as a school or a school leader, how can they go about contacting you?

**Andy Williams:**

Email is the best way, email. And my email is [connectandy00@gmail.com](mailto:connectandy00@gmail.com). So [connectandy00@gmail.com](mailto:connectandy00@gmail.com).

**Glenn Hinds:**

Fantastic. Andy, thank you very much again for your time and we're delighted that we have that opportunity to have this chat with you knowing that schools are about to go back across the Western world anyway and that this episode may be of benefit to the teachers but also the parents and pupils who're returning to school. So, we really appreciate you giving your time up to us and we wish you every success. Thank you.

**Andy Williams:**

Thank you, Glenn. Thank you, Sebastian. It's lovely talking to you.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Thanks so much, Andy. This was great. Appreciate it.

