

Getting To The Core: Dr. Bryan Pearlman

December 11, 2024 • 44:21

SPEAKERS

Marvin Franklin, Dr. Bryan Pearlman, Dr. Carla Postell, Linda Kell

Marvin: Well, hello and welcome to Getting to the Core, a Wayne RESA podcast, where pedagogy meets practice. Today, ladies and gentlemen, you're in for an absolutely special treat as the Getting To The Core team is joined by one of Wayne RESA's leadership consultants, Linda Kell and we have a special guest, Dr. Bryan Pearlman, life change specialist, mental performance coach, educator and mediator.

I am today's host Marvin Franklin, Education Improvement Consultant here at Wayne RESA. Today's GTC team is Dr. Carla Postel and myself. Today's guest holds a doctorate in education from Maryville University, a Masters of Social Work from Louisiana State LSU, a Masters of Education from Linwood University, and a Bachelor's of education from the University of Missouri. Go Mizzou! He is a former school principal, teacher, keynote speaker and an adjunct professional from education psychology, Dr. Pearlman just mentioned today that he is the author of six books. As I was looking up his bio, it had five books. And then while we were talking, he said that number will be 10 books really soon. I hope he gets a chance to tell us all about that. So with that being said, How are you today?

Bryan Pearlman: Doing great. Thank you so much for having me here. Very, very nice to be here.

Marvin: Well, good. You are the second person that we've had in the studio. This is our wonderful, great place that we have, and really excited to do some great work. I know it's a blistering winter day. You've made yourself your way here, and Linda is going to tell us why you're here, and she's got a couple questions for you.

Linda: Thanks, Marvin. And I think what I'd call this for you, Dr. Pearlman, today is the back by popular demand tour. Because, quite frankly, this is your third time at Wayne RESA, working with our Learning Series for Leaders. And why? Because of your engaging books, your engaging presentations, and the content that you bring to our leaders in our county. And I know your past presentations have focused on Maslow Before Bloom, Whatever It Takes. And today's presentation and tomorrow's are focused on one of your newer books, From Struggles To Successes. So my question for you today would be, what impacts have you seen from your PDs and from your books as you've traveled around our nation and in the world?

Bryan Pearlman: You know, it is great to be here. It is a real honor. Thank you. It's a great question. Linda, you know, I think as I've been traveling, one of the things that I take away is

that a lot of the concerns or challenges that we're dealing with here in Michigan or in Detroit, they're really issues that are people are dealing with all over the country, you know, all over the world, frankly, and I think if anything from these types of conversations, trainings, even sharing information and resources, it's just showing sort of the power of crowdsourcing solutions, that the power of all of us is so much greater than any one of us, individually. And I think oftentimes my presentation or trainings kind of just stimulates further conversation, has people, you know, figure things out together, share those resources. I say a lot in the trainings that I do that we don't have the time to recreate the wheel. We just don't. And again, going back to the kind of concerns and challenges and opportunities, they're not unique to this area. So using that crowdsourcing model, or being able to put our heads together to problem solve today, I did a training together, and one of the things is really making the distinction between being a problem solver instead of being a problem admirer. You know, problem admirers can take really good data about what you know, challenges there are with a particular student or staff member community that's sort of admiring. It's good information, but we really have to take that to that problem solving lens and really recognizing also that there are people who can help problem solve in any position, be it a teacher, be it an assistant, be it a principal, be it parents, community members. You know, anyone could be the problem solver. Anyone can help lead an initiative, and it's really capitalizing on the resources that you have in your own community. So from the work that I do, I think, if anything, it really just stimulates conversation and teaches people to come together to a common goal and understanding that I'm not in a building anymore, I'm not a teacher. Not a principal anymore, but I still view this as they're all of our kids, and again, whether that's in another country, a different state, whatever the responsibility I have is an educator is to every everyone's kids. They're all ours. They're all our responsibility.

Linda: Great. Well, thanks so much. I'd like to just ask you one other question and focus more on the book that you talked about today, *From Struggles To Successes*, because it's quite a different book than your *Maslow before Bloom* and *Whatever It Takes* that's more kind of story based and this one you label a handbook for parents and for educators. And was there something that you experienced that kind of propelled you to write this book, or what was kind of the reason behind that, and kind of changing the way that you written your other ones.

