



Nat: Welcome back to another episode of Reach, Teach, Talk. I am thrilled today to talk ... Before I introduce my guest, I actually had really rough morning this morning. I had a meeting that I really had to prepare for, and it was a conference call. It was in New York. I'm in LA right now, and I was totally scattered and my computer printer wasn't working and I couldn't print out the notes for this meeting. The coffee wasn't brewing right and I was running out of the house to get to the studio but knowing that I had to have this meeting in the car. I get interrupted by this woman who is walking her dog right in front of my house saying, "There's a big puddle in front of your house right now."

Nat: She pointed and there was a puddle in front of my house. It's true, and it covered half the sidewalk on the block. She's like, "I need you to take care of this." I was only thinking about getting in the car, getting to this meeting, and having the meeting in the car while I was driving to my next meeting which is this, yay, and feeling interrupted by the fact there was a puddle, oh my gosh.

Nat: It's Los Angeles. I understand that water is a big deal and moisture, but could it have come at a different time? Yes. Could I have handled it better? I'm sure I could've, because then I get behind the wheel and all that to say, and I'm breathing from here, not here, all that to say, I needed a break. I needed a mental break because I could tell that even though it was a beautiful sunshine-y morning, it's already 78 degrees, it's sunny and it's November, the month of gratitude, supposedly, I needed to take a breath.

Nat: I needed to open up and I tried, and in the car I was breathing from my stomach and I was trying to center myself, but all that to say, it was a perfectly fitting way to begin this podcast episode, because I'm honored to have the founder and CEO of Unplug Meditation here with me today. For those who don't know, I'll let Suze explain what Unplug is.

Nat: Unplug Meditation has two brick and mortar studios in Los Angeles, and they also have an app that anybody around the world can use when they need a timeout like I needed this morning.

Nat: Without much further ado ... Actually, with further ado, before I introduce Suze I want to just give the layout of what this talk will be about today, which is about the power of mediation. Mindfulness is a term that we've been hearing a lot in schools in the past five, 10 years for sure, and with good reason, because brain

studies, brain research is explaining how areas of the brain light up when we have applied intension and when we are able to focus on nothing and also gain something in return.

Nat: That's the application here, and that's why I thought, oh my gosh, to have Suze come on the show would be just incredible. Welcome, Suze Schwartz.

Suze: Thank you.

Nat: Founder and CEO of Unplug Meditation, mom of three sons, and a New Yorker moved to LA about a decade, less, ago. I'm very happy to have you here with us.

Suze: I'm so excited to be here. I'm excited to be on your show. This is such a cool space, and have Mike producing. This is cool. I'm in.

Nat: Thank, you producer Mike. Mike with the mics. Suze, maybe a great way to start off would just be, what's your background in this? Did you grow up in a family that valued meditation? Have you been ... Do you find yourself on many retreats and then decide, hey I want to start this? What's your background?

Suze: Could not be further than who I am. I'm going to just start with, after college I became a fashion editor working at Vogue, Elle, Marie Claire and I was at Glamor for about 14 and a half years. My husband said, "Let's move to Los Angeles." He always wanted to move here, I never did, he said, "Don't you want an adventure?"

Suze: When he said that, I thought, you know what? Let's give him this decade. I had a great decade, two decades, now let's make this about him. He had a great job offer. We moved out to LA and I decided to set the three boys up with school and help them as they transitioned, and he started his new job.

Suze: I was so stressed out. I've never not worked. I didn't work for six months, and I finally went back to work about six months in, and I was traveling back and forth between New York and LA doing Taxi TV commercials inside of New York City taxis.

Nat: Wait, so you were the face, like when you're in a New York City cab, you've got the screens?

Suze: Yes.

Nat: You were reading the news?

Suze: No, no, I was doing commercials for Lord & Taylor. I was kind of helping and I was creative director and I was producing these commercials and I was the face, so I did something like, "Hey, you, what shoes are you wearing? Taxi, take us to Lord & Taylor."

