



Nat Damon:

Welcome back to another episode of Reach Teach Talk. I'm here with Mike Erwin, the co-founder of The Positivity Project, which is a nationwide network of workshops and professional development. And I don't know what else you'd call them, Mike, but seminars based on bringing people together in this divided world, focused on youth, looking at schools as hubs for not just academic learning, but, and this is why you're listening to Reach Teach Talk, relationship building, right? Growth, overall.

Mike Erwin:

Absolutely.

Nat Damon:

Development of the mind, the body, and the soul. Mike and his business partner, Jeff, served in Afghanistan and Iraq. They are bringing their military experience and working in an organization that is focused out-word, right, on the greater good to young people's lives today in the US. And in terms of relational teaching, I can think of no better example than this organization, The Positivity Project, in terms of the way that The Positivity Project is able to integrate hope through connection into the lives of young people in the US today.

Nat Damon:

So that much further ado, we're going to have a great conversation, Mike, about kind of the founding of The Positivity Project, where this idea of hope and positivity came from, how it connects to healthy relationship building, and honestly, how The Positivity Project has been able to heal a very fractured and a very divided United States that we are existing in today. So, welcome on board, Mike. We're really happy to have you on Reach Teach Talk.

Mike Erwin:

Yeah. Thank you so much. I really appreciate, Nat. Yeah, I'd say we're working, right. We're working on that last one. It's certainly a tall order, but we're definitely doing our part. Yeah. Real brief overview of The Positivity Project. So our mission is to empower America's youth to build positive relationships and become their best selves, right. So we really want to help and drive the connection and the ability to relate to other people and also to help every single individual who goes through The Positivity Project to grow in their character strengths, to become a better human being.

Mike Erwin:

On top of the training that we provide, we also, we essentially have a scaffolded by grade level, Pre-K all the way to 12th grade, essentially a curriculum. A character education, social emotional learning curriculum, where we empower. We put the power in the teacher's hands to teach a daily 15 minute

lesson about the character strength of the week. So they're learning about integrity and humility and gratitude and creativity, enthusiasm, hope. These character strengths are so essential to living a successful and a fulfilling and an impactful life. Teachers are talking to their students about those for 10 to 15 minutes every single day. And the impact has been huge. One school up to 785 schools in just the past five years.

Nat Damon:

Where do you think that hunger for The Positivity Project comes from?

Mike Erwin:

I think that... There's been this... Obviously, a big movement over the past 15, 20 years in the information age. There's been a lot of focus on growing in intellectual rigor, right? How do we get more students reading and more doing thinking critically and communicating in all those "21st century" skill that a lot of strategic business plans that at the district level of schools talk about. But I think at the end of the day, a lot of people realize that there's a challenge about... That's awesome, but how do we also help to build better human beings? And these things are not necessarily in conflicts with each other, but success in getting smarter and winning and all those things if pursued to the extreme do come very often at the expense of, well, what kind of person are you?

Mike Erwin:

And so, I think that... We've seen over the past 15, 20 years more and more of this focus on the outcomes and test scores and all that. And sort of... I don't say left behind, but definitely receiving less attention and focus is, yes, but how are we helping students to treat each other better? To better connect with and to build relationships with each other. To include when they go back home with their family and their friends.

Nat Damon:

Now, is it... Because I've always believed that learning is... It's never passive. Learning is really only gained through challenge and through obstacle and hardship that you can, "Oh, I mastered that concept and now it's going to be in my long term retention." It's not like I open up my brain and just kind of get fed the information and I automatically learn that way. So if learning and if a school environment is based on learning, then I'm just thinking... That seems to me that a school environment is one that is competitive and one that is not always going to be happy and fun. So, how do you connect both the themes that you were excited about Positivity Project, enthusiasm, hope, positivity into a school climate where academics and learning is not necessarily always going to be enthusiasm generating and fun and...

Mike Erwin:

Right. Totally. And sometimes it's going to be really hard. Absolutely. But one of the things we do is that we partner with schools is that we often fold really well into some of their academic curriculum. So, ELA, the reading and the writing and you think of some things like that, art and music, and PE classes. There's a lot of different classes where the Positivity Project often finds itself making the way into there.

Mike Erwin:

And going back to my point, I think it's completely... It's awesome, right. They have competition and to have people who are striving to be the very best, right. Some of the data that we looked at from the

Harvard Graduate School of Education study, though, that was a bit alarming was that when it comes down to, are we trying to help children be successful, be happy in the moment or care for others, right? Care for others was at the bottom, right.