05:45

Bryan Pearlman: Another great question, Linda, you know, in my first two books, *Whatever It Takes* and *Maslow Before Bloom*, that was just kind of storytelling. You know, I'd written stories in different ways, shared in different ways, and decided to kind of put those together into a book form and really, with the major focus being just for educators, whether it's teachers or principals, school social workers, counselors, superintendents, my hope was to be able to share stories that everybody maybe I would say this is story about Johnny. Everyone had a story about their Johnny, and really helping them just feel like they're not alone, that we're all kind of dealing with some similar things. In many ways, I think the best lessons learned in those books were from

the dumb things that I did, or the mistakes I made, doing the best I thought I knew how to at that time. Getting into the third book, I had had a lot of people. I mean, the second book came out right in the heart of the pandemic. Maslow Before Bloom came out in May 2020, people like, You're brilliant. The timing is perfect. It's sold, great. I'm like, there was no planning. How did I know the pandemic was coming right? And then from that point to the third book, it was a period of years. And in that time, I would have people saying, This is great. We love the stories, but we need, like, some concrete, step by step things. And we need something beyond just for teachers. We'd like it to be something that teachers could read, but we would also like to have something that parents could benefit from that so From Struggles to Successes, really, I mean, I think probably 70% was guided towards anybody you know, and really having things again in there that all of us have dealt with, either as an educator, a relative, a parent, whatever, that anyone dealing with kids or teens you know could relate to, and then took that level of step by step, and then some really good reflecting questions to talk about afterwards. So it isn't just wow, that was a good book, great. I'm gonna, you know, give it to someone else. There's some really good stuff in here that can really guide discussions and help for better outcomes for all of our kids.

Linda: Great. Thanks so much.

Marvin: Well, we also know that he is the co-founder and board member of the mental health nonprofit, Distinguished School of Mental Health and Wellness, you utilize a customized approach for helping people to become the best version of themselves by focusing on the client's present state and where the client wants to go in the future. This approach includes goal setting, mentoring, skill building, coping strategies, coaching, educating and communicating. So it sounds like a lot of that collaboration comes out in this last book I too fell in love with Maslow Before Bloom, and I've got some questions for you in just a minute as it relates around that those case studies very similar to just stories, brought me back to my time in the classroom and in the building. I know Carla wants to she's been sitting here nudging me. She wants to ask you a question.

Carla: Yeah, I do, because my question kind of surrounds the Maslow Before Bloom, which, too, I do think it was a perfect opportunity in time with COVID, with all of us and what we were going through. So, you know, in your experience, what would you say is the biggest barrier educators face in implementing Maslow Before Bloom principles and possibly, how could they overcome that?

Bryan: Yeah, that's a really, really good question. I think that, you know, so often I'll get at trainings or even people who would email me or message we agree with everything that you're saying. Now, how does that get done? Or I'm a teacher and my administrator doesn't share the same view, and isn't maybe trauma informed, or is maybe kind of, you know, sort of a more traditional discipline type of situation, and I tell them, Look, you're not going to necessarily change the world in five minutes. It's little ways, by little ways, I'm from Missouri, and Missouri is the show me state. So when you show people the way to do it, and you have results that often, is the best way to gain that momentum, because everybody wants to be. Successful. So one of the biggest barriers is just making sure that you're involved in a team, or somehow can get the

conversations started, changing a lot of maybe some of the beliefs we have, or the idea of well, but we've always done it this way, which is a dangerous phrase. I really don't love that so little by little, I think that that's often, sometimes it's the leader and most of the team are into this and want to apply it, but you have some holdouts who just, for whatever reason, it's change, it's new. I don't really know what to do with that. And again, I think, you know, we kind of meet people where they are and help them grow at theirs. You're going to have people that are early and easy adopters. They read the book, great. I want to do it today. How do I implement everything and do that? And there are some that are maybe more skeptical than those that it's going to take a lot of convincing for that to be so we just kind of meet people where they are and just kind of incrementally, try to build some momentum. And again, once, once they see success, once you see outcomes, well, you know, office referrals go down, achievement going up, attitude going up, you know, sort of this team approach. It's contagious. I mean, people want to be a part of that winning team. And whether it's the students or leadership or parents, whatever. Nobody deliberately wants to stand in the way of progress or something good. I think it's just new. It's different, and maybe change is a little bit scary.