Suze: I would make these funny things like turn my head and have them go, and I was stressed out because I left my kids in Los Angeles with my husband who had just started this new job and I didn't really have backup. I did not feel good about it. My mother in law had come to visit me in New York and she said, "You need to breathe." I'm like, "Okay, show me how to do it."

Suze: She's a psychotherapist. She taught me a three minute breathing exercise and afterwards, I felt 100% better. I said, "What is that?" She said, "It's called meditation. You should learn how to do it." I said, "Okay, great."

Suze: When I went back to LA to try to find a place to mediate, I realized that it was commitment. It was either a six week program at UCLA, there wasn't a lot of options. Four days in some strange guy's apartment for TM, different retreats. There was a Deepak Chopra 21 day mediation series which I decided, okay, I'm going to do that, and you know what? I'll sign up for the six week program.

Nat: This is how many years ago? This is only ...

Suze: 2012. I opened up Unplug, the world's first drop in meditation studio, and that's how it all began.

Nat: And the world's first drop in meditation studio was open about four years, five years?

Suze: Five and a half years.

Nat: Five and a half years ago.

Suze: I opened it on tax day because I thought people would be stressed out that day, April, 2014.

Nat: Good thinking. I love a couple things you were saying there that stand out to me is, one, your husband saying, "I think you need to learn how to meditate before you build a studio," which says so much about you and your drive, and when you have an idea, just go with it. "Oh, wait. I'm going to run a pizza company but I don't have any dough in the fridge to make pizza with."

Nat: So, taking a step, and the cart before the horse, but also, it only took a three minute breathing exercise.

Suze: Yeah.

Nat: That was it. It was three minutes that your mother in law advised you to do. That's all it took for you to ... It is something where one can meditate and not have it be this obligation, hour plus long ... You can do this maybe even in the car, right?

Suze: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nat: It's three minutes.

Suze: Yes.

Nat: The power is ...

Suze: It's life-altering.

Nat: In what way, how?

Suze: Here's the thing. The problem is, meditation has a bad rap. People think it's hard. People think, I can't do it because I think too much or I can't sit still or I have no time. All of those excuses are excuses, they're not real. The truth is, we all think you can't turn your brain off in meditation. That's the number one barrier for most people.

Nat: Isn't that what you're told to do?

Suze: It depends who's teaching you. We tell people that meditation is a dance. It's a dance between your mind wandering with the 50 to 80,000 thoughts that you have every single day, and you coming to the present moment and just being in the present moment. It's like a ping pong game. Your mind wanders, you come back. Your mind wanders, come back. That's why you hear begin again, you're constantly beginning again because your mind will constantly wander. If it doesn't, that means you're flat lining and you're dead.

Nat: Right, right.

Suze: For us, meditation kind of works like a bicep curl. When your mind wanders and you stop to notice how it's wandering and make the conscious decision to come to this moment, breathe, slow. Oh, there I go planning dinner again. Breathe, slow, oh, there I am worrying about my kids again. Breathe, slow, it's a bicep curl that you actually do for your brain that changes the physical structure of your brain.

Suze: Let's just simplify it. I'm not a scientist, and you can watch Sarah Lazar who is a Harvard neuroscientist. Her TED Talk is genius and we put it on the Unplug website under Scientific Facts, but what she says is, there's really two parts of the brain. There's the prefrontal cortex which is executive decision-making, focus, compassion, and there's the amygdala which is fight or flight.

Suze: What happens in meditation is the more your mind wanders and the more conscious you are about it and making the conscious choice to come to this present moment, that bicep curl, you actually build your prefrontal cortex and the gray matter there. You build focus, memory, compassion, executive decision making, and you shrink fear, anxiety, stress, and fight or flight.

Nat: I've never heard it framed that way, Suze, the idea that you're actually building and weakening. You're building in the areas that you want to build, that one

would want to. They're executive functioning areas, just how you make decisions, as you said, with clarity, with more clarity, with more ability to analyze, but at the same time, you're shrinking ...