Mike Erwin:

And so, a lot of the message that a lot of students have been getting is that feeling good in the moment, in other words, just being happy, "you doing you", is more important than helping others and achieving at a high level is more important than helping others. So I think we need to be aware that only one out of five students said that helping others is like the most or the primary message that I get. And so, again, there's nothing wrong with that. I think it's healthy competition, especially constructive competition is healthy. It's how we get better. It's just, I think, simply reminding people along the way that you should not pursue success at all costs, right. Because success at all costs is going to leave you feeling empty after you win that championship or you get that SAT score or you get into that college, right. It's only going to be so enduring, but what you're doing over here from a relationship building standpoint and being that good person that is more enduring.

Mike Erwin:

And so, we're simply trying to say, "Hey, how do you grow in your character so that, yes, you're also successful, but also that you're using those character attributes to be a better human being and to build stronger relationships with your family, your friends and your teammates?"

Nat Damon:

Wow. I love that idea of the classroom actually being less of a individual like, "Okay, I'm going to work just for myself." And instead how to be both that and caring for your neighbor. Caring for the student next to you who... Let's face it, right? You remember being in high school. You kind of had a sense for who was really acing the class and who was struggling and it wasn't a big secret, right. And if we can broaden ourselves in the classroom to care for how others are doing, it could actually unify the classroom in a deeper way.

Mike Erwin:

Well, yeah. And if you think about it, right. I say this all the time. Life is a team sport. And so, the challenge we have in lots of different domains in life is that we think that if we are individually successful, that that is going to make us happy. And what the research suggests is that that's rarely the case. A great story I used to illustrate this. One of my mentors, Jim Collins, his wife won the 1985 Ironman World Championship. 30, 20, 15 years later, she went on to coach up in Boulder, Colorado. She coached the high school, women's cross country team. They went on to win the state championship. And when he talked to her about this, she just said, "There was no comparison. The fulfillment that I got out of helping others to achieve their dreams versus me achieving my dreams." Right. Yes, this is certainly a big deal. It's not like she's saying like, "Ah, yeah. That Ironman World Championship that I sacrificed so much for didn't mean anything." Of course, not. That was amazing, but what she said is that compared to helping other people achieve their dreams and helping them to succeed and doing that as a unit and as a team, that was more rewarding and more fulfilling.

Mike Erwin:

And I just share that as an example of the fact that you can be really individually smart and get the best grades or be the fastest kid in the class or the Allstate athlete or whatever it might be, but it's really how

you integrate those ideas into your life that's so important. And that's why our mission statement at the P2, right, it's about empowering America's youth to build positive relationships and becoming your best self. Yes, we want you to become your best self, but we also want you using those attributes so that you can build strong relationships.

Nat Damon:

Wow. That's awesome. You got me thinking about... You defined actually quite brilliantly or Jim Collins's wife did. The idea of what it is about teaching that is so beyond it being just a job for so many, for the great teachers, right. That they attributed it as a calling and it's something that's a real life calling. And it's that idea that they are fueled by this, "Look at what I'm able to do with this group of students. Every September I get a new batch and I don't know them, they don't know me, and we create a classroom dynamic that's relational at its heart. And the satisfaction that comes with watching the improvement and watching their growth. It goes beyond even this individual satisfaction that I might get, right."

Nat Damon:

I live in LA and there's a lot of people who are quite successful and high profile celebrities, whatnot, yet every once in a while you certainly hear stories about people who you would think would be super happy and really fulfilled, but in a sense it's like they spent their whole lives just thinking about themselves and not having that relational connection with others.

Mike Erwin:

100%. And this is such an important point to draw out. In our initial training, we talk about this in the research quite a bit, but the number one driver of life satisfaction is the quality of a person's relationships with their family, their friends, their teammates, their coworkers, right.

Nat Damon:

[inaudible 00:10:22].

Mike Erwin:

The positive psychology research, as you know, has borne this out over and over again through super longitudinal studies, through ones that have done it in just recent years. And it keeps coming back to the same, if not near the identical idea. Your relationships really define your level of happiness and life satisfaction, right. In other words, you can be less successful as the world will often and society will define it, but you've got strong relationships with people who look out for you, right.

