



Nat: We're back with another episode of Reach.Teach.Talk and the theme of today's episode is communication and the power of words. I am thrilled today because we have an expert on the topic of communication in organizations ranging from fortune 500 companies to schools. Mr. Drew Kugler, from the Kugler company is 35 years now, worked as a consultant and a leadership coach and is just an incredible guest, I feel for this episode because he has worked in two different mediums. To talk about communication and to grow teams and to focus on the relationships between people who work together in teams. In both the private sector and also in the more public nonprofit sector and again with schools to great success. Welcome Drew, to our episode of Reach.Teach.Talk. I'm thrilled to have you and why don't we start actually with you sharing with us about your background and what brought you to what you do today.

Drew : Like you said, it's been going on 36 years now, and frankly with the state of the world and communication as you stated at the top, it gets more and more both fascinating as an observer because that's really what I do. I just observe on an ongoing basis all day long, I watch and listen to people. As you also mentioned, I've been able to be engaged and retained by all kinds of interesting places over all that time from the classroom to the boardroom. There's a pithy little way to pull it all together and because of technology, that's such an easy example of the difference that it's made. Happy to go into what I've seen, the goods, the bad's and the worse because of that. But it really started, my mom, bless her soul, would always tell me that I was a bit of a show off.

Drew : I would stand on third base in my recreational sports team. There'd be a base hit all the way to the fence, but I would insist on sliding into home just to get the attention. What happened is I managed to turn that into some comfort in front of different kinds of audiences, very early on. I was in drama and speech and all that stuff, interestingly fast forward the story, it culminated in an opportunity to teach and teach as a graduate assistant at San Diego state university. When, the state of California made it a regulation that every single student had to take a public speaking class. There was this absolute overwhelming demand for people who would teach the public speaking class. In 1984 I entered into the classroom always having that comfort.

Drew : But then very slowly and over now up to this very moment, learning the distinction between being comfortable in front of an audience. But the difference between that and truly engaging and connecting in, a real way with that audience. Because I used to think all I got to do is be the speech guy and I would, find my way. This really led to this business, one day a friend, a mentor said to me, "Drew, just never forget that it's not about you. It really is about them, the audience." That alone we can go into that is a really fundamental thing that everybody needs to remember.

Nat: Not just teachers.

Drew : Not just teachers, parents, friends, everything. That if you're there and you really have in essence the ambition for yourself, you're going to have a problem. You might not even think so, ultimately it's not going to work as well as if you can find that bridge between you and your audience. Whether it's a kid, whether it's your child, whether we can go all the way up. All the way up to your fellow senior vice president of finance who is struggling to establish her ability to connect to people. My job has always been, and the last 21 years, just like this, you have the whole company, he's sitting here by design. Where I go to these places, find out if you will, the skinny on what people are like to work with. Then I tell them, then they have been good enough to, for the most part listen and be intrigued because that's a view.

Drew : You know the old saying, "I don't know who discovered water but it wasn't the fish." I'm the guy sitting on the little beach and I get to look in and see people and then reflect it back to them. To this day.

Nat: Yes. I'm thinking about the message and the messenger part too because I'm thinking that these companies will hire you. Or these schools will hire you to just as you said, assess the broad view, meet with the constituents, figure out where communication is working fluidly and where it's not. They'll listen to you primarily as somebody who's coming in, because you're objective, you don't work day to day among the staff, with the business manager example you said earlier. It does bring up a question to mind, as you were talking about, I was thinking about teachers and I was thinking about how there's no personality type that makes a great teacher. You can have an introverted teacher, you can have a bookish teacher, you can also have the dramatic teacher sliding into the third base symbolically in the classroom. Yet, they can all be successful because of how they're able to communicate and the effectiveness.

Nat: I'd love to go a little deeper into what your thoughts are about, if you're a new teacher to your classroom, it's the beginning of the school year and you may have taught for one year. You may have taught for 10 or 15 or 20 but how can a teacher, immediately look at their classroom as an audience where they can effectively on that first day of school, build that bridge. We talk a lot in this podcast about building connection and it's about relationships. How can we use our words, how can we communicate verbally, non-verbally as the adults in the room from day one? What advice would you give?