Nat: You have fMRI studies that ...?

Suze: You can see the before and after on her TED Talk.

Nat: The shrinking of the fear and the increasing of the decision-making, actually, to me, it sounds very ... Back to the bicep curl but in a different way. It sounds like you're strengthening, you're becoming stronger as a thinker, because if you're eliminating the insecurity and the fear, because, look, we're not in the Savannah anymore. We're not being chased by lions.

Nat: We are fortunately not. A lot of that fear that comes from the amygdala is, you can disregard, but we are conditioned over 10,000 years of being humans on the planet to have this fear, this sensation of fear, even if it's irrational. I love that idea of, like, the fear part decreasing, the executive functioning part increasing. That, to me, clarifies what meditation can do in a way that I've never thought of before.

Suze: I'm going to actually take it to the next level, too. You ready for this?

Nat: I think I'm open to it.

Suze: At age 25, for those of you who can watch this, some of you can't, I'm making a fist, because your brain is fully developed at 25.

Nat: Is this your brain?

Suze: This is your brain, the first, fully developed at age 25.

Nat: That makes me feel very old.

Suze: Every year after that guess what happens? It starts to decrease. It gets weaker, weaker, weaker, weaker. What Sarah Lazar did was, she basically took 50 year old non-meditators and had them do a program where they meditated every single day for eight weeks for 28 minutes a day, and she took a before and after shot of their brain.

Nat: Just 20 minutes a day? Sorry, just, 20 minutes ...

Suze: 28 minutes a day.

Nat: Okay, 28 minutes a day. This is not a big commitment. It's 28 minutes a day, half an hour.

Suze: Eight weeks.

Nat: Eight weeks.

Suze: You can watch the whole thing on her TED Talk, but she then measured their brains eight weeks later and found that they were as sharp as the 25 year old brain. Why is everybody not doing this? I have no idea.

Nat: This is anti-aging.

Suze: Yes, well, and there's a whole study on all of these things and you can read more about it. Actually, we wrote about it in the Unplug book, Unplug: A Simple Guide for Meditation for Skeptics and ...

Nat: Fantastic, I wish we had a copy of it right here. I would love to show it off here.

Suze: Yeah.

Nat: There is a book, Unplug book, you can get it on Amazon.

Suze: We simplify all the science.

Nat: Fantastic, fantastic, easy to ... This conversation is making it very easy to comprehend, very non-scientist.

Suze: Yes.

Nat: Okay, wow. Let's think about this. What you're talking about, really, is a weakening of irrational fear, a centering of one's body, of one's sense of place in a looking within, in an acceptance of one's thoughts. It's not pushing them away, is what I'm hearing from you, right?

Suze: No.

Nat: It's acceptance...

Suze: Be aware of them.

Nat: Be aware.

Suze: Making a conscious decision to not sit down and cup of tea with them.

Nat: Very nice.

Suze: That's Johnny O'Callaghan taught me that one.

Nat: I love that.

Suze: I love that. He's like, we don't have to have a cup of tea with every thought that we have.

Nat: Fantastic. As you said, 50 to 80,000 thoughts a day is quite a lot of cups of tea, right?

Suze: Right.

Nat: That's a lot of caffeine, actually. That probably wouldn't help with the centeredness. The last thing is the strengthening of executive functioning. Let's think about kids growing up today.

Suze: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nat: You have three sons who have grown up post-iPhone introduction, right?

Suze: Yes.

Nat: Definitely post, what was it, Friendster to MySpace to Facebook and now it's TikTok, Snapchat, everything's getting quicker, quicker. What would you say for schools that are considering putting in mindfulness practices like yours into their classroom? What benefits would come out of this inclusion?

Suze: Right. We actually have partnered with this one. Her name is Katherine Nelson. I met her through Dr. Robin Berman who introduced me who is going to be a guest on your show pretty soon.

Nat: I would hope so. She's also in the book...there's a great quote from Robin.