Mike Erwin:

You're going to be very fulfilled. And I think that's super important for people to realize that while we spend so much time and effort pursuing and chasing after our dreams and our own accomplishments, that if we do so along the way at the expense of our relationships, that when we hit that accomplishment, who's going to be there to celebrate with us? Who's going to be there to be happy with us if we have neglected people all along the way. And I think it's a real hard internal look that we have to [inaudible 00:11:19].

Mike Erwin:

Some of my own reflection on that like the first organization that I founded, Team Red, White, and Blue while I was in grad school at the university of Michigan, I was so committed to the success of that organization and in helping veterans. A lot of my relationships like I just say, "I don't have time. I'm working away. I'm Team Red, White, and Blue." And I felt like, "Hey, I'm doing this great thing for the veteran community and I'm so passionate about it," but eventually got to the point of realizing that's not healthy for me. And it's really going to be not healthy for the organization long term if I can't find a way to strive and hit balance.

Nat Damon:

That's such a great example. I can relate as well. Certainly. It's the idea of diving head first into something that is absolutely authentic to your belief. And there's some incredible feeling that comes with your work being a definition of who you are, right, an outlet, an extension of who you are. Yet if it does come to that degree where it's like, "I'm just going to focus on growing this and building this work, this project," as passion driven as it is, we are wired for social connections. And if our friendships, and if our family relationships start to fray, it's hard to build those back up again. And it reminds me of a podcast episode I did recently with Parker Palmer about relational trust and how you build that relational trust and proximity and time together are two essential traits, right, that come with building relationships.

Nat Damon:

So I'd love to take a step back, actually, and hear more about you and your background in terms of... Did you just wake up one morning with a Eureka moment just saying, "You know what? It's all about enthusiasm and positivity and connection and relationship." How does your story contribute to the founding of The Positivity Project?

Mike Erwin:

Absolutely. And I'll just say a quick word on what you just mentioned. I think it's really important to know that over the past couple years with all the challenges of COVID and all that, you talk about proximity and how important that is that a lot of children have not had that. A lot of them have missed out on lots of that interaction time that they would have with one another. And I think that... Just like I know there's been a lot of talk about the gains we need to make and the learning and the academic front. There's also, I think, a big amount of gains we need to make on the social front and on the character front.

Mike Erwin:

My personal story on this is that I graduated from West Point in 2002. Deployed to Iraq once, Afghanistan twice. After that third rotation, I went to grad school at the University of Michigan, as I said, a few minutes ago. And I was in the PhD program in personality psychology, but underneath it, I was really studying under Dr. Chris Peterson and [inaudible 00:13:49]. Chris Peterson being one of the founding members of the science of positive psychology under Dr. Seligman.

Mike Erwin:

And I had two years, basically, 22 months. Not quite two full years to study under Chris and I started Team Red, White, and Blue in part because of what I was learning from the research of positive psychology. I went back to West Point and taught. Well, in October of 2012, Chris died suddenly of a heart attack. I believe he was 62 years old. He was just starting to hit his stride in terms of his life's work.

Had he remained healthy and lived, I mean, he had another 20 years of academic contributions to make to the world. And that, in some regards, died with him. There was not that many people out there in the field of positive psychology at the time that had this explicit focus on character strengths, which is really what I did in my graduate school thesis work in. Was in the intersection of leadership and character strengths.

Mike Erwin:

So bottom line, when he passed, that's really when I started thinking through, "Well, what can I do on my end to maintain his legacy and bring forward a lot of this work that if he was alive, he would be fighting for to bring to the world?" And it centered on character strengths. And so, that's, to me, as I started reflecting on my own life. And at the time, just had my first couple of kids. So my wife and I were having these conversations of how do we want to raise our kids? And what's important for them as they grow into young adults and into adults? And we kept coming back to how important these character strengths are to build and to groom within them.

Mike Erwin:

So that really is where the idea started. And I started initially a group at West Point. I called it the Positive Psychology Project. And I really just was meeting with some cadets and talking about what positive psychology is. And then for a couple years, it kind of laid dormant. And then it was really through conversations with my co-founder, Jeff Bryan, former All-American Lacrosse player at West Point, two time Iraq veteran. Went out and got his master's degree from the Fletcher School up at Tufts. And we really came together with very different backgrounds, psychology and international relations. And we talked about, how can we contribute to the future of the country?

