# Transcript

## Helen Street – From Good Intentions to Learning Engagement

SIMONE EIRTH:
I'm Simone. I'm a principal in residence at the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership. Thank you so much for being with us this afternoon. I know that you would have had a crazy busy day in school and there would have been 100 reasons why you could have said, oh, I'm not gonna make it. So really, thank you so much for taking the time and privileging your time for professional learning this afternoon. And you're in for a real treat with Helen today. To get started, I'd just like to acknowledge the traditional owners throughout Victoria because I know that we're coming in from all different places and extend the acknowledgement even beyond Victoria and all the way to the lands of the Whadjuk Noongar people who are the traditional owners of south-west of Western Australia, where Dr Street is actually joining us from Perth. And I'd like to pay my respect to elders past and present and any First Nations colleagues who might be joining us today. Thanks again for privileging the time and being with us this afternoon and really valuing and committing that time for your own professional learning and looking after yourself by actually taking the time to engage this afternoon.

As you know, these are big events and we're pretty excited about it. But it really takes a team for these events to happen. So I'd really like to just do a huge thank you to the Academy team Taylor Mason, Kate McGown, Chris Elliott and Project Lead, Gabriela Boni-Finch and Maria Otto, who is our manager of the principal program. Today I'm going to be monitoring the chat and you'll see a slide that will come up just in terms of operating online and the etiquette involved. And as I said, I'll monitor the chat. So if you've got any thoughts or ideas that you'd like to put in there, make sure you do so and we'll let Helen know what's coming up in the chat during the session. And on that note, it is my absolute pleasure to introduce Dr Helen Street and she's an applied social psychologist who has a passion for education and improving the mental health of Australians, young and old. She's known as an agitator. She likes to challenge norms and the (INAUDIBLE) of our social world in hope of building a better future for all the children in our schools.

Helen's Street works really been about exploring engagement and wellbeing and motivation of young people and she's presented around the globe, so we're really lucky to have her with us today. She presents at schools, colleges and educational events and writes regularly for educational publications including the Western Teacher magazine and the positive times. She actually initiated and started with her partner, the Positive Schools Group as well, who run conferences and that are available for you to be a part of as well. So on that note, you're in for a treat. As I said earlier, I'm gonna hand over to Helen. Thanks so much, Helen. Over to you.

HELEN STREET:
Oh, thank you Simone. What a lovely introduction. And I want to echo your thoughts about the fact that it absolutely takes a team to bring these events together. So thank you also to Gabriela and to everybody who has invited me on board and made sure I understand the technology and help bring this presentation to everyone today. So I'm excited to be here and to talk today about learning engagement and self directed motivation and I'm particularly excited to do that for three sort of really key reasons. Firstly, motivation and engagement are in themselves really valuable ways of understanding how we operate within the world and absolutely being self-directed in our lives. Being engaged in what we do is gonna lead to all sorts of benefits in terms of the process of doing things and the outcomes and the achievements that we can have. But beyond that, I'm excited to talk about this because I feel that rather than thinking necessarily that the pursuit of happiness or the pursuit of well-being per se is a good sort of juxtaposition to the challenging poor mental health that we see in schools, in students and in staff.

I think a much better juxtaposition to poor mental health is actually to think about motivation and engagement, `cause if we see students and staff who are self-directed following their goals, engaged in what they're doing, interested in life, energised, that in itself is in many ways wellbeing in action. So by looking at motivation and engagement, certainly self-directed motivation and engagement, I think we very much looking at wellbeing in action. And thirdly, I think that this topic and indeed this presentation is really important and relevant to my own work, which is very much about thinking about contextual influencing how context can meet our needs because I want to sort of really instil in people an understanding that our motivation, our self-direction, our ability to engage in the things that we do in life is not something that we simply hold as individuals, but rather it's something that comes from our connection to our context and how that context connects to us and meets our needs.

So it's a very sort of contextual approach to supporting wellbeing in action. So I'm gonna share my screen now and we can keep talking along to my slides. OK, so all about thinking about positive intentions to learning engagement and really understanding that really we are talking here about well-being in action. But even though this is so important for all of the reasons that I've just mentioned, how hard can it be sometimes to put our goals into action even when we have goals that we feel are important and we actually believe we really want to put into action and I think if any of you think back to New Year's Eve or maybe even just last week or yesterday and think about all of the goals that we continually set for ourselves and fail to put into action even though we know those goals are important. For example, thinking about getting more sleep, which is always one that I'm working on or eating more healthily or doing more exercise. We know these things matter, but how hard can it be to actually enact them in a self-directed, engaged way?

And certainly, that's true for our work as well. For the staff thinking about writing reports or getting lesson planning done or doing things, we know that matter but are hard to do. Certainly from a student's perspective, whether it's thinking about reading the novel or practising math or revising for the test or getting that big report done, it can be really hard to move from really thinking you wanna do something and really knowing it matters to actually doing it. So how do we better understand that process and the factor is that can help us to close that gap between good intentions and our actual behaviour? So Nike would say, well, the answer is to not think at all really about it and to just get on and do it. And as much as I wish that was a reality and don't think it really is, otherwise, we'd all be doing an awful lot more running around and eating healthy food and sleeping well. But there's certainly, there is some sort of rationale behind this message. And the very least it's pointing out that a lot of the thinking that we do do about the things we want to do or we think we want to do tends to work against us and challenge us and can lead indeed to procrastination and us putting things off.