Drew : I started out in this business coming out of the classroom of the public speaking domain and became a speech teacher, a speech coach for a very long time for people. That's important to the answer to your question because it is and remains the number one fear that most people face. Without going into the whole thing, I had to come up with a way to in, a healthy way distract the speaker who was preparing to get ready to give their speech. Because immediately most people feel a pit in their stomach or their hands, sweat or whatever it was. Years of going through this, I was trying to come up with these moves to distract. The heart of it is, in this case the teacher, get the speaker to divert their thoughts away from frankly something that won't change.

Drew : That is the physiological reaction to being nervous. That's just going to change because you use the word nervous. It sets something off in your body. We had to come up with a

better way. Hang with the story, it's really important and probably my first suggestion for today and that came a few years later. I was watching one of those keynotes demonstrations that Apple does to demonstrate their new products and before the keynote guy, Tim Cook came out, they were running these quotes along on the screen, to warm people up. Here was the quote that has absolutely riveted my work. The quote is, "Here at Apple as we decide to create a product, before we do anything, we meet and we decide. When the product is in the consumer's hand, what is it that we want them to feel?" What is the emotion? Is a joy, is it inspiration, is it anything? Then they said, "We craft backwards from that expectation and that goal."

Nat: It's the intangible first, it's the feeling first.

Drew : Well, let me even... Yes, feeling is important, because feelings are what move people, not facts, don't forget that. You think you've got all your facts and your PowerPoint all lined up with your agenda and your lesson plan.

Nat: All those I's dotted, T's crossed.

Drew : Perfect, but if you are not finding an emotional connection to use your word, you're going to come up short, but let me stay with the teacher. My specific advice based on that interaction that I saw from that slide and thought about it was how is the new teacher, first day in class. What are they doing before they show up, how are they quote unquote preparing? Are they answering the question? Do they even think by the end of the school year, here's how I want my students to feel? Do they even ask themselves that question and do they begin in that crafting backwards that Apple tells us is so important? See the difference?

Nat: Yes, and to interject for a second, because this is a phenomenal and very relevant example you're giving. Is because I'm making the association with curriculum design. There's this whole method of curriculum design, which follows the exact pattern that you're talking about, which is, by the time you give the assessment. You start with the assessment, you start with what skills that you want to make sure the students have by the end of this unit and you work backwards by design. That's as you have said.

Drew : Backwards design.

Nat: Backwards design, thinking with curriculum. That's cognitive, but what you're talking about is the emotional, and I've never thought about it like that before. You're using the same idea of working backwards by design, but based on emotion, how do you want your students to feel at the end of the semester, at the end of the school year?

Drew : Therefore, I want to build on that. You're right, because backwards design is a great way to think about content. No doubt, it's the same embracing it. By the way, total kudos go to the master of self-help and that's Dr. Stephen Covey, who talked about begin with the end in mind.

Nat: Begin with the end in mind.

Drew : Same, whole notion, however you caught the distinction that is so important here and that is you can have all your content. You can have the room perfectly decorated and you know all that sort of stuff, but if you have not charted a journey for yours in this case students. Fill in the blank, anyone, for your students, for your audience, for your team, for whatever it is to follow this path, then you're going to... Let's say you do it. Yay, you follow the advice, you're going to be better, and you're going to appeal to that central part of humans that so many people are afraid, we'll come back to that word, afraid to dance with. That is the emotion that is connected with change because you're taking your students through this process of change through the year, right?

Nat: Yes.

Drew : But they're just like human beings. They're afraid too. They're afraid of the unknown, that's why we don't like when mom turned out the lights in our bedroom. It's the same thing that people go through in trying to connect to other people.

Nat: Wow, in working through some change cycle, you need trust. You need to have that sense of stability with the person who's in charge. In this case in a classroom is the teachers, the adults in the room, and in order to build that on day one, again, you're thinking about the last day of school, how you want the feeling. How do you want your legacy to be, which I don't want that to be misconstrued because you were sitting at the very beginning of this talk that it's not about, it's about taking you out of it.

Drew : How you want the student to feel, not about how you feel? That's the problem. See if I in that case, can get the teacher or the senior vice president to, here comes the cliché phrase to get out of their head and into the heads of the people, around them. Guess what they don't feel, there's no nervousness because they're not using the word, they have relocated either way in the only thing that's really changeable, and that is the minds and the emotions of your audience. Tough lesson and once you accept that, quite frankly that's a journey to climb. They all say, "Oh, that might be too hard." Whenever I hear that word, I do play Mr Hanks, line from A League of Their Own, where he says "Hard is what makes it great."