Mike Erwin:

This country that we fought for, we deployed a total of five times together between us to defend that country to the ideals that America espouses. And we came back and realized like, "wow, there's a lot of challenges on our home front." And we thought to ourselves like, "What can we do?" And that's really what began this conversation of, how can we take positive psychology and package it up in snackables and bite-size pieces, if you will, day to day to day to day, and then empower and train teachers, as many of them across America as possible, to be able to have these lessons and these conversations with their students to slowly, ever so slowly, growing students' knowledge about what gratitude is and how to be more grateful. What hope and optimism is, and how to be more optimistic. What humility is and how to be more humble. The list goes on and on. And that's the goal as we partner with schools is to build these character strengths through their teachers, through their learning, and then through their practice to show more and more of these character strengths so that they graduate and go on for the rest of their lives, having a deeper sense of appreciation and understanding of what these character strengths are and why they're so important.

Nat Damon:

There's so much that you just shared about. I mean, character strengths, first of all, is key. And I think that I'd love to, at some point, probably not in this conversation for time's sake, but I'd love to learn about how you developed and really selected those specific character strengths, and also how it brings... I'm also wondering if there's anything that you can share off the top about what you learned during your tours of duty about just the need for positive mindset, relationship.

Mike Erwin:

Well, [inaudible 00:17:38]. Jump in just real briefly as an example. I will see this a lot of times in my soldiers that we deploy. They would be awesome. Things were going really well back home. And then you put them into extreme adversity like on a deployment 7,000 miles far from home, family, friends, the familiar, and the adversity, the environment would have a drastic impact on their mindset and on their capacity to perform their job.

Mike Erwin:

Then you have other soldiers, the opposite. Back when things were more peaceful and more stable, they would be late to formation or they would miss morning physical training. You get over to Afghanistan and all of a sudden they are wired tight. And you would see how much the environment as the pressure and the temperature got turned up, it either broke people or it made people. And so, I became very fascinated about like, "Well, what is it about people who can make this transition from tranquility to a viable environment and actually grow stronger through that volatility?"

Nat Damon:

Wow. Yes. Okay. In the snackables analogy, I just love that so much. I've never heard it before, but you talk about building an environment where individuals can thrive together like what you just shared in terms of deployment in Afghanistan and how under certain circumstances you create the environment and they'll snap into service and they'll be right on. And then other environments where it could be more sluggish and turn in late for training and whatnot.

Mike Erwin:

Right.

Nat Damon:

Right. In the snackables approach, I guess I related to kind of what I share when I work with schools on their advisory programs about... I call it the drip, drip, drip effect. It's not just during the half an hour, twice a week that you have advisory or homeroom that the magic really happens. In fact, it's usually like take advisory out. Take the advisor or the counselor relationship, the mentor relationship out of that structured 30 minutes twice a week, and have it just... Think about the times during the school day where you have those ten second sidebars. You have-

Mike Erwin:

Yes.

Nat Damon:

... those, right. You have the time to kind of take a beat with a student that you see in the breezeway and just say, "Hey, I remember that comment you made yesterday," or "that was an incredible soccer game. I caught it a few minutes a couple days ago." And that kind of stuff is what to me creates environment more than just saying, "Okay, we're going to change our environment and expect it to just change from the top down or from some structural [inaudible 00:20:00]." Can you speak on that a little bit? Am I following-

Mike Erwin:

Absolutely. Yeah. A phrase comes to my mind. It's better to be consistently good than occasionally great.

Nat Damon:

Ooh.

Mike Erwin:

It's just this whole idea of the consistency matters. And what we often see is that a lot of times schools will do when it comes to characters, they'll have a theme of the month. One word theme for the month like responsibility, right. Or they'll bring in a speaker or some sort of assembly or they'll do something like once a month or once every two months and make a big deal of it. It's awesome, and people are engaged, but then the question is, well, what's the follow through? How do we sustain this? And that's the big thing is we know the power of habits.

Mike Erwin:

And so in our partner schools, nearly 800 of them, you just have the habit of, hey, every day, very often they start off the day this way. We're talking about the character strength of the week, right. And so, let's say it's humor or enthusiasm. You sit there and you talk about that character strength of the week, Monday through Friday, for the first 10 to 15 minutes of the day, right. We've got videos. We have activities. We have all kinds of different resources at teacher's disposal to take the guess work out of it. And frankly, a lot of the planning since so many teachers have so much stress and so much work on their plate to begin with. And they sit there and they turn around and they execute and they don't need to be an expert in the character strength of the week or in positive psychology to be able to teach it and to have a conversation about what gratitude is, right. About what love and kindness are.