Suze: Yay, okay, great. We met Katherine and we started sending teachers to the school, which is a very troubled school. The kids have a really hard time. They come from difficult homes, some of them, and they're under-funded, it's a public school. She loved the program. It was changing lives, just helping, not only the kids, but the teachers, as well. We decided ... She said, I really love the app. I would love to have the app for the school, so now she has a place. When the kids are acting up, they come into the principal's office and they put headphones on and they listen to the meditations.

Suze: We have a whole series of kids meditations by Suzan Kaiser Greenland, who wrote ... She's unbelievable, she's a legend. She's the mother of kids mindfulness, the Mindful Child. She wrote Mindful Games. She's taught a series on there and someone that she trained, Laurie Cousins, also taught a series on there, so they listen to these kids' meditations.

Suze: Whether it's just putting a stuffed animal on their stomach and watching it rise and fall, or imagining their feelings are like a balloon that then rises to the sky and disappears, it's helping them.

Nat: I love the idea of going to the principal's office. When I rarely went to the principal's office for doing something inappropriate when I was a kid, the first person ... I would actually be happy to go there, frankly, because his secretary was one of the kindest women I've ever ... She was lovely and she was always

unconditionally warm. However, if I knew that I was going to go and have a set of headphones planted on me and be required to sit and just think, or not think, just meditate for five minutes, I think that that process ...

Nat: I'm thinking also as a principal, that that process could be so effective, because talk about disarming and talk about also the idea that you come to this office to be disciplined for an action or behavior that's inappropriate, but you're a human being and before we have a discussion, I'm thinking in the principal's shoes, before I have a discussion with a student, for me to know that that student has had five minutes to reflect through meditation, I would imagine the substance of my conversation with that kid would be so much deeper and so much more, frankly, proactive, afterwards.

Suze: She loves it so much that she really wants one in every single classroom and we're working on getting that for her. More important than that is there is this concept of circle time that they do have in kindergarten. I dream of the day, and I genuinely believe this is the future of education and it will be a fact, that kids will have little moments of mindfulness prior to starting the day, whether it is that they set an intention of their, not to do list, but their to be list.

Suze: How do I want to be today? Because, when you set an intention first thing in the morning, not only does it make the whole day go slower, but you genuinely and often actually achieve the intention that you set. I set intentions every day.

Nat: This sounds like the secret. It sounds like manifesting.

Suze: Yes, but that's the difference. This is not setting an intention to crush it. This is me setting an intention to ripple out kindness, to ripple out positivity, because I know if I go to work and I'm in a grouchy mood, everybody's going down with me, but if I go to work and I'm in a positive mood, my positive energy impacts everybody in the room. Everybody's in a good mood, we all do much better, and the day is a success.

Suze: I want to clarify, intentions are often thought as people setting goals. This is not the intention I envision for kids. The intention is how they want to be, how they want to show up.

Nat: I love that. It's different than a kid say, "Okay, I want to get all A's on my report card, and I'm going to have to meditate."

Suze: That works too, by the way.

Nat: Oh, good, yeah, yeah, but on a ...

Suze: I could talk about that, too.

Nat: I would love to talk about that, before though, I would love to explore this idea of awareness and how you mentioned it slows down the day to be intentional, and that's a good thing. How, why?



Suze: Okay. I can just say my own makeover. Before, when I was Suze, Fashion Editor, and I hate talking about myself in the third person, but I thought that would be helpful to imagine me that way.

Nat: Absolutely.

Suze: I would wake up and I would just check the boxes. Okay, I have to do this, I have to do that TV show. I have to shoot 50 people in five hours, and it was crazy, and then I would come home and I would lay on my bed and turn on the television and not want to talk to anybody and want to go to sleep.

Suze: Where did my day go? I have no idea. It went by in a blip, but now I do this technique called RCM, where I rise, I click the Unplug Meditation app, meditate for 10 minutes, and then get it out of bed, so, R-C-M, Rise, Click, Meditate. It's like I'm slowing everything down. What do I want to do today? What am I grateful for? Who do I want to be?