So it does seem that there's something more to it. And certainly, social psychologists such as myself have spent a lifetime or certainly a career lifetime really trying to understand what it is that enables us to close that gap between intention and action and especially since the mid-1980s, our understanding has really accelerated. And nowadays we have so much more of a contextually based and sophisticated understanding of engagement and motivation than we've ever had before. But let's start at the beginning. So traditionally speaking, people would imagine that knowledge in itself was a motivating factor which would enable us to close that gap between intention and behaviour. A sort of belief that if you're not doing something important is because you need to learn more about it. You need to find out more about healthy eating or you need to have more of a plan with your report writing or you need more information or you need more steps or you need just to know more about your goal. And that will enable you to put it into play.

And in fact, this sort of very simple understanding of how to support engagement still plays out in an awful lot of classrooms and school settings. However, there was a lot more to it than that. And thinking of knowledge in itself doesn't get us very far. So to sort of think about how motivation and engagement understanding has developed, I thought I would take is to have a look at marketing and an understanding that large businesses and corporations spend a huge amount of time, effort and money on employing people, social scientists who really understand motivation and engagement and have very much up to date research that helps companies to work out how to promote their products, their services to shift people from thinking something looks nice, to actually taking action and using it or purchasing it. So advertising is a great source of information. (AUDIO DISTORTS) So first of all, let's go back in time to about the early 1950s. And this is an advert for coffee. And we can see here that at this time in history, there really was a sort of embracing of this idea that if only we had enough knowledge, we really could get people to do things.

And so certainly in this advert for coffee, there's a huge amount of information about what coffee looks like, the different strands that can come in, how you can use it, etcetera, etcetera. And there's even a helpful picture of somebody enjoying a coffee. But let's now fast forward to about 2015, 2014 and a much more modern advert for coffee with a much more modern understanding of how we can get people engaged and interesting. And here it is here. So as you will see, there's not even the word coffee mentioned in this advert and yet we know, we know without even thinking about it, that this is indeed for an espresso coffee. And it's, of course, an advert starring the very glamorous George Clooney. And when George Clooney became a brand ambassador for Nespresso back in about 2013, their sales tripled within a year and they shot up to be the number one favourite way of making coffee at home for British people. Obviously, as Australians are more sophisticated in their coffee-making than having relied totally on the press.

But nonetheless, George Clooney has done wonders for Nespresso sales without even talking about the product. So let's shift back in time again, but this time a little bit more recently than that coffee ad, but nonetheless, back to about the 1960s and an ad for perfume. And here there's less knowledge, less information, but still very helpful bottles of Chanel perfumes. We know what the product looks like. A little tagline. This sort of leads us to understand what this perfume might be all about. And now let's go all the way forward to only about a few months ago for a modern ad for Chanel. And again, we can see there's no sign of the product in sight. So unlike George, with his helpful cup of coffee in hand, is cute. Margot Robbie in this picture doesn't even seem to be using perfume or who knows, it's a visual picture. We see the word Chanel, but nonetheless, there's not much more to it. And this is an incredibly successful campaign again. And then one final one. This time going way back in time to the era with huge amounts of information to try and sell products this time for affordable clothing.

And we can see all sorts of ways that young men can wear this very affordable, colorful clothing from back in time. Let's fast forward to a modern ad for affordable clothing. And here is an ad for H&M clothing, this one starring David Beckham. And if you look closely at your screens, you will see he doesn't even appear to be wearing any H&M clothing or at least not on the screen. And yet again, a really successful advertising campaign. So my first question to you is to think these are big businesses that really understand motivation. They really understand how our research and our support of what makes someone engage in something has changed over time and they've changed their advertising in accordance with this. So what have these different advertising, these different more modern advertising campaigns work in common? And maybe you wanna just comment on that in the chat if anyone can think of that. And yes, they are all very good-looking famous people, but is there something beyond that?

Let's see if I can access the chat on my screen as well. Not sure that I can at the same time as my (INAUDIBLE), but maybe Simone you can help me tell me if anybody makes a comment.

SIMONE EIRTH:
We're just waiting at the moment. Oh, there's some coming through now. Simplicity, aspirational images and how the product will make you feel or maybe even look. (LAUGHS) Yeah.

HELEN STREET:
So well I think that they're sort of touching on what these people have in common so they don't actually tell us anything about what the product will do for us, but nonetheless, they work really, really well. And the thing is that not only are these three stars very well-known people, but they're also what we call very Q scores. They're seen as very popular and very likable people and also very trustworthy people. So they have the power to shift our attitude towards a particular product. We're sort of left with a sense, oh, my gosh, you know, if George drinks Nespresso must be all right, it must be a good product. And so we too sort of start to feel more positively about that particular product. Margot is using Chanel perfume and I ought to be using it myself. So it also shifts our understanding of normative information. We start to feel that this is the cool thing to do or the thing that we need to be doing if we want to have a sense of belonging to a sort of pool sector of the population.