Carla: Okay, thank you. Thank you for that.

Marvin: So with that mindset, though, I want to ask, I guess my timeline is interesting. So were you a social worker first, or because, and I ask that because a lot of the behaviors that you're mentioning really are not the same as what I would consider our typical administrator of today. I think everybody is just so mired in standardized tests and other things that we have in place. Please tell us, did you Which came first? Social Work or administrator, and how did you get to that marriage piece?

Bryan: The egg came first. The chicken came second. Okay, fortunate, blessed that my wife, Lena, has been a therapist for 30 years now. So she's been a mental health person, an adjunct teaching that working in hospitals in a variety of settings, that it took a while for us to realize that our silos, me as the educator and her as the therapist, actually were more like a Venn diagram, that there's so much overlap. She would ask questions about, well, I don't understand why is this and we're seeing this. And I would say, Well, I don't understand why does anxiety look like this in our school? And by sort of melding, that kind of started peaking my interest little by little, and at the point when I felt like I'd accomplished everything I intend to do in education. I left to help expand her practice.

First of all, just thinking, I'll just help to serve more people and educate and do that. And then I decided I would go back and get the Masters of Social Work, which is the clinical degree that you need to practice, mainly just so I knew what our business was like, at least I'll have some information. And really liked it so much that it started, maybe I'll see five or 10 people a week. And then I started as a therapist December of 2019 and when the pandemic hit, like every week, our census went up to the point I was telling Linda that Monday of this week, prior to coming here, I had 11 clients, back to back to back to back, and on an average week, I'm probably in the mid 40s, way more than I ever anticipated. But it does say a lot to do with the state of how people, kids, teens, parents, families, everyone's doing. So no, I was an educator first, and it's funny, because I meet a lot of people that were school social workers, school

counselor first, get into the admin and work their way, that way, and they're like, you've kind of done that backwards. And I'm like, It's the story of my life. I always do things backwards, but definitely not a linear person at all.

Marvin: Well, maybe with the wife in the equation, maybe you were a student first, and you were practicing in the buildings. And then, I guess my question is, so was that Master of Social Work. Was it easier, since you had a lot of that practice at home?

Bryan: I don't know if I would say easier. I definitely had someone who could help me study, sometimes even correcting the book or correcting the professor. My wife's done this for a long time. It definitely has been so important in working in a practice with her with another colleague, that both of them literally. Have, you know, 30 years experience to be around that it is very humbling going from being a school principal that, you know, I feel like I was Mr. Fix It most of the time and solving all kinds of problems, to being like I'm the guy who's really just learning here.

And to some degree, too, I feel great because as we have team meetings and things they do, even though I'm the new guy. I've been doing this for five years as a therapy part that they rely on me for. Hey, there's an upcoming 504 meeting. There's an IEP. Tell me about what this means, and what's this education jargon, and how do we help do that, which I mean I sat in. I mean, at least 1000 IEPs, 504 meetings. So it makes me feel good that I can contribute, rather than just being the one raising it. Okay. Well, this just happened today. What would you do? So, yeah, it has definitely been a huge benefit. Early on, we would do trainings together where I would cover soar, I would translate the mental health into education, and she would handle more of that. And as her census has continued to grow, she has stopped doing many of the trainings, and I just go wherever the need is. So yeah.

Marvin: All right, so with that, I'm going to kind of take some of the interest, and meld those two lives together, the marriage because and this is aligned to that Maslow vs. Bloom, or Maslow Before Bloom thought process.

Our state is really struggling as it relates to our standardized tests, and you mentioned COVID, and many of our families are still struggling with that social emotional piece as well. How can we or what would be your suggestion for leaders as to how to make that perfect marriage to reduce our chronic absenteeism and still try to maintain academic piece?