Suze: Then, I'm just present with my breath, experiencing the sensation of breathing, and I'm consciously slowing myself down, because I move 200 miles per hour. That's my natural state, is to move very quickly. This has really helped me be more present and embodied while I am doing things, as opposed to the old me who would just be like, "Oh my God. How the hell did this happen, I have no idea." I was in it but I was never in it.

Suze: Now I'm landing in the moments that I'm actually in and I'm present for my life, as opposed to not being present at all and then missing out on everything that's important.

Nat: Am I right to think about the students who are squirrely, who have got a ton of energy in them, who are ... It's more challenging for teachers to have them focus in a 45 minute class period. How would you help a teacher who's got ... Yeah, who's got a class like that? How can they incorporate, without it taking over the entire curriculum?

Nat: I guess, attached to this question, Suze, is, look, schools are places of learning, and learning is challenging and learning is not passive and learning involves sweat, work and focus and dedication. What also can you say to teachers who are going to be skeptical to this idea of, "Oh, what this podcast is really about is let's incorporate mindfulness, half an hour of meditation in here, and get to 15 minutes of curriculum." That doesn't work for me.

Suze: Yes.

Nat: How ...?

Suze: Okay. Let me clarify for those people that ... David G says this great. He's one of our teachers at Unplug, and he says this. When he goes into ashrams, he calls it meditation. When he goes into schools, he calls it mindfulness, and when he teaches cops and he teaches the military, he calls it tactical breath. For anyone ... It's the exact same thing that he's teaching to all three people.

Nat: You're answering a question that I am so glad you're answering, which is the difference between mindfulness, meditation and ...

Suze: It's the labeling situation, okay?

Nat: Yes.

Suze: Let's cut the labels and let's get to the foundation of what this thing does. We're going to call it a tactical breath, because we're talking to the skeptic who doesn't want to do meditation or mindfulness. Tactical breathing is a box breath that's used by police officers and it's used by the US military. What it does is it helps you focus and it helps you calm down. Two things that happen.

Suze: When you are in that stressful state, and you know, you have a tell, you feel yourself being activated. When you slow down your breath, you send a signal to your brain that everything's okay even when it isn't. Austin, who is my hyper, wants to do everything, can't sit still kind of guy, he's 18 now and he's still that way, does the tactical breath and it is the 16 second breath. Not only that, Austin now teaches kids in schools the 16 second breath sometimes.

Nat: He's a peer mentor of tactical breathing.

Suze: Yeah, well, he was trained in mindfulness and he went into some schools and he taught them how to do the 16 second breath, which is called box breathing, also. What you do is very simple, is you basically close your eyes and you can try it. I'll walk you through it. You breathe in through your nose to the count of four. Two, three, four, and hold your breath for four seconds. Two, three, four, and an audible exhale out. Let's hear it. Three, four, and hold, two, three, four. One more time, breathe in through the nose for four, hold your breath for four, audible exhale for four, and open your eyes.

Suze: It just brings you back into alignment. It helps with focus, it helps with anxiety, and it also helps with sleep.

Nat: Oh, yeah, I would love to do this before I go to sleep.

Suze: Yeah.

Nat: In fact, even lying in bed, right, you can do this.

Suze: Yeah.

Nat: You can do this in the car. You can do this after somebody yells at you for having a puddle in front of your house.

Suze: On the app, we have an entire section for SAT and ACT testing that we did with this company called test prep, and one of the meditations on there is called 60 second super power focus, and it is a 60 second meditation that helps you connect with your breath so that you can not be in thinking anxious mode and

bomb your test, but be present and slow it down so you can really focus on what you're doing.

Nat: Anxiety is so incredibly prevalent today. It's with kids with testing, with test taking. That just clicked with me, what you just said. Really, this is a wonderful example of how you can apply meditation practices, tactical breathing practices, mindfulness practices, all the same, in your classroom without it taking ... When I talk with teacher groups about relational teaching, and inevitably I get asked, "How much is this going to take? Is this third period Thursdays, we should do relationships?"