Nat: I love to hear you-

Drew : I'll always stick to that.

Nat: Can you say that one more time, because your voice is so... I feel like I'm talking to, Tom Hanks, I think my listeners might think I've got Tom Hanks on the episode.

Drew : He has an argument, go to YouTube and pull up the scene in the, A League of Their Own, where Geena Davis, quits because the team is just not performing. She's frustrated and she comes up with some frankly BS reason to quit the team. He confronts her and he says, "Really, what's going on here? She says, Oh, it's just all too hard. He says hard. He says, hard is what makes it great." Now so, think about any difficult point in your life, let alone in the classroom. If you were to chart the hard moments of your life, not only were they made different by the conversations you had around them or chose not to, but more than that, those were the things that made the biggest difference because they challenged you to sacrifice. They challenged you to in some cases suffer.

Nat: Yes, absolutely.

Drew : Right and that's where growth comes from. I only really connect because this sounds really good in my ears by the way, it only really connects when you're challenged, when it's difficult. Like that kid who won't just do what you wish they would do, but then don't forget it's about the kid and figure that out and go to the emotions.

Nat: Brilliant. You made me think about how learning, I say for example, in my book, Time to Teach: Time to Reach, I really stress the point that learning is cognitive and emotional and social and it's not a passive activity. You don't learn just through one direction. Like, here's the information and my mind is open to just receiving the information, suddenly I've learned it. You learn best, and you retain longest through challenge, through acknowledging and learning. That could be part of what a teacher communicates somehow on the first day, first week of school, first month of school is this is not going to be easy every day.

Drew : We're going to hit moments.

Nat: Moments we have challenges.

Drew : How are we going to treat each other?

Nat: Exactly, what language. That gets me to think about assessments and it gets me to think about critique and it gets me to think about reviews. To use it in a more of a corporate lens and you have an awesome term that you use and it's up on your website, Kugler.com called Constructive Candor. Let's talk about critique because it's also interesting because so many people think, "Oh, teaching is you know Mr. Chips in the classroom or Robin Williams and Dead Poets. It's the whole, the conductor and the symphony and everything that's going well, it's great. But there's so much more to the job than delivery of information. Because the best teachers are the ones, also who are fascinated with learning process and the only way that we're able to understand whether a student is learning is through assessment. Through evaluation, through checklists, ladder method.

Nat: Yet that's such a challenge to do effectively. How do we use our words to best deliver information that these students need to hear? Because, if we're talking about authenticity and transparency as being really important in the classroom and in any work environment, then we've also got to find ways to deliver information that's not always going to be positive. What do you mean by Constructive Candor? What does that term mean to you, how did it come about and how can teachers and school leaders use it?

Drew : Use it? Wow. This may take a minute.

Nat: Take your time.

Drew : Yeah, thank you. The term grew out of an interesting, I thought a transition I was going through in my work back in the early two thousands. Remember I started as this speech coach and remember that the key was everybody freaked out about their speeches.

They hired me because it's so hard because I get nervous. Well at the heart of that, when you really dig into that long story short, they're afraid as we said, we'll come back to that word. What was interesting is, by just paying attention to my clients, I came upon a parallel set of fears about how to show up to a, in this case a conversation. Here's what I found, I go to this law firm and the law firm, the senior committee was, is a big multi billion dollar law firm.

Drew : Hundreds and hundreds of attorneys with staff and the whole thing worldwide. They confessed to me with the door closed now many years ago that their biggest problem was one of what they called deferred maintenance.

Nat: What does that mean?

Drew : What do you mean by that? Exactly, and they said, well, we have a whole bunch of people that we have all this feedback for, about their performance, about their not personalities, but about their citizenship, they called it. They are acting in ways that people don't want to work for them. It was really some negative stuff and I said, "Well, what did they say when you told them about this behavior? They said, that's the problem."

Nat: We haven't told.

Drew : That's the deferred maintenance.

Nat: Pushed it forward.