Bryan: It's another really good question. You know, one of the things that I said as a principal, and I know my superintendent, just turned his head and rolled his eyes when I would say that, I said, if we're doing sort of those Maslow things, and if we are meeting people where they are, and we are providing the kinds of resources and putting our time and energy in the right things, our test scores will be there. I never really harped on it. We never stopped the world to you know, Okay, now let's crunch on these things to prepare for.

I just, in studying that for so long, knew that short term gains weren't going to give the long term results in both data and also a love for learning. If kids are passionate about if they learn to be

problem solvers, if they know that their basic human needs are met, that we're there if they're crying, we're there if they're tired or hungry or sad or scared. That melding that with with, you know, a really rich and robust curriculum, we're going to get those results, not just now, but forever and maybe part of my mindset was this idea that I was like, Mr. Fix it, come in turn the place around and friends would tease me. They're like, this is the time when now you can sit back and enjoy all the hard work, and being that I have ADHD, it is very boring, so I'm like hand it over to someone. Now move on to the next challenge.

But my hope was, if I did the right thing and laid that proper foundation, it would be in a situation where someone could carry forward, and the schools that I had been a part of continued on that trajectory. So I think that it is sometimes counter intuitive, because there are schools like, can't you just buddies would be like, can't you just teach to the test? Can't you just do what the rest of us do? Get the blueprint data. And I would say, that's great, and I'm glad it's working for you. I'm kind of taking this long view that the people that were we're not in the widget business.

You know, we've got children living, breathing, children that someday, maybe selfishly, they're the ones who are gonna be making decisions that impact my life, or even taking care of me, that I want it to be, that these are gonna be, you know, fostering this idea of lifelong learning and really being passionate. And nobody's come back to the school and say, Oh, I just missed that standardized test. It's that teacher. It's the experience I could think about. Even the things that really resonated with me were teachers were fun activities where the let's go in the woods and let's actually learn stuff.

I never have anything that's like, wow, that was amazing. I just love that textbook. So, you know, obviously there are elements that are out of our control that have to be there. But also kind of taking that idea that if we're looking at the whole child, if we're looking at building these lifelong learners, if we're looking at building passion for learning, the results are going to be there. And whether that's short, long term, or whether we gage ourselves by people that. Make those huge differences in life and in society, and it's like that was one of our graduates right there, and how proud we are.

Marvin: I love everything that you just mentioned as I'm thinking about you mentioned ADHD. I'd love for you to talk about that book before we had the opportunity to record. Today, Dr Perlman and I were on a call, and we started to talk about some of the challenges many of our boys in our schools have, and ADHD is one of the things that they are identified with, that high rate. And I also in that answer that you just gave, I would really, I'm wondering, did you provide any lead way or any information for your teachers to try to infuse some activities that would increase some of what you just mentioned, like getting the kids outside and actually having these real life experiences, because the truth of the matter is, they are not creating widgets. They are developing children or people who are going to be a part of the community, we're going to be part of society, and they'll have many different, wide array of jobs, and at the end of the day, we should not be what our test score says we are. Right?

Bryan: You know, I was the king of the pilot program. The pilot program, helped me fly right under the radar enough that didn't necessarily need any kind of major endorsement whatever. I

would get permission to try them. They'd say, Okay, we did, like, a morning movement thing. We started with some of our kids that were just not ready to learn when they came off the bus. Whether there was, you know, friction at home, or stress for me on the bus, or they just woke up that we started doing things with OTPC support, at least, to train us on how to break the or cross the midline and get the wiggles out so the teacher could get the class started, the student can come down. Now. It's already out there, focused and ready to go. And we just saw lots of success from that.

We started a morning mixed martial arts group. And mixed martial arts is from like, UFC. No, we did not have kid fighting at our school or anything of that sort, but we had a UFC fighter that would come, and he would teach Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, which is the ground game I was brought up. My dad was a boxer. I teach the stand up boxing. But really that was the conduit. That was the thing for high interest. The real thing we were teaching is, you know, like distress tolerance, patience, respect, you know, discipline, all of these types of things. And our example from doing the mixed martial arts thing. The one year we did it, there were 25 students, 24 of the 25 within six weeks, no discipline issues. Achievement was better, attendance was better, and we'd have a circle at the end.