Nat: It's like, no, actually, it could take 10 seconds to help improve the relational ethos of a student, teacher relationship, just a sidebar conversation in the hallway. You know, "Hey, I noticed that you said this in class yesterday and I remember it today, and it was important enough that I want to share with you that that was a really good statement."

Nat: Yeah, stuff like that. It matters. It's micro moments and I think that this is applicable to what you're talking about. It's this idea that, don't be threatened by the term or by this idea that suddenly the classroom becomes an Ashram for 45 minutes. It takes a minute, three minutes before taking your big test or before going into a new concept in the curriculum.

Suze: We suggest three to five minute for kids. One, three, five, nothing longer, because you're going to lose them.

Nat: Right, and if the science backs up, which it does, the alleviation of fear, the growth of the executive functioning, so thinking, organizing thoughts, assimilating thoughts, making thoughts make sense before you output them onto, say, an essay or a test, I only see this as win, win, win, win, right?

Suze: Yes.

Nat: A question that I got, which I was thinking about earlier, is something you said that maybe made me think this, is around the time that you're talking about time slowing down when you're intentional.

Suze: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Nat: There are those who believe or who think that meditation, mindfulness is a very selfish act, actually, is all about the self and it's implied in that cynicism or implied in that, is that it's disconnecting. Reach, Teach, Talk, we're all about relationships. We're all about how you reach each other and how you can teach each other through in real life contact, connection, built on trust and all that.

Nat: What can you say to that approach of thinking which is, this is a going inward ... If I were in a classroom, how does all of 25 of us in the classroom meditating together connect us still?

Suze: Okay. Let's say little Joey in the classroom is acting up and misbehaving and I'm the teacher and he's worked my nerve and now I'm going to scorch the entire village. Not only is little Joey getting in trouble, but the whole classroom is now ... I'm mad at all of them, because they're all him.

Nat: They're all him.

Suze: Yet, if I was the teacher and I had taken a moment to slow it down, I would actually be able to pause before react, and so I would respond instead. That is the gift of the practice. When you don't meditate, you're more likely to scorch the village, and when you do meditate, you pause, you breathe and you respond. You have that space between the activation of, oh my gosh, this kid's driving me crazy, sit down, and, you know what? This kid must have not had a good breakfast this morning. He's hyped up. Why don't I just tell him to take a walk around the quad and then I can help everybody else and when he's ready he can come back in?

Nat: I love that, finding power in the pause.

Suze: Yeah.

Nat: That's what you're talking about is like, okay, Joey's acting up, scorched earth, you want to just flame everybody in the classroom and start all over again with a new class, and abusive temper all over again, but really it's just, take a step, breathe. This is hard, though, because in the school day as a teacher, finding time even to go to the bathroom is really, really challenging, because you've always got the kids coming in and out, you've always got, "Hey, got a second? I need this help,"

Nat: Actually, you're always putting your attention outward. You're always putting it outside of yourself. What's encouraging and what you just shared in that example is it takes just a few breaths. Joey's already got the class stirring up. Five more seconds of them all being stirred up is not going to make any difference. It's already kind of falling apart, and it will fall apart much worse if you're not intentional with how you respond, right?

Suze: Yes.

Nat: Because, this is really actually a very pedagogical or instructional approach that you're talking about here is, before letting yourself show your true feelings, take a step back, find power in the pause, and you'll think with more clarity, your executive functioning will be kicked into gear, and you will have a tactical way of having Joey handle the Joey situation.

Suze: Yes, we also have this thing that we have on the Unplug app called Meditation in a Jar. It is something that I learned from someone, I don't know exactly where it came from, but basically, we take a mason jar and we put glitter at the bottom and then water, and then put the cap on, and we show kids. We shake it up and we show them that the jar is filled with glitter, and we tell them, this is what your

brain is like when you're feeling angry, you're mad, but if you stop and you take a breath, I say, "Notice the jar, and what do you say?"