So these marketing campaigns have been built upon a very well-established and robust theory supporting that understanding of how we close the gap. And that's called the theory of reasoned action. They each work not to tell you, give you knowledge of facts or information, but rather to shift your attitude in a positive direction towards the product and also to give you normative information that tells you that you ought to be or should be using the product because that is the norm in the sort of groups that you would like to belong to and who wouldn't want to belong to groups with these people in them. So to sort of give you a really simple example here, I think, oh, I'm gonna practice yoga twice a week and I know that it's good for my health, I know it's really important thing to do. But if I have a really negative attitude towards yoga and I think, oh, you know, it's just for hippies, that's why there's lots of sort of people like me and I don't even know anyone who does yoga. So I don't even see it as a sort of normative thing to do.

Then despite the fact I might think yoga is very good for your health and well-being, I'm still not gonna put it into play. Whereas in contrast, if I think yoga is important and I think, wow, and I really just sort of love the whole concept of it and what a great way to exercise and be sort of calm and floaty and flexible at the same time. And everyone who's anyone is doing yoga, right? Now I said in 2021 and here it's 2023. If I sort of think these things and I think these things in a positive light without necessarily knowing anything about yoga, I'm much more likely to show up naturally put that intention into practice. So behavioral intentions lead to volitional behavior. If we have positive attitudes towards that intention, that goal and also we have normative influence that tells us that we feel that we ought to be doing that to support our sense of belonging. As you might imagine, the older that you get, the more you rely on attitude. But young people are very much concerned with social norms.

They're very much concerned with what their friends are doing, what they put close to them (INAUDIBLE). So taking that into the classroom, if I think, well, my friends are, you know, I think I'm really gonna listen to my teacher in class. No, it's important. I know that I'm gonna learn more if I pay attention and if I think in a negative way but you know what, I Just sort of think it sort of sucks to listen to my teacher all classes. It's so boring and nobody who's ever pays attention anyway, even though I might know it might be helpful, I'm not gonna do it. Whereas if I think, you know, it's actually such a lovely classroom environment and everyone's listening and it's really the right thing to be doing because that's what everyone around me is doing. And I see it as a positive in a more positive light, that emotional attitude towards that sort of rationale of what I need to do is really gonna shift my behaviour into a more positive role. And I'm gonna end up more likely to listen to my teacher in class.

Or in a similar vein, this one sort of final example, thinking about sleep and who doesn't struggle with sleep. Maybe it's just me. But we do know that young people are struggling from a lack of sleep overall. If I might know, that seems good for me and I might have gone to the talk in their school that told me that I need so many hours sleep at night, but I'm not gonna actually go to bed on time and get that amount of sleep. If I have this sort of attitude of, you know, life's too short to sleep and none of my friends seem to me to go to bed early and there's sort of I'm missing out if I don't stay up extra late. So it's really, again, about attitude and norms, not information. Whereas if I feel like, oh, you know, sleeping is just as wonderful thing that makes me so fresh, lovely, I can't wait to get into bed. And that's actually the people I really love in my class or go to bed at a very reasonable time as if that could happen. But if that did happen, we're much more likely ourselves to then put that goal into action.

So i hope that sort of really building this sense of how much it matters, not so much what you know about the topic, but your attitude towards that and what you think the people around you are really doing. And it's not just about what you think those people around you think we ought to be doing, but it's more sort of descriptive norm of how you think everybody else is behaving, what is the law in your environment? But nonetheless, attitudes and norms are just not enough in themselves to really understand how and when people put their goals into action. There's another element that was then developed and added to this model, and in doing this, the model changed names and has become the theory of planned behaviour. And even though this is now back in time quite a long time ago, back in the early 1990s, that this theory really became sort of well known and well established, it's still relied on heavily today, especially in the advertising and marketing work. So in this sense, if I go back to my yoga example, we can start to see that it might well be that I have a great attitude to yoga.

I think everyone's doing it around me. I think it's important. But my perceived behavioural control is also of importance. And if I think no matter how much I want to do this, I can't make time for it right now because I'm busy, I'm doing webinars and I'm writing and I've got children and I don't have time in my life and I don't even know where to go to a class. I don't have a sense that I've got control over that process. And that lack of a sense of perceived behavioural control is gonna have a really powerful effect on my ability to be motivated or to evade. And so no yoga happening for me. Whereas if I sort of have information provided to me that helps me feel I've got this, it's more under my control. I find a class for middle-aged women which need no previous experience and it's just down the road and it fits in with my timetable. Suddenly I have this extra element. This is gonna be really helpful for me. And the same goes in classrooms. Having a sense of perceived behavioural control is really important.

But nonetheless, as we can see from this next slide, we're still only explaining at maximum half the variance between intention and behaviour. And a lot of the time only about 2019, 20% of the variance. So this still is not a very powerful model for really predicting how important goals will lead to engaged behaviour. As I said, people develop, spend their lifetimes trying to understand this topic. If only it was as simple as the theory of planned behaviour. So it seems there's more to this model, and that's where we wanna go. So since the 1990s, really, we started to realize more and more that we need to pay attention to contextual factors and in particular how the context that we find ourselves in are meeting the core needs we have to feel that we can be self-directed in our motivation to do so. So in addition to attitudes, subjective norms and thinking about perceived behavioural control, we also really need to think about behavioural factors as our motivational factors. In particular, what key needs do we have that have to be met to enable us to really close that gap between intention and behaviour?