It was literally almost like having a therapy circle at the end, where we could talk about highs and lows and challenges. And it almost became like a gang for good, like a club for a lot of the students there didn't have that in their community. And by having this gentleman come in and work with me and and I was coach Pearlman. So Coach Pearlman was a little different than Principal Pearlman. We did infuse a number of burpees and running, which, and I don't really enjoy that part. But the thing is, and it was written up in our state, principals thing, we had maybe 25 schools visit, and I said, it doesn't have to be a martial arts thing, right? The what isn't what's important, it's the, why are we doing this?

We started a boys knitting group, right? For kids that were just tearing up our lunchroom during lunch. Said, Okay, you have a right to eat. It's a privilege to eat there. Come in my office, you're going to eat here. Let's come up with a way to use that time. Well, when we're done eating and a guy's like, I would like to knit little baby hats, because my little nephew or something, was in the NICU, and they ran out of those pink and blue little hats. Can we knit those little hats? And they became such a thing of pride for them. We had doctors and nurses and parents. We had a mom who would make me cry right now, who said my kid was born at like one pound eight ounces, and they gave it like a 25% chance to live, and my little baby got that little hat with the cute little note of who made those. And that gave me faith in humanity. And it's like was the greatest thing. They bring in cookies, whatever. So these kids who were a lot of challenge around the schoolhouse, in the lunchroom, at recess, it became like the most popular club, and there was a waiting list to get in to see boys doing that. Now I laugh because I went to my superintendent goes, Okay, wait a minute. So these kids are challenging, and you're going to give them two sharp metal objects, it's like, I think we're going to be okay. And there was a community member, a mom, who was really good and taught them how to make these so just trying these types of things, and teachers would see it. I would say, if I don't, if we'll see we don't like what we have. I'm not going to admire the problem. Let's. Try something, the more ridiculous it is, maybe the better it's going to be.

And for a lot of our kids, the reason why their achievement was down or their behaviors were a certain way. They didn't feel part of our community, or maybe they were struggling in math and reading and writing, which, I mean, let's be real, that's 80% of a school day that if that's not where your talent lies, you're even if people tell you're smart, you're great, you're creative, someone myself who was struggling at reading and writing and have ADHD, I'd hear people say, Well, you're gifted, and you're such a talent, and I'd be like, and you have no idea what you're talking about, because if I was so smart, why can't I read or why can't I write a paragraph? Why can't it just get out onto paper?

So I think the reason why I think the staff followed, the superintendent followed is I think they could see a real level of authenticity, because I was doing what I had lived my whole life, and just saying, I'm trying to hopefully find something for kids who are like me and others who don't fit in, and find a way for them to feel successful and hope and so forth. You feel those things. You tend to double down and do what you do. And if you don't, you tend to be the ones who get suspended. And I was suspended a few times or more, or spent a lot of time with principal training in the principal's office as a student.

So, you know, I think sometimes that, and the kids believe, you know the gentleman who did the mixed martial arts and I, we became friends because we both had, like, the similar upbringing. We were both the kinds of kids that we knew somehow we were smart, we just didn't fit into the traditional school model. And the kids could see right away, like we would talk, in a way, they're like, these guys are the real deal. If they're saying it, look how they turned out. Maybe we should do something similar.

Marvin: I love that. The calculus of Maslow Before Bloom, you just articulated it just in that moment. And I think a lot of our educators have a hard time seeing it go from one to the other. And that case study that you mentioned, you unlocked all of those other dimensions by providing a space for them. There's all of the elements of Maslow like they felt safe, they felt warm, they felt secure, they felt a part of and because of that, they could now feel free to, to calculate to like a knowledge and move all the way down the full scale. So I read that case study also with our group. We, we did a group, a book study here, with our education group on Maslow versus Before Bloom, and those case studies that you just mentioned, was one of ours, our group activities, and Terry is the person who had that, and we had to do like, little projects around and she couldn't wait to tell the story about the kids in the NICU. And she was literally in tears too. She was like, oh my god, I'm going to cry, but it, it makes perfect sense to me, and it makes perfect sense to the people who are in it, because you have to believe and feel warm and welcome. And it, who would think those kids would want to do that right? And then what? And those were boys. I, if I remember the story correctly. These were some, some boys that were pretty rambunctious.