Drew : We've put it off, why? Because, we're scared of what they'll do when we tell them. I said, "Well, what are you accomplishing by not telling them?" I didn't even know exactly at that point instinctually or certainly in any sort of framework how to go about getting ready to tell somebody the... I don't call it bad news, I call it important news.

Nat: That's a good lesson right there.

Drew : It's important that they know that, important for the firm and important for the teams they're on and the matters that they are involved in. It's important for their relationships. I can go on and on part of the problem, don't forget the power of words is we call it difficult. Look at the book, Dr. Stone out of Harvard. Difficult Conversations. Susan Sergent I believe is her name, book called Fierce Conversations, crucial conversations. You hear this stuff, it really ramps it up. I had to come up with some way to at least push back on these folks because my obligation was to be the helpful objective outside person.

Drew : I wasn't there to perpetuate their deferred maintenance. I had to help them break it. What I explained to them, number one, was to come to grips with the costs of what president Kennedy said, "The costs of inaction." You think you're going to risk these things by having these important hard conversations, but what are you accomplishing or what costs are you paying by not having them. To call it deferred maintenance was a cute phrase, certainly gets our attention. But guess what? It was people believing at the end of the day that they were okay and they could continue to behave like this, b e paid

seven figures and continue to be, you may want to cut this word assholes. That was what you've seen the book, The No Asshole Rule. It's a common accepted phrase that came out by the way of the law firms and the and the entertainment studios.

Drew : I've often said that I've made most of my living over these years and I'll get back to Constructive Candor. Being invited to places that you would never think would want to change and this law firm in the early two thousands was that place. They said, 'Okay, what do we do?' That forced me back to the drawing board, because lawyers like it clear and clean and on a piece of paper to come back with a way for them to organize their thoughts. In a way that had the highest likelihood that it would be at least paid attention to. Here's the second big statement, obviously the Apple one was big. I also liked this one, "When it comes to communicating something that needs to be communicated, are you doing it in a way that, not only where you say it, but that can also be listened to." I understand-

Nat: Not only clear.

Drew : Not only clear in your mind.

Nat: But substantive.

Drew : Not only clear in your mind.

Nat: Harmonic.

Drew : No. But doing it in a way that factors in who has to hear it and how they need to hear it.

Nat: Do you curate it so that it's received by the listener.

Drew : Received and not immediately resisted. Received and not... Or more than that, the very fact that you get it out of your mouth, because I can't give you the exact percentage. But most of the problems of connection in organizations, in my opinion, is the unsaid. The things we know we should say but we don't because, here it comes because we're afraid. Now we say, stay with me, this is always the interesting part, "That we're afraid of how the people are going to react." I don't want to use the classic, I don't want to hurt their feelings.

Nat: Totally.

Drew : I actually find the more that... Remember I get to talk to these people. They're not really that concerned about the other person's feelings, what they're concerned about is being around the person and how uncomfortable that is for them, meaning the sender of the message. They just don't like the tension, that's what they're afraid of being around. They don't really... But, they might care a little, bit about the individual, but I had to come up with a way which eventually was published in the American Lawyer in June 2004, my picture in there, I look different today. Anyway, the point of the story though is that for once I put it down on paper and it forced me to flush out three basic steps. I can't go into the whole thing, it's on my website. I'm coming up with an online course

about it at www.drewkugler.com. But it basically is how you prepare, how you engage and how you sustain, how you stick with it after you're done with the first conversation.

Drew : I can go into all the reasons where people really, really mess up in each of those, but that's a much longer conversation. But I introduced that to the law firm and then that got into the system and is now the wheelhouse of where I work.

Nat: Can you repeat those three pieces, how you prepare.

Drew : Sure, very simple it goes back, remember my friend, the Apple quote?

Nat: Yep.

Drew : All about preparation, has nothing to do with what you do when you open your mouth, how you prepare before you show up to the conversation. The important conversation, even choosing the word important is part of preparation. You've got how you prepare, and then once you're in the conversation, do you act in an engaged way, i.e. Are you present or are you looking at your phone? Are you having good eye contact? We go through the fundamentals of true engagement because that's rare in important conversations because anyway, lots of reasons why people screw that up.