So this is sort of moving us out to thinking about how the broader context supports us and allows us to engage in whatever it is we need to engage in. So what are those key needs that the context of our life need to be supported, whether it's at home context, our classroom context or our broader school context? Well, to answer that question, I thought that I would sort of throw the question to you and get you sort of reflecting on your own experiences when you actually do feel completely engaged in an autonomous way for the things you're doing. So to do that, what I'd like you to do is to think about what makes a great time great. So think about a recent time, maybe just something in the last week or two weeks where you had a good time. Where you had a time that was meaningful. It doesn't have to be the greatest time ever or the funnest time ever. But you thought, "Yeah, that was good. I enjoyed that." So, for example, it might have been when you went out for a drink with friends or it might be a family dinner, it might be something you actually did on your own, like going for a walk on the beach (UNKNOWN) your class.

It could be all manner of different things. So it could be just simply having a lunch break with a with a friend or a class that went surprisingly well. So think about your experience and maybe if you have pen and paper with you, I'd encourage you to just jot that down. Note that you can't remember it, but it does help to clarify your thoughts, I think if you put them into writing. Walking the dog is a great one. Thank you for that. And now the important question. So once you've got your thing and if identified, whatever that is, and it's gonna be different things for different people and that's absolutely fine. I now want you to think, what was it about that experience or what is it about that experience about something you do regularly that makes it great for me? So here we're sort of tapping into those key needs that are being met for you in that situation that made that a great time for you. So in that sense, one person could do an activity and it wasn't great and another person does the same activity and it is great because for one person their needs are being met and for the other, they're not.

So what needs are being met that makes a great time great? And it would be fantastic if you could share some of your thoughts on that in the chat so we can have a sense of what 1 or 2 of us are thinking. Someone has written social connection, which I feel will come up a lot.

SIMONE EIRTH:
Being not concerned about times coming through as well and the people, as you said, the fun connection and challenge from (UNKNOWN). There's a few coming through there, Helen.

HELEN STREET:
Fantastic.

SIMONE EIRTH:
Laura's got five senses being stimulated. The taste when you get when you go out for a great meal to a restaurant.

HELEN STREET:
Oh, interesting. But yes. Good. Lots of social ones. Lots of talk about being with others.

SIMONE EIRTH:
Definitely lots of social ones. And just being mindful of the body and your mental health and your belonging, which Katie Hull has contributed. Katie Hull Brown

HELEN STREET:
I like that autonomy, music, dancing. Fantastic. OK, So whatever you thought of I would imagine that for many of you, all three of your absolute key needs were being met. And for all of you, at least one was being met. So, whatever it is you thought of. I wonder how many of you did what you did in a way that felt autonomous, that you had agency in that process, that you did that thing purely because you wanted to do it, not because you had to do it, or we told you how to do it, or somebody paid you or gave you a glitter pen at the end of the experience. You know, we don't take the dog for a walk and then someone gives us a sticker and then say, the dog walk was great because of the sticker. Or we don't go out for dinner with friends and then get a marble in a jar at the end of it. We do these things because we want to do them and we feel we have some control over them. We have some agency over that situation, and I hope that resonates with you. And certainly, autonomy and agency are one of our absolute core needs.

And I will just sort of highlight here that these needs that I'm mentioning are not just ones that I've made up or come to a sort of decision about based on my experience working with people, they're needs that come from self-determination theory, from Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, which is the most robust theory of motivation in the world, which helps us to understand self-directed motivation with an understanding of ourselves as social beings with three core needs. So we all have absolutely more than three needs. But no matter our age, where we come from, who we are, what we're doing, we have these three core needs of the same. So that autonomy and agency is absolutely key. And some people would say that having autonomy is what really defines us as human beings. Secondly, and so many of you keyed into this second need. Is the need for cohesion and belonging. So this is really all about relationships and relatedness. No matter what we're doing, we sort of have a better experience if either we're doing it with people who we have a positive relationship with, or we're supported by people that we have a positive relationship with.

So when I say a positive relationship, I mean a relationship in which we feel accepted for who we are, in which we feel there's a sort of authenticity. And by that I mean this is sort of congruent, harmony between our innermost sense of who we are and how expressing ourselves with those others. So for many of you, just being with people you like is enough to make a great time great. For those of you who are thinking about something that you might have done on your own, I would suggest to you that the people that matter to you were supportive of you doing that thing. So we tend to find that young people will be much more engaged in activities if they know that they're supported by the people who matter to them. So sometimes that might be that they're actually with others collaborating in an activity, but it might simply be that they know, for example, that their parents really believe in learning and what they're doing. So parental attitudes to education (UNKNOWN) a lot or that their teacher believes in them or that their friends think that that's a great idea.

So even if we're talking about, say, musical practice, you know, child is much more likely to persevere with what can be quite tough, quite hard, relentless practising of an instrument to get better when they know the people who matter to them believe in and support what they're doing. And then the third thing is competency and engagement. And I've written engagement as well as competency, because I want you to really think about competency as an ongoing process here, as a developmental sense of progression rather than an achievement of any particular. So whatever, whether it's in a restaurant, tasting, smelling and having a sort of full sensory experience or whether it's seeing the sunset in a new way or finding out something about a friend we didn't know or feeling that we're sort of growing in ourselves as a person, or simply that we might be more concrete, that we're actually learning a new subject and we feel that we're getting competent in that. So these are our three core needs in life.