Mike Erwin:

And so, no doubt about it. It is about that consistency. And I would argue as consistent as you can make it, as many days in the week as you can make it, you're going to increase it. And we know this is neurological pathway stuff, right. When you build habits and you're engaging with things on a consistent basis, that's how the brain is developed and shaped to show more of that character strength. This is how we learn math. We don't learn math once every two weeks. You learn it daily, right. So when you put the practice in and consistently engage on something, that's where the real growth happens.

Nat Damon:

And we're at a time... You alluded to this earlier in our conversation that we are coming back together after this knock on wood. We are entering into the tail end of this pandemic and the transition into an endemic COVID life where we're going to have to live with this, but hopefully it'll be more like the flu than what we've been experiencing, which has caused incredible isolation. You mentioned earlier-

Mike Erwin:

Yeah.

Nat Damon:

... among our students and our adolescents and all of our youth and this disconnect. And I was thinking about that when you were sharing about the neural pathways and how we are socially oriented. Our brains are developed for social connection and to be able to positively reinforce that in schools today

and moving forward, being such an incredible priority. And thinking about this past couple years, I'm wondering if you have anything you might want to share, particularly, about young men. I'm thinking about young men who have been isolated. There have been a lot of studies about young women and girls and the cutting off truly of their social world and how in the negative impact of that. Yet, is there anything that you've seen in your work with The Positivity Project regarding young men, boys, and the effect of the pandemic on them specifically, and also... Or just things that you've observed that may be interesting to talk about. About where boys are today.

Mike Erwin:

Yeah. I mean, well, I think we can cite the article. We talked about this earlier in the Wall Street Journal that talked about, I believe, it's a 40 to 45% reduction in the amount of young men applying to college. I think that 45% fall is over the past three years. So 2019, 2022. So that's a very stark drop. That's not like a micro trend. That's a pretty big red flare from my view, but it's more than just like applying to college or moving on. I think a lot of times it boils down to a lot of the stressors that, I think, we see a lot of young men facing, but also like everybody, right?

Mike Erwin:

The temptations are there to play video games, right. And I know that young men play video games at a much higher rate than young women do. And those video games, I think, the problem with them, and I'm not demonizing video games, is that there's... And when I talk to lots of young men who spend two, three, four, five hours a day playing them, they really truly believe they've got friendships with their teammate on whatever game they play, but they literally don't know what the person looks like. They don't know anything about their story or about who they are. And that person certainly is not going to be there for them if they have a bad day or if their mom is sick or their dog dies, right. So there's a real important role that in real life in-person relationships play because those are the people that pick us up off the floor when something really tough happens to us or we really take it on the teeth.

Mike Erwin:

And so I think that a big part of... And this is just my sort of analytical kind of perspective on this is that so much of the video game culture, but then also certainly interacting with people virtually on TikTok and Snap and Instagram and texting, all the virtual interaction, but this is both boys and girls who obviously do so much of this, is there's a lot that gets lost in translation, right, in those virtual interactions. So I think for young men, I think that the video games is absolutely a big part of it. I think I saw a stat the other day, so I don't know if this is accurate, but there are more boys and young men playing Fortnite than play football, basketball, and soccer added together in leagues.

Mike Erwin:

So, again, there's just a massive volume of young men that are spending lots of their time with who they feel like to them are friends, but they don't really know anything about you. Objectively, they're not your friend. They're just somebody that you're playing this video game in the metaverse with. And so I think these are some of things we got to grapple with moving forward, especially as the metaverse accelerates and gains more steam. I'm on the side of "I'm very concerned for what this does to the long term health and happiness and wellbeing of our society". Certainly, the past two years have accelerated the metaverse and accelerated the virtual world. I think there are some amazing things about the virtual world like we're connecting and you're in Los Angeles, I'm in North Carolina. We have this real time live conversation that you can record and then share out. Technology's amazing. So I'm not an anti-

technology person, but I think that we have to really ask ourselves, what's the trade off? And when we spend so much time, especially young men, playing video games and interacting with people in that way, that's not real people in front of them, objectively you're making it harder for them to build those meaningful connections with people in their life, with their friends, with their family, romantically, et cetera.

Nat Damon:

Mike, you really have me with that example of friendship being... When things really, really crumble and you just fall to the floor, who's going to be there to grab you? Who's going to be there to help you up? And your story, obviously your background at West Point and serving your tours of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq, and having that understanding innately of what it means to be there for others, right. What it means to be... If you're thinking about young men in the world of manhood to be a gentleman to others.