Drew : However, the natural inclination of most people who get to the point of having had the important conversation, they think they're done. It's this huge sigh of relief. Well guess what, the most important conversations in your life cannot take place one time. They have to take place over time and they have to take place with, we've talked about building trust, they're not going to believe you the first time. They're not going to trust you at all. They have no reason given the history of the school or of the institution to trust you, especially if you're the boss. What you do, by sustaining, by showing up, let me repeat that by showing up again in a generous and trusting way, you will build momentum. Which, is what you need to build. Trust, it can't be done once.

Nat: Drew, this is great because as you're talking, I'm thinking about two different school-based perspectives here. One is student teacher and show up, see the student, I see you every day, walk by the students who you're concerned about or whatever, knock on their desk. Wake up like this, I see you put your hand on the shoulder, walk around, greet them by name, all of that. That's I am here and that's one thing, but the third part that the post-

Drew : Sustain.

Nat: The sustain, part also as the teacher is, I'm not going to say I'm just going to give you back this essay or give you back this test or give you this feedback once and just assume you're going to, learn from it. I'm going to remember exactly your performance and I'm going to continue to talk with you about it even in casual ways, like a ten second sidebar conversation in the hallway. I might see you outside of the sports field, this is, "Hey, let's just remember I see you and this is something that we're going to continue to work on and we're going to reflect on it." There's the teacher student, but then there's also the second lens that I was listening to you with through my ears. Is the teacher administrator communication and I would love for you to share a bit if you could about

schools as organizations, because Rob Evans, who's a phenomenal consultant on the East coast.

Nat: A doppelganger for you actually, but I'm on the East coast, has worked with many, many schools and he's an educational consultant. He has his example of overhearing to middle managers. Well one, who's overseeing another manager on the plane and he is giving him his quarterly review on the plane.

Drew : On the plane?

Nat: On the plane, totally enveloping. Rob Evans is sitting behind them and his listening to this dialogue between reviewer, overseer, administrator and a manager and worker. He's being clear and the funny thing is that the worker's pushing back, he's like, "I don't do that. The manager's like, yes you do and I've seen it and this is this and you need to work on this." But they were having it out and it was quarterly and Rob could tell this was not the first time they've had this review. To your point about sustain, in building first and then sustainment it was, also seen in this example that he gives about. Then of course he asks the question, how amazing would it be if we could have schools have this kind of open, transparent candor, so that we can really learn. Because schools... I'll be curious about your thoughts because you've worked with so many. How schools are different ecosystems than corporations.

Nat: What do you have to be sensitive to, what do you think? Why is it that as school it's so often you're called in to help communication in schools. Where's the specific resistance coming from in an educational environment versus in a private environment?

Drew : You can link back all resistance, is a wonderful book, if I can recommend on top of all the other great books that you talk about here. A book called, The War of Art by Steven Pressfield and he does this great job of in the writing, personifying resistance. But at the heart of resistance is the fear that we choose to make real. Fear, somebody once said is, what is it? "Fantasy, experienced appearing, real."

Nat: Say it again.

Drew : Fantasy, experienced, appearing real.

Nat: That's great.

Drew : Meaning you think that the fear is real and what happens is and this happens in schools all the time. I had a conversation with a head of school the other day about having an important conversation, which keeping it gender nonspecific, the head of school said, "I just don't quite know how to tell her this." But that was by the way, that head of school knew how to tell her, but if she could say that she didn't. Sorry, she said that she didn't, then she could get out of it and avoid the vulnerability, especially as a head of school and be able to in essence leave the organization. In my opinion, these conversations are, if not the essential part of leadership of a school, it's right up there within the top hits of what you need to be able to do. To here it comes again to be able to say what needs to be said in a way that it can be listened to. It's a two sided dynamic and all due respect,

that is the difference, you said we need to have this candor. In actuality, we don't need more candor.

Drew : We need more constructive candor and let me explain, what is that constructive is the adjective. Let me tell you why the adjective is so important because, hopefully we get enough conversations going about it, the adjective implies a patience and a commitment to building something. Construction, to just be candid or as the law firms are always telling me, well, we're really blunt here. That doesn't really help, if you do it in an unfeeling way, then who is it about? It's about how you feel. "Oh, I was blunt, I love this one. I was honest." You know what? That does not move it to the point of what makes constructive candor and what has to happen back at that school and what has to happen in all these places. What is missing is a generated mutual commitment to making something better. How do you generate the mutual commitment? How do you build? You engage. There's the word again, you engage the individual or it could be a whole school. You engage them in a dialogue.