Suze: They'll say, "It's becoming more clear. You can see the water again." Yes. "Everything's at the bottom of the jar." Yes. We say that the jar represents your mind and the glitter represents your thoughts and your feelings.

Suze: If you stop and you pause, everything's still there. It's the same thing. It just settles and becomes a little more clear.

Nat: That is incredible. I love that visual so much.

Suze: It's not mine. It is someone else's, but we do ... Susan Kaiser Greenland turned me onto it. It's not hers, either, but someone else has done it and there's so many of them, but it's an easy thing for teachers to do in the classroom with kids, too, and then they keep it on their desk.

Nat: I love that so much because, as a teacher, the ideal classroom is not necessarily the classroom where everybody's nice and kind and does all the work they want them to do and everything is kind of vanilla that way, like, no respect for individuality.

Nat: The ideal classroom is actually one where the students have clear thinking, clarity of thought, receptiveness to ideas, receptiveness to each other, and actually that might answer my question a little bit, in a way, is this idea of how meditation and mindfulness, how intentionality, can help connect a classroom, a group of 25 people plus one adult.

Nat: Because, if you're thinking clearly, your blinders are kind of rotted, and you're able to then be more open to the people around you. Isn't that the desired hope for any teacher running an optimal classroom?

Suze: Yes. There's a woman, her name is Amy Sandler and she teaches the Search Inside Yourself Google program that they teach at Google. She does these meditations before meetings. You sit there and you center in yourself and you realize that ... Nobody like meetings, nobody ever wants to be in a meeting, but you think about the fact that nobody wants to be in this meeting including yourself, and that everyone has something important to say.

Suze: You give yourself some space and permission to actually listen and not have to be the speaker, and be open to what people have to say. That just changes the whole vibe of the meeting, and I love that.

Nat: I love that so much, and also that's a real world application to the workplace.

Suze: Kids, too.

Nat: Yes.

Suze: Classrooms.

Nat: If we can teach this young generation that approach to communication, the listening, the it's okay to be quiet because actually just listening is an action in itself. If we have a generation that's going to grow up with that as their foundation, that gives me a lot of hope.

Suze: Yeah.

Nat: We had a guest on earlier who was talking about a program called Council which is this idea of everybody talking. The only person talking is the one who's holding the coffee mug or the [inaudible] stick or the rock or whatever it is that you decide, and it's similar in that way.

Nat: It makes meetings more effective. It kind of gets rid of some of that shaking up glitter in all of our minds in a meeting where we're not certain if we're being listened to, we're not certain if the conversation is receptive to everybody's thinking. That's a wonderful application of it.

Nat: I'm thinking, you're the mom of three sons. Are they all practicing mindfulness in certain ways, or is this something that works for some?

Suze: I did put them all into the Unplug kids program until I dissolved that program.

Nat: There's a story behind that.

Suze: I dissolved it because the kids really didn't want to be there. The parents were making them go, and I thought it was the greatest thing that I ever did for my kids, but I also felt like I want to create a space where people want to be there. We decided to film all the things that we were doing in the classes on the app so kids could do it on their own time and that was very helpful.

Suze: They did get the foundation of the power of the pause, and how they don't need to react to everything. Real world problem would be, my son is playing Xbox and I'll be like, "Turn the Xbox off." I'll take the clicker, and he'll freak out and want to punch me in the face.

Nat: Right, like animal response, right?

Suze: Yes. Now, mindful communication, five minute warning, I'm turning off the television whether you're in the middle of a game or not. Five minutes comes, he's still in the middle of the game and I turn it off. Normally, he would be very angry and yell, but now he just, like ... Then, he calms down and walks out.

Nat: Tactical breathing.

Suze: Yes, it's tactical breath.