Bryan: Some very boys, boys. But I think if someone had said maybe you'd like to do knitting, they would have scoffed at that. Yeah, so definitely.

Linda: And, you know, and I think that ties with some issues we're having, really, in our county, in the nation, with chronic absenteeism students really whether it's refusing or not wanting to come to school, and it sounds like your views that were really anti the we've always done it this way, and instead being the we've always done it this way, let's try something different. Really paid off with the attendance that you saw in your school across the board. Did you find that your school was kind of a shining light compared to some others because of what you were offering?

Bryan: I definitely think so. Linda, I think that, you know, there's a number of those. It wasn't necessarily, you know, when there was a transportation issue or something, but we know with the group of boys that we had, there were a percentage of those absences that could have gone either way. If the kid really wanted to get to school, they could have gotten to school. And I think giving them that hope, giving them that leadership and that connection, you know, really helped them to want to be there, you know. And really push for, yeah, I know that happened, or whatever. How can I get to school?

You know, even some of the kids would call miss the bus. What am I supposed to do? Hey, we'll send a cab right when that would have been the kid that before that wouldn't have said anything. Would have gone home, mom, I missed the bus. Okay, you're staying home today, so you. Yes, you definitely saw that the increase in attendance, and others asked, like, what's your what's your secret? Why is your attendance increasing that way, and without ever comparing us to another school? Because, I mean, we all do what we can do, I kind of had the belief that, like, what would have gotten me to school in one of those days when I could fake an illness as well as anyone, but I wasn't going to do it when we had, like, our experimental science club, or when we had, you know, dodgeball tournament or something, you know, a class party or field trip. Miraculously, you'll see the kids with the worst attendance are still going to be there.

Now, a big portion of the students who became part of our group were doing so because their attendance was not good, their achievement wasn't good, and they had tons of office referrals. I could say probably 95% of our of our office referrals came from those 25 or that majority of those kids and and it wasn't rocket science. There was a disconnect, like this school thing, they weren't sure it was for them. And for a lot of kids, third and fourth grade, that's when they make the decision, if this thing's for them. It is so hard to undo that mindset.

So, you know, again, it was like, I'm trying to think what, what is it that we can do? You know, it's not all just fun and games. I mean, we still have academics to teach. We still have to teach them how to read, write, do math, science, social studies, music, art, all of these things, but at the same token, you know, I'd have people say, you know, but the boys were five minutes late for this, or your movement group took 10 hour 10 minutes of extra instructional time. I'm like, let's be real. Those kids weren't going to be focused at that time, and probably were going to hijack your entire class. I would rather sacrifice 10-15, minutes and have these kids being on target the rest of the day. I would do that. I do that seven days a week. I would do that all the time. So really, just thinking about back to, yeah, making it something, a reason for them to come to school, removing a lot of the barriers.

We made sure that they had breakfast with us, that transportation was handled, that there was everything was taken care of. So all it was is we just have to get here. And the attendance was incredible, right? And the participation was incredible. It was one of those things where I think I'd written my resignation letter saying, If anyone gets hurt, or if this blows up in our face, I'll own it and I'll walk away. But my superintendent, like he had been a boxer and was really into a new we weren't fighting. We were just, you know, doing techniques. So I kind of took all the risk out of it for him, I told him I had my own, my own personal umbrella policy that would safeguard me if anyone sued me, so I just wasn't that worried about it. I was, you know, I don't like what we have. I know there's better that we could be doing for these kids, and so try it, and if it doesn't work, we'll try something else.

Marvin: Now, I do have one other question about Maslow before bloom, and then we're gonna move past this. But I was really compelled with one of your case stories or studies where there was a friend who told you about a job, a position, and you had resigned, or you had stopped being in administration, and you really were going to focus on, I think you said you made a promise to the Misses that you were going to help build that that business, because you had spent a lot of time in your own and then as You got here for the interview, you felt the Spirit moved you in a different way, and it just kind of touched my heart, because I know, as we talked before, in our pre conversation, how this work is so much more than just the actual work. Like when you look at it from the outside, it's like, oh my god, it's so much. But there's something that tugs at your heart string to make you want to be a part of it. So can you tell us a little bit about that story?