And as I said, they come from self-determination theory. I find that in schools that I work with, there's an increasing amount of attention paid to both autonomy and relatedness, but less to competencies. So when attention is placed on autonomy, it often sort of translates into wanting to give students more of a voice, more agency in the operation of the school and within classroom life. But here and the biggest, certainly, most important thing I can say about autonomy here is we have to be so careful that we don't just ask young people what they think in any particular situation without first establishing a sense of safety so that they really believe that they can tell you what they think. Relatedness is also something that's given a lot of attention in schools. And in fact, I'm sure a lot of you would absolutely say that healthy relationships are at the heart of well-being. And certainly, I've recently been doing quite a few wellbeing audits with schools working for a longer term, with schools and absolutely relationships come up time and time again as being the greatest thing about school life, but also when they're not working the most challenging.

Competency is something that I feel we give less attention to, especially the way that our education system and much of our schooling is traditionally set up. It leads to a lack of a sense of competency for many young people, especially when we see measures of success that focus specifically on outcomes. So that's something that really needs further exploration. But in the time I have with you here, I just wanted to sort of touch on each of these needs and think about it in a sort of school environment to get you thinking about how that might look in the context of your classroom. The autonomy, thinking about voice ownership. There's also thinking about creativity and play. And often when we talk about free time, whether that means to play the younger children or hanging out with your friends when you hit your teenage years, that is the time when you feel most of the sense of autonomy and agency. And it's also one of the most important ways that we learn. That choice and control is a nice way to think about what agency and autonomy looks like and also teacher-directed environment.

And in fact, there's some lovely work done in Scotland by Karen MacInnes that was founded. The way that young people really define a lesson as playful is when they feel they have choice and control over their learning. So thinking about just some sort of direction for your own work in schools. Being sure to understand there's a big relationship between perceived behavioural control and autonomy. And the more we can sort of support young people taking risks, being vulnerable and taking ownership over their learning, the more they actually feel they have that perceived behavioural control, the more they feel they have autonomy and agency. And then talked about the importance of feeling that you're in a safe environment and creating psychological safety in your classroom is so important. And there's all sorts of ways that we can do this. But just being aware of what feels risky to different people and that can be used to mean different things to different people. So having discussions about what feels risky, does it feel risky to give an opinion that goes against the opinion of your friends?

Does it feel risky to get something wrong or make a mistake? Does the classroom feel unsafe if your teacher walks in looking stressed and frazzled? These are the sort of explorations and conversations we need to have so that we can manage risk and create safety in our environment. And it's only then that we can really promote agency and autonomy in an effective way. So providing choice and control, mentoring, supporting ownership over learning when and where possible. And here you can think about choice, control and ownership over time. The time you do things, over tasks, the actual things we do, over technique, the way that you do things and over team, who you do things with. So some students will absolutely flourish when they work in a group. Others do much better when they work in a \*pair or even sometimes alone. So there are many ways of learning, as we all know, and having some ownership over the way that you learn best is important. And then this final one, avoiding extrinsic rewards and awards.

As soon as we offer someone that glitter pen or a star chart or move their name up on the main board at the front of the room, call it the name board or (UNKNOWN). But sure, it's not officially called that. Or you start handing out classroom prizes continually to try and get people to do things. The more we diminishing their sense of autonomy and agency over what they do. So certainly if we sort of dangled tempting gifts and prizes in front of young people, we might garner temporary compliance. They might do things because they want the prize, but they're not motivated to do the thing or to engage in the task or motivated to claim the goodies at the end. And then if those prizes aren't on offer, they tend to be really disinterested in doing anything at all. But moreover, in the longer term, they're losing the opportunity to learn about the intrinsic rewards and what they do and to really engage in the process of learning. This is a huge and quite controversial subject, but so important that we have these conversations.

So invariably, if we're using a lot of rewards and awards in your classroom, it's because there is an unmet needs amongst the members of your class. So it's not necessarily that you should just give up using all of these sort of behavioural controlling means if you don't have any other option, but at least start by thinking what needs do I need to support in my class? Is it a sense of competency? Is it relationship? Is it this autonomy to mean that I don't need to use rewards and awards which can ultimately work against self-directed learning? And just on a note, back to advertising, just one final little note, back to advertising and the point of great interest. When... this is sort of the hammer this point home when self-prepared cake mixes when sort of like complete all-in-one cake mixes first came out, they had all the ingredients in them and you just needed to add water, put it in the oven and there was your cake and they were a complete failure. Nobody actually bought them because they didn't feel they were making the cake themselves.

There's no agency over that. So nowadays when you buy baked cakes, you'll find that it actually is really a sort of a box of flour and sugar. And you actually have to add in everything and bake the cake like you might do from scratch. But now they're really popular because there's a sense of agency and control over what you do. There we go. Marketing, showing us the way again. The connection relationship. So here we're really talking about your relationship as a teacher with students, and that relationship is the most important way you can support motivation, I think hands down than any other relationship in the school setting, even though absolutely for relationships not for long. But it's also, we're not just talking about those one on one relationships here. We're also talking about how a student connects with their class as a whole or if we're talking about staff, wellbeing and engagement, how your staff connect with each other as a whole group, not just how they get along with their best friend, on staff.