Nat: This is wonderful. I'm thinking about how there is so much hope. There's such an interesting ... Maybe this is grace or something, because you think 10 years ago, 15 years ago when technology really began to seep in to ... When it become on our palms and when technology began to seep in to our every waking moment, we were saddled with this, the increasing need to pay attention to technology, but around the same time came this ... Not a pushback. It's a way of accepting what modern life is today, which comes in the form of exactly what you're doing. It's like, you captured this moment and you felt it instinctively. Like, this is important. Taking time to reflect, taking time to not think. Taking time to allow our thoughts to just wander and to do the bicep curl and to have it be this response to, otherwise, what's always just attention going outwards and being sucked into the device.

Nat: If there's any last thing you can say about what you've learned, Suze, about, through this experience of starting Unplug, through this experience of working with thousands upon thousands upon thousands of people and now reaching out to hundreds of thousands and millions with the app, what's your biggest takeaway in the past 10 years of building this company, the biggest reward for you? Maybe the biggest challenge, also, and ultimately, what's your biggest hope for the future of mindfulness in workplaces and schools and in society at large?

Suze: When I first started this, I was building this company and I felt very possessive of it. I've learned a lot since then. I was almost hoarding meditation, and that was not what I was supposed to be doing. I was supposed to be sharing meditation. Some guy came I and told me I should free-chise it. I was like, "Wow, that would be so much better, to just teach everybody how to meditate and let them open up their own studios and let it be free.

Suze: I go home and I tell Mark, "We're free-chising," and Mark's like, "We're not going to free-chise," of course. The truth is, the more that I thought about it, the more I realized, yeah, that's actually what I do want to do. Now we're training teachers. We have a teacher training program where we have people flying in from London, flying in from Japan, flying in from Brazil, and they're taking our teacher training program and opening up their own studios.

Suze: For me, that's so rewarding. It's the ripple of, it's not just. We're two studios in Los Angeles and an app, which is great, so we can reach many, and yes, we do go to different companies. The fact that now there's a place in London called Levitate. There's a place in Japan called Medetia, and there are peeps that are now rippling it out to their communities, and it's growing.

Suze: I just feel really lucky that I get to be part of the movement that makes people feel better. That is why I started it and that is why I'm doing it, and the more people doing this, I think the better the world will be.

Suze: In closing, on my side, yes, I think we really owe it to our children to learn how to meditate and stop this crisis of stress and anxiety which is everywhere. It needs to end, and it's optional. We don't have to be stressed out world. Yeah, we're going to have stress, but we need to learn how to deal with that, and it's so easy.

Nat: It's so easy, and it does not take so much time. It's a daily practice. It's five minutes, 10 minutes, and if you're a student in a school and you feel like, "Oh my gosh, I know that I've got two tests coming up and I know that I've got this concept I'm having a hard time mastering," take some breaths, do the four second, four second, four seconds.

Suze: 16 seconds to calm, it's on the app.

Nat: It's awesome, and it's on the app. I'm hoping schools, too, really take a close look at the website for Unplug, because this app is something that, it costs very little, yet the effect ... You were just giving some great examples earlier about the effect that it can have even on disciplinary processes. I can see, this is the way we can include five minutes of meditation on the Unplug app with students who are ...

Nat: Let's face it, so many behavior issues come from students who are bored. They'll say, "I'm so bored, oh my God. Anything to get sent to the principal's office so I can get out of this classroom," right?

Nat: This is a way of acknowledging that as part of the school dynamic, and this could be a bomb, this idea of making it ubiquitous, making the power of the pause, making the applied intentions of a five minute meditation or breathing exercise, could make a huge difference positively in a school climate and school ethos. I'm just so grateful to have had you on this episode, Suze, because it does give me hope about a way of thinking and a way of practicing that takes very little time, very little expenditure, money expenditure, yet can shape this young generation that, if we think we've had it bad ... We are kind of internet ... Half my life is before the internet and half my life's after the internet and this is a challenging world right now.

Nat: For me, grappling with that, these kids growing up are growing up in a world there they've known nothing different and it's only going to intensify, I imagine, the distractions, the inability to focus. This is an approach that, if schools could incorporate them, if families can, if workplaces can, it'll make for a better future for all of us. Thank you for being a guest.

Suze: Thank you, thank you for having me.

Nat: Wonderful.