Bryan: I would love to you know it was funny when I left education, a long joke, as I say, I tell people I retired, but I'm too young to really retire. And I said, Well, I'm sure that's what everyone thinks the audience usually looks like. No, we thought you were old enough to retire. So, no, I was too young to officially retire, but it was time, you know, to move on. And it was funny because, yeah, I was sitting in my office with shorts on, with Vans tennis shoes, I think, with like a Captain America shirt and maybe a backwards Boston Celtics hat. And I said, Can I send something to you? He has this number your cell phone. And I text, and I go, does this? Does this look like someone who wants to return to school administration?

I'd already committed. You know, my wife helped me through my entire career, helped me get my doctorate. You know, the kids were young as that process, so really took, you know, us both and a lot of sacrifice. Is in a lot. And, and I promised her, you know, okay, we're not gonna be getting calls the middle of night that the fire alarms going out, or that someone broke in, or there's some issue. I'm done, done, done. We're good. And they're like, well, just come on, just talk to us anyway. And, and I got in, it was like, Oh, I'm so upset, you know, I'm so I don't want to face the wife about this, and she was great. And she's like, You know what? I know you gave me your word, but I know if this is your calling. So, you know, I did it. I committed to do it. I said until they found somebody else. But I committed to stay for a year. And fortunately, through that, they were able to to find someone. I fell in love with it. I mean, of course I did. I got right back in there, and they're like,

You're the first person this who ever played football with the kids at recess. You're the first is, I'm like, I am literally a 14 year old eternally inside of this body. This is the greatest thing ever. And, you know, is just one of those things. But there is, there is that hook and I drive by, you know, that I actually can look at as I go, like, at least three schools on my way into work every day, maybe more. And I'll see them, you know, as the kids are coming in, or maybe if I have a meeting in the middle of the day elsewhere, I'll see them doing something fun. And there's always the itch to turn the wheel and like, Hey, I'm still certified. I think I'm 100 year certification. I'll be long since deceased when that thing expires, but there's always that edge. Or, you know, I for a while, I was getting calls. I would get a call, Hey, would you like to be the gifted director?

Hey, would you like to be an assistant superintendent? Hey, would you like to be a long term sub? And now the point is, I travel a lot. We have our charity. I teach at the at the college level, and my calendar with teens and kids and things is very full, and I can kind of say I felt like I was practicing as a therapist without a license when I was a teacher and a principal, because hardly anyone got sent to the office because they did something well, which is probably a problem. We need to balance that. But, I mean, that's the basis of so many of the behavior challenges and things that we had really did come from anxiety. Well, that's what anxiety looks like.

Or somebody has ADHD and they're really struggling, or it's depression, or, you know, trauma is huge. Like prior to the pandemic, two out of three people have had an adverse childhood experience, which is a trauma metric. So yeah, there was an earlier comment that's right, like, we don't teach people this. We don't teach us in undergraduate.

We don't teach this in principal school. And I think we're starting to do more and more of it as we recognize that 50% of the people in our field leave in the first three to five years, and they're doing that not because they don't like the school lunch or whatever. They're doing it because they weren't adequately prepared for the child. Doesn't mean they don't love kids. Doesn't mean they're not passionate. I mean, this is a hard job, and you know, at least, hopefully giving these people, you know, incoming teachers or whatever, more of that, that real look into what this is like. And maybe, instead of having as many, you know, content, maybe having more on the pedagogy and on the behaviors and mental health, we really need to be putting a lot more in, because mental health isn't just for the school counselors, the school psychologist or the social worker. I mean, there, we'd have to have 50 of them in every school. I mean, teachers really need to be level one triage, and at least know what it is that they're dealing with.

Marvin: I love it. I totally agree.

Carla: Well, Dr Pearlman, we are nearing the end, and I just would like to thank you on behalf of the team for being here with us today and sharing. I'd like to leave you with a question that's taking us back to the first book that was discussed that you're here sharing with our young leaders, or leaders here in the county, from struggles to successes. Which would you say would be your top three takeaways from someone that may read or should read your book.