So we're talking about belonging. We're talking about feeling safe because you feel that you can be vulnerable and connected in that (UNKNOWN) And this is about really prioritizing relationships. And I feel like this is certainly not rocket science. We really know this. We really do know this, but we tend to talk about this rather than making it policy or established practice. And so we end up with some people who will take this to heart and spend a lot of time getting to know students, prioritizing relationships, saying hello to people as they come in the classroom or even as they come into the school at the beginning of the day, and others will feel like I just don't have the time to do this and they gets lost. And it's not that those other people don't value relationships, but they think that they'll fit that around everything else and it never quite gets there. So this is a real call to make sure that everybody understands this unofficial policy, to spend five minutes at the beginning of every class just checking in and saying hello.

And that doesn't have to be a deep and meaningful conversation about how you're doing emotionally. That can be has anyone got a funny story? Did anyone do anything exciting at the weekend? It can be a fairly low-key casual conversation, but it's still building that all-important connections. Making sure we spend time building cohesion in a classroom and cohesion is another really big subject in itself. But overall, we're looking here to help our class feel that they are one. There's a sense of ownership and pride in being part of the group as a whole. If we don't work to build classroom cohesion, then groups will still appear, but there will be smaller subgroups within the class and they're not necessarily gonna be created on the basis of wanting to learn as the teacher would like them to. So if you want a harmonious classroom, we need to actively work to build cohesion. And taking time for brain breaks is a great way to do that. Brain breaks are not just about taking a break for your brain, but also very much about supporting ongoing, the social glue that binds us together and that's cohesion.

Making the behaviours that contribute to healthy relationships normative within your classroom. And again, another big topic, which is being aware that if we want to develop classrooms where everyone is fine, trustworthy, honest, respectful, then we need to raise an awareness that these things are normal within this environment and we need to create that normality by making sure that's the reality of how we treat each other, how we treat students, how we expect students to treat us. And through repetition and consistency, we turn policy into normative practice. And again avoiding extrinsic rewards and awards which create power imbalances between those who are handing out the awards and those who are receiving them. So do anything to support deep and meaningful relationships. As Rita said so well, kids don't learn from people they don't like, whereas they do tend to engage and do a lot to want to achieve well from people they do like, the teachers they do like. And then competency, that final need, which is so much about having that sense of mastery, a feeling of progression and really feeling that you're heading in a good direction, that you're progressing and you're learning and that you are becoming competent with certain amount of skills and knowledge.

And we know here that there is absolutely a lot of research and understanding about good teaching practice that really supports a sense of competency. And I know when it comes to this sort of scaffolding and breaking those down and setting steps that you're educators, absolutely the experts in this area. And all of these things can help with a sense of competency as you move sort of from one step to another. It makes things seem less foreboding, less overwhelming, less tough. But beyond that, there is still a lot other things we can do to support competency. Simply building those healthy relationships with your autonomy is absolutely important. If your teacher believes in your potential, that's really matters. But beyond that, just thinking about what measures of success are can really make a difference of how competent or successful we feel we are. And to illustrate that point, I will take you on a journey to California. And this is El Capitan, which is in Yosemite, and it's a sheer granite rock face, which is over a kilometer in height.

And it's very glassy, very magnificent, very well known, particularly in the climbing world. In fact, experienced climbers will come all the way to Yosemite to climb El Capitan in their droves during climbing season. And small groups of experienced climbers will often take five days, maybe a week, to get from the bottom to the top of this great granite rock beds. They do a bit of climbing, they get to a certain level, and then they nail this little portaledge, cot beds on the side of the cliff, sleeping there overnight and up they go again the next day until they finally make it to the top. And it's considered to be a great achievement if you actually managed to make it to the top. So one particularly great rock climber, Alex Honnold, decided that he would climb El Capitan in record speed. And he thought that the best way that he could really break the records in how fast he could get to the top was to do it without a team of people, on his own, and without any protective gear. So other than the shoes on his feet and his chalk bag, he had no ropes, no plates.

I can't remember what they thought. Anyway, the plates that you have around to the side of the rock. Nothing else. He would just start at the beginning of climbing all the way to the top, which seems like an insane idea. But he trained for nearly eight years to make this a reality. And during this time, a film crew that specialized in creating films about climbing came on board and they made his journey to try and attempt this climb into a movie called Free Solo, which I highly recommend, ended up winning an Oscar and becoming quite a mainstream despite it being a climbing documentary, essential. So ultimately, it's not a spoilt, to let you know that Alex managed to make the climb. And in fact, here he is on the rock face. And it actually only took him a few hours. I think it's been just under four hours or so to actually make this climb. So people have said that that's really the equivalent of running four marathons uphill, non-stop, while all the time knowing that the slightest little error and you would fall to your death.

So some people would say that this is one of the most incredible athletic feats of all time. Whereas other people would say that is ludicrous, the guy's crazy, that's completely mad. The slightest mistake and he would be dead. Alex Honnold himself said, "Well, risk is more than just the consequences of things going wrong. It's also the probability of things going wrong." And he felt that he was so much at the peak of his physical fitness, so highly trained, so practised in climbing El Capitan. He knew that every handhold, every foothold so well. He could sit and imagine the entire climb in his head. So he felt that he was so well prepared that it actually wasn't that risky at all for him. So why am I telling you about this incredible story? Because what really struck me when I watched these all, was that I got to this certain point of his training and he thought, today is the day. This is the day I'm gonna climb El Capitan. And all of these film crew members that had been recording and following this journey, they were all in place, ready to film this climb.