Mike Erwin:

Yeah.

Nat Damon:

And how that... You can replicate so much through technology and your examples being excellent. Video games that can strengthen your brain and increase your capacity for strategic thinking and blah, blah, blah. And I don't mean to blah, blah, blah dismissively. I mean, there's a lot that can and be used even academically in a video game format yet it's not the same as building friendship. And I suppose you say the same with girls in social media or just take gender away and just youth and social media, same thing. How many of your friends who like your posts are going to be there for you truly?

Nat Damon:

You hear the stereotype of the person who on Facebook says, "I'm having dinner on Friday night at this restaurant. Anybody out there who wants to join me? I'll be at this place maybe at the bar." And nobody shows up.

Mike Erwin:

Yeah.

Nat Damon:

These are your "friends". So this world is so much more complex in that way. And your Positivity Project, the idea that it really challenges that flow of society and causes all of us even if... By the way, anybody who's listening or watching, just go to this website and you'll learn so much just by visiting the website alone about the way that The Positivity Project forces a pause on where society's going, how we're bringing up our youth, and kind of recenters us on what really matters most in terms of relationship and connecting and positivity.

Nat Damon:

Mike, I'm going to leave you just for time's sake. We're going to have to wrap this conversation, but anything that you feel essential to say that we haven't talked about yet? Any theme or any story you'd like to share to kind of wrap up this awesome conversation?

Mike Erwin:

Yeah, no. I just would say... First of all, it's been great. Love the energy. Just how much you care about this stuff. It totally shines through in the discussion. Yeah. I think that... Just putting a bow on all of it is... Again, come back to the importance of relationships. And the final thing I would say on this is my second book just released a few months ago. It's called Leadership Is a Relationship: How to Put People First in the Digital World. And it really unpacks... The first chapter is called Relationships Under Siege. And it really just makes the point that relationships are inherently very complicated because they are ongoing interactions between two or more people or two or more groups of people. And when you think about... If you're someone listening to this and you're thinking about, "Hey, I really buy into this. I know what... I understand the research relationships are so important, but man, they're hard." You're not alone. In fact, you're with everybody else in the world. Nobody. I've yet to meet somebody that says relationships are easy.

Mike Erwin:

And so, I think it's so important to know that whether you're talking relationships from a leadership standpoint or a family standpoint, or a teacher, or a coach, or a mentor or friendship. All the different ways that we relate or romantic relationships that we relate to other people. It's so important to know that they are hard and they're never going to be not hard. And I think that's such an important thing because we often we will beat ourselves up and will allow ourselves to get down and frustrated so much when our relationships aren't going well. That's okay. Right. The key becomes, how do you bend, not break? And how do you stretch and say, "Okay, that was a really bad day. I'm going to stop the bleeding, right. We're going to address some of these things and we're going to get things back on track tomorrow."

Mike Erwin:

And I just think that's such an important concept, and it's why equipping students, but all of us, really, with the understanding, the character strengths, the attributes, to be able to understand these strengths and what they are and why they're so important and why relationships are so important, is arguably not just timeless, but arguably more important than ever.

Nat Damon:

I love that expression to bend the break because I think about as a teacher in the classroom when you're teaching and you're teaching and either something, there's a... Something that's being taught clearly is not resonating with a faction of the students. You can see it in their body language. You can see it in their face. And it's the teacher who actually has the fortitude to pause and to ask like, "Are you all with me so far? Have I lost you like five minutes ago?" And bending that break because the instinct may be to keep pushing and pushing ahead yet that is pushing toward a break. The connection between you as a teacher and the students in the classroom. So bending that break is actually what we talk about when we say hey, ask your students or check in, "Are you with me or have I lost you"

Mike Erwin:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Nat Damon:

And that goes with friendships, that goes with inter-personal working relationships with teams. Certainly you've experienced in so many different modalities in your life. And Mike, I'm thrilled about your new

book by the way. I'll make sure that we have that up on the [inaudible 00:32:14] as well. And thank you so much for being with us today on Reach Teach Talk, talking about relationships, positivity, and the integration of both in what's needed for today's youth and for our society in order to heal and to really come together and unify in the future.

Mike Erwin:

Thank you so much for that. I appreciate it. Love the conversation and, yeah, I hope you have a great rest of the day.

Speaker 1:

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.