Drew : If you just come with candor or bluntness, that dialogue never happens because you delivered your message. Dr. Stone, the guy I referred to earlier with the book, Difficult Conversations, seminal learning for me about this. He says in the beginning of the book, look, the reason that we screw up most difficult conversations is because we enter into the room, prepare. We enter into the room with the wrong purpose. We now enter into the rooms when we're really fired up and we've got something important to say, inside ourselves to get it out. Dr. Stone, so beautifully put it. He says, "We enter into the room to deliver a message. That's our job." Once the delivery is done, I believe we're relieved, we did our job. What if he said, we enter into rooms in to important conversations to hear the other person's story. You tell me that, how does that change your behavior? The difference between needing to deliver versus engage?

Nat: Well, it completely takes the ego out from me.

Drew : Number one, how does your behavior change?

Nat: My behavior is much more open, much more relaxed. I'm going to be coming from a listening stance.

Drew : There is the key.

Nat: In an empathetic stance.

Drew : In there to be empathetic and to be a good listener. There's one key behavior which moves it from candor to constructive candor is that you become the Inquirer, the asker of questions.

Nat: Help me understand.

Drew : Help me understand. What's going on here? Have you heard this kind of feedback before? You're your colleague back East, him eavesdropping on that session, there was a lot of back and forth. Wonderful way you put it, they were having it out, that was not constructive candor because of what you said that the receiver said, "I don't do that."

There's no conversation there. He's in total defense mechanism. The art and essence and grace of constructive candor is that the person who's receiving the feedback enters in prepared as well. To listen to comprehend why the feedback may be true and what could they do about it.

Nat: Looking at schools as growth industries, which absolutely has dawned on me as we've talked in this conversation. Has been about, well, schools are growth industries, there are the I think a healthy school, and I've worked in many and some healthy and some less healthy. The healthy schools have had in common that they had in essence this mission among the faculty and the staff and all the constituencies who are the adults working in the school. That we are a growth industry, we are growing ourselves. We're not perfectly polished people. The students who are watching us are watching imperfect people doing their best and I'm thinking about this. As you are sharing the magic special sauce of how to make difficult conversations easier and let's say more effective. Is that we're looking at, if we can have this mindset in our schools that we can be trusted as people who are doing our best. But every once in a while we're going to need feedback.

Nat: We're going to need to get sculpted, we're going to have, to have recalibration and if we are not threatened by the re calibrator, if our contract is not on the line. If our job security is not in threat, then we can receive that information better. I'm thinking about how this is why we need to have more moments in the school year where we can give this kind of feedback. Even peer-to-peer curious about colleague, colleague to colleague. Not necessarily administrative feedback, but even just observational feedback.

Drew : Well, let me interject to make sure I get this point in, because it's so important. You are not going to inculcate constructive candor onto your campus in interior administration and with your board or whatever it may be in snippets. It has to be a commitment of building your culture around it. It has to seep in and, and be practiced because, what you said was we really need to do this, need is not the question. There is never an argument, of the hundreds of places I've gone to talk about this, no one ever says that's a bad idea. They all nod their heads just like given a better speech, because they know what good can come. Here's the challenge, is that they, hide inside the safe confines of saying they need it.

Drew : If you ever hear someone say I need to lose weight, I need to drink less. I need to do, they're not going to do it. That is an acknowledgement of a fact, basically a personal fact. You have to move beyond and create an environment which is the job of the leader. Be clear about this. Anyone in a classroom leadership role, like the person who's going in that first time teacher who's thinking in advance or the head of school. Your sole job is not to change anyone. Your job isn't to motivate anyone. You have one job as a leader, create the environment where people can become what they want to become.

Nat: Growth.

Drew : Create the environment. Now, here's the important point about growth. You and I both know where that comes from. Carol Dweck book Mindset, talked about a growth mindset. Here's the fundamental of it because if schools call themselves a growth place, let's test it. Test for enough examples through the culture, administration, front desk,

security, how much curiosity. There's the keyword, questions, how much curiosity do they have? They are open, if they're curious. Dr Dweck is very clear about this. "You're either open or you're closed." That is a key, key indicator of how open they really are, because curiosity is hard. Why? Because then you have to not pretend that you already A are, right and B, you already know all the answers. Which is the opposite of every bad teacher I ever had who was there to prove to us how smart they were.