And this took a lot of preparation because nobody wanted to leap out from a rock with a camera when he's got no ropes to protect him, obviously. So there was cameras suspended by ropes and long-distance lenses and all sorts of things going on. What about half an hour into the climb, Alex decided that an injury in his right foot had not healed well enough for him to feel that he was absolutely at his best with the climb. In fact, he felt that it was a little bit risky for him to proceed. And so he called the whole thing off. Now, remember eight years in the planning, two years of intensive training. And he pulled the whole thing off. And remember, he didn't know at this point in time that he was gonna be successful in the next climbing season when his ankle had properly healed and the weather was right and everything was back in place again. But what really struck me was that although he was disappointed for sure, he wasn't devastated, he wasn't exceptionally upset, he was fine. How could he be fine when he put his absolute whole life into trying to achieve this goal in that sense of competency?

And so I became really interested in how he viewed his life, his training and his own sense of motivation. And through following him on his own writing and his podcast, it came to light in a particularly interesting interview I listened to, sports psychologist Michael Gavin. Alex said that at the beginning of every climbing season, he'll set himself maybe eight to ten goals. And these are goals that he would set out to achieve during the climbing season. But the reality would be that he might just achieve five or six of them. And that was good, that was fine. Because he didn't set the goals to achieve them as his ultimate measure of success. He set the goals to guide him, to live by his values. So, here's the four things that mattered to him most, which for him is being out in nature, improving his climbing, being with other climbers, etc. So he said he liked to hold strong goals held loosely, which I love that expression, strong goals held loosely. And by that, he's saying that absolutely set yourself specific goals with whatever you're doing in life.

You got kids in schools, absolutely set yourself specific goals with the tasks that you have in your classroom. But don't think that success is about whether you achieve the moment. Measure your success, if those goals are keeping you on track, which matters most in terms of where your learning will take you and what your learning means to you. So, spending the time to think about the relevancy and the why behind we learn anything is really important, if we want to be self-directed in our motivation and engaged in the process. So on that note, think about ensuring that you maintain high expectations for all students. So now is really important. We know that given the right support, most young people can achieve really good learning outcomes. Gone are the days where we think there's some magical, gifted, few percent of young people who can do great things and everyone else is more in the middle and average. It's rather that those 5% of young people have all their needs met in a really good way, they feel competent, they're given lots of autonomy, and they have people who really support them.

If we could meet the needs of all young people, they could pretty much all have high performance out. Absolutely, we need to scaffold and break down tasks, but we also need to ensure that we set goals with students that are according to their values, to the things that matter most to them, that we help students to set strong goals, but held loosely or weakly. We also encourage them to see the progress on their own journey by making sure that the feedback we give is strength-based. We help them to embrace mistakes, to realize that it doesn't matter if you don't achieve, if you get things wrong. What matters is that you're progressing according to what's really important to your values. And in that sense, I think it's so important that we try and take this relentless focus away from outcomes when we think about measures of success, and think more about measures of success in our schools in terms of connection and engagement. And again, reduce the use of extrinsic rewards and awards, because what they do is they constantly tell young people, it's outcomes and goal achievement that counts.

And the more we do that, the more it's gonna be devastating when you don't achieve your goals and the lesson touch and anyone will be with what really matters to them, which is their value. So, here we have this growing model where these motivational needs will really influence our attitudes, our subjective norms, our sense of behavioural control, our intention really close that gap between intention and behavior. But there's still more to this picture. In addition to motivational factors, there are social cognitive factors. But to get on to those for the last half hour of our presentation, I think that it would be good to maybe put the break in now and just give everybody two minutes to have their own brain break and take a breath. But please don't run too far away, literally two minutes. You can stand up, move away from the screen, try not to use the two minutes to check your phone, and go on another screen. But just take a breath, stand up, walk around, and come back, join me again to find out what social cognitive factors I believe we really need to be paying attention to when we thinking about motivation and engagement.

OK. Two minutes down. So, welcome back. And now to build this model, we gonna move to social cognitive factors, which incorporates quite a big range of other factors that I think it's important to consider. And some of these absolutely overlap with some of the themes and the things that we're saying. And it so much comes down to what are these factors that can influence our attitude, our perceived behaviour control, and our subjective norms, and understanding these driving factors. If we start focusing on those, we can really start to move that intention towards behaviour and help close that gap. So possibly the most important social cognitive factor I can think to share with you today is that of self-efficacy in the work of Albert Bandura. I got the pleasure of seeing him speak back in 1999 when he was, then think in his 80s in Toronto, he was an absolute leader in the field of social psychology. And his work into self-efficacy has really helped, I think educators and schools around the world really to understand how we can develop a sense of competency in young people, never mind supporting that understanding of motivation and self-direction.

So as in his own words, he said self-belief does not necessarily ensure success, but self-disbelief assuredly spawns failure. So, it's not that belief is in itself some sort of magical thing. So I'm not saying that we should necessarily all create a vision board or just think that, belief is gonna get me through, but rather belief guides us to put certain things into action, to behave in certain ways, to pay attention to learn in a way that is more effective than if we don't. So, some of the core ways to start thinking about increasing and supporting self-efficacy in ourselves and in our students, are firstly to think about mastery and developing a sense of mastery. So, simply put, if you have a sense of mastery, you are likely to see challenges or things going wrong or failures as opportunities to overcome a sort of a hurdle and take a serious step forward in your ongoing competency and skill level. So it pegs you towards expertise and puts you in a whole another realm, the sort of sense that if I can get through something tough, then I've done something that other people aren't necessarily doing.