Bryan: Oh, that's so hard. Picking three points out of all of them. It's like saying who their favorite child is, boy, girl, twins, Samantha and Matt. We don't have favorite children. Yeah.

Marvin: Twins, we can see his face, so we know!

Bryan: I love them both, either, both the real therapists, which is fantastic. I'm stalling, if you couldn't, so, you know, if I could just kind of boil it down, I think, you know, one of the biggest points and the focus for the families, I think, would go to this idea of the struggle between autonomy and accountability. So many of us were raised at a time where parents said it so you do it, where you don't have a voice at this table, which a lot of people say, what was better when. We were kids. I don't know if that's true, right?

Like I knew I had to respect my dad because he was a dad. He's the one that provided a roof, food, whatever, and he also owned a belt. And I'm not condoning that, but, you know, sometimes you get spanked. We did. I think I complied more out of fear than for any other reason, and we know when we're in that state of fear, we're not at our best anyway. So really acknowledging that, even though that's how we were brought up, that may not be the best way with today's kids and teens, that really acknowledging that, that friction of autonomy, I want some say in my life, but the accountability, but I'm the parent, finding a way to have collaborative problem solving, maybe business of that kid meeting once a week, where that way I'm not checking some portal seven times a day to make sure the kid turn their work in.

Because, in essence, we are kind of doing that gradual release of authority that hopefully we need to toss you out of the nest when you're heading to college or trade school or the military, and we're hoping you're going to soar, but we have to equip you with that, and we have to learn to kind of do that collaborative problem solving, I think so that's one real part there.

I think the other, or maybe one of the others, is the power in communication, having that open line of communication, understanding that we're not here to be super punitive, but when there's a mistake made, we're trying to work together to learn from that and not repeat that same mistake. So the consequence more of like, maybe a natural consequence, maybe another point, maybe allowing kids is a good one out of this, to be bored. Like, maybe being bored is okay.

I know growing up, if I had said, Dad, I'm bored, he's like, Well, I'll give you something to be bored about. Go clean the basement, you know. And like, somehow, somehow, we feel like, you know? I know parents who are like, we've got 14 things to do today over the weekend, and I'm like, But why? Well, I don't want the kid to be bored. Well, it's like, being bored is okay, learning distress tolerance, or frustration tolerance, is a really important life lesson. You know, it's we go to the DMV like none of us are happy to go get our driver's license. You have to learn distress tolerance. I get in there. What am I gonna tell a person wearing there? Excuse me, I'm number 108. I'm bored. That guy's like, good for you. What makes you so special, you know, just learning one of those really important life lessons. So I think there's a lot of that. And really again, trying to meet the kids where they are working as a team, trying to collaboratively problem solve in some ways, seek that win, win. Seek something where everyone can leave the table saying wasn't exactly what I was hoping I can live with, that not only is it going to help in the near and little bit further future, that's a great life lesson that'll serve them in their work, in other relationships, etc.

And I'll add a fourth thing. This is one of my favorite points. I think it's really important for the adults to not forget what it was like to be a kid. And I feel like parents or educators that are really struggling often forget that we were a kid once, and this isn't a widget, it's a living, breathing person, and there's a function behind every behavior. Someone's acting this way because there's an emotional need that's not being met, or that there's something going on. And it's almost like becoming like Sherlock Holmes, of trying to get to that root cause, and we can help them, and that would be successful. I face a lot of pushback when I say that. It's like, well, I said, so they should do it. And my response is, that's great and good luck to you. But my stuff is what's effective and what's most likely to produce a positive outcome, and I've seen it with my own children, and I've seen it with the people I've worked with, and I'll keep continue standing by that.

Marvin: That's absolutely a wonderful answer. We really enjoyed having you here today, and we look forward to having you back. I know that you've been working with Linda and the leadership consultants and the leaders with Wayne County over the last few years. So we look forward to having you back. Thanks for coming to Getting To The Core. I am Marvin Franklin, and we're getting ready to sign on out.

Carla: Thank you again.

Linda: It's been a pleasure.

Bryan: Thank you so much, Dr, for having me. I really appreciate it.