Drew : You see how it all wraps together and the fundamental of constructive candor is back to the, giving the speech. Is it's not about you, it's about their story. Because guess what, last point on this, they're the ones who have to change. Not you right, now I think you have to change, that's another discussion. But you're there to help them change. Make it about them, come with questions prepared, that is always what doesn't happen.

Nat: In a way of beginning to wrap up our conversation, it brings me back to the beginning of our conversation because you are, and I've seen about the idea of perfection and you just were speaking about that. How you can come all armed and I've got all the information, I'm maybe be ready to present this to the person who needs to hear it. But, really perfection is pernicious, perfection is not what it's about. I think about teachers that I've seen that I've coached and I've worked with and mentored in the past, the newer teachers to teaching who it just is you had... They fit exactly the image you were describing, they're perfect. Their classrooms is flawless and clean. The boards are so well decorated and the students' desks are perfect and the table and everything. You can be sure the teacher knows her material but those teachers don't always succeed and usually they're the ones that are having troubles connecting with our students. Because they are so concerned with appearing perfect.

Drew : Delivering their message of perfection.

Nat: Delivering their message. A to B, they're not getting to beat A, they're not getting the... Because the students instead of leaning in and being curious, they are leaning back and being like, "Okay, well I'm just getting information from this teacher, I may as well just be doing this online or have her be, she could be a robot? That's not teaching deeply and it's certainly not relational teaching.

Drew : Certainly not.

Nat: Just in last bit of the time that we have left right now, do you either want to sum up your points from this conversation or is there another point that you really want to bring up before we wrap it up?

Drew : I'll tell a very quick story that symbolizes it all. Constructive candor, when I was home writing the article in 2003 I couldn't figure out how to open up the article. My then six-year-old Alexandra, walked by my desk and this is in the article, said to me, "Dad, you got to help me out and I said, why? She said, look, and she pointed at her wrist and there was a band aid on her wrist a Dora the Explorer band aid. She said to me, dad, you got to help me pull it off. I said, sure, I'll do that. Then she held up her finger and she says, but pull it fast because if you pull it slow, it's going to pull all my hairs out, too slow." What does that story have to do and why would I pick that as my conclusion?

Drew : How good are you, the listener, anybody at pulling the band aid in the right way? Number one, it's going to hurt. Number two, constructive candor comes from sticking around. Sticking around and helping once the message has been delivered once the band aid has been pulled. In essence, are you there to help the person process what's happened, help them see their piece of it. Most importantly, genuinely listen, that's where everybody falls down. I hope today has helped illustrate in some ways. Most of all, thank you for letting me talk about this. This is what I am a committed to for the rest of at least my professional, if not personal life. Thank you.

Nat: Sure, thank you so much.

Drew : You're welcome.

Nat: I mean this is this... I think that for me, after I record, these episodes, I always take time to reflect on them and I jot down parts that I want to make sure stay in the episode and not edited out. I have a hard time figuring out what to get edited out of this conversation.

Drew : Thank you. It's a compliment.

Nat: But also, it is that action though is what you're leaving us with, which is it's yes you deliver the message but you stick with the recipient of that message. Because your words matter and that person's going to go home that night too and that person might wake up at two in the morning, still thinking about that conversation, how it went and as a deliverer, you need to remember that. Then the next day may make a point to say, say hi. Make a point to just be seen yourself because you're not disappearing. You're not just, here's a hot potato, I'm giving you this feedback and see you, we're done.

Drew : Pulling the bandaid and letting you deal with the pain, not a good thing. Thank you man.

Nat: I appreciate that the wisdom of your eight year old daughter at the time.

Drew : Six, even scarier.

Nat: Six, is basically is what we're leaving with. Thank you to your daughter, Alexandra.

Drew : All about Alexandra.

Nat: Drew Kugler, Wonderful conversation.

Drew : Thank you.

Nat: Thank you very much, for taking the time to be here.

Announcer: You've been listening to Reach.Teach.Talk, with Nat Damon. If you'd like to recommend a guest for a future episode, you can send your suggestion or questions to nat@reachacademics.com.