And so people with a sense of mastery are very good at persevering. We could say Alex Honnold had absolutely demonstrated a great sense of mastery in not giving up, but persevering and working hard towards ultimate success with his climb and many others, he's done as well. But people without a sense of mastery, tend to see a challenge or something going really wrong as some sign that they shouldn't be on that path. They shouldn't be doing that thing. And so they tend to then be more likely to give up and say, this is obviously not for me or it's not gonna work out or I'm no good at it. And so we can immediately see how important it is to support that sense of mastery, which is really all about helping young people to take risks and deal with small failures in a way that allows them to ultimately feel successful. So, it's not about forcing people to do risky things so that they then have to experience failure per say. It only really works if you feel that ultimately you have some sense of success.

So it's about cheering people on out of their comfort zone to take a risk that they're prepared to take. So, they still have the potential to feel some level of success. So, easy example. If it's Sports Day and you've got someone who is really nervous about running the 100m, but you can at some level that you feel you can cheer them on and encourage them enough that they'll give that a go and then they overcome that anxiety and that challenge and they run. And even if they might come in the middle of the pack or not necessarily at the first place. But they feel like, "Yes it's I did it. I made it down the track." Then they can feel a sense of achievement, and that's really gonna build their sense of mastery. They know that they can face challenge, overcome it and feel really successful. What if you have a child who feels like I can't possibly perform in public, that I'd rather be cloaked in the aisle with a stick and doing this kind of thing right now, it's so far out of my comfort zone.

And we force them to do that race or we tell them they have to do that race. And they then do that and they feel humiliated or embarrassed or they just feel it's not going well. Even if they too come in the middle of the pack, then they're not developing a sense of mastery. Rather, they're developing a lack of a sense of mastery, and they're more likely to run a mile next time they face a challenge. So, I think that's really important to think about how we support an ability to deal with things going wrong. It has to be done with an understanding that people experience ultimate success. So, understanding how people who matter to us have failed or got things wrong and then gone on to be successful can be really helpful. And here, just bear in mind that I, as an example, my oldest daughter is dyslexic and so is one of my brothers of both my brothers, and I used to often use my brother as a great example of someone who'd been very successful in life in their career with dyslexia. But to my daughter, this is somebody who is so far removed from where they're at.

This is a middle-aged person and she's a teenager. So just make sure that the role models that you think of and the people that we put out there actually are relatable to the young people we tryna support. By being encouraging, and here I think really sort of thinking about that strength-based feedback can really help somebody see that they are progressing and there are things that they can do even if they might have failed the math test, they maybe still got question one right or they still sort of showed up and they've had a go. So, it's about building on what works in an appreciative way to allow someone to build that self-efficacy. And really being aware that somebody's current physical and mental health is gonna impact how capable they feel, that levels of self-efficacy. So, that's a general pull-out to look at those other factors as well. And now thinking about time. So, I think time itself is something that's quite a fascinating aspect of motivation. So, maybe it doesn't get enough time spent on it or enough airplay.

The way that we sort of think about our future has a big impact on how motivated we are to do things and how engaged we are in activities. So, for example, most young people tend to think in the much more short term that we do as we get older because we then time moves much more slowly. They haven't lived this long. So, an easy example here is you think about sort of campaigns to get young people to give up cigarette smoking back in the 1980s and 1990s 'cause now it's all about vaping and we need to work on that. But when cigarettes was really problematic, early advertising campaigns try to encourage young people not to smoke by talking about cancer and heart disease and sort of life expectancy and things that would become really serious problems in middle to late age. And this meant nothing to young people who were really only focused on what was gonna happen next week. So, when advertising campaigns changed to think about short-term problems with smoking, even though they weren't anywhere near as serious as the longer-term problems, it had a huge impact and young people really started to develop that negative attitude towards cigarettes.

And now despite the horribly ongoing issue we have with vape, cigarette smoking is still considerably pretty uncool amongst young people. And then those advertising campaigns focus much more on the needy issues you might have with poor skin or bad breath or just becoming unattractive to the people that you wanted to attract. So, thinking about short versus long-term gains is a really interesting and a good way to think about how you support motivation. It's not necessarily helpful to say to someone who's saying year seven that you need to learn this if you want to go to university or it's might maybe better to think about how that might benefit then their growth. Now, let's wait. And sort of building on that sense is a real understanding of people's temporal horizons, which varies. And if you have time and opportunity, ask the people around you to tell you what they're gonna be doing in their future. Just give them that sort of general question and see what they come back with. They will find that generally speaking, your average adult will tell you a future that is about four to five years away, whereas young people that are particularly vulnerable to poor mental health tend to have a much, much shorter temporal horizon.

For example, those that are dealing with substance abuse that I worked with back in the early 2000s tended to talk when I said, "What are you gonna be doing in the future?" That same general question, they would come up with plans and ideas for about a week away. So, where you see your temporal horizon says a lot about who you are and how you are situated in terms of feelings about yourself and your vulnerabilities. But it also is a good sort of like indicator of what influences might have a big impact on you in thinking about engagement and motivation. Another factor and the final one in this section, I think is worth throwing in there is that really encouraging young people and indeed it's good for us to understand that motivation comes with task persistence. I think it's just all too easy to believe that motivation is something that is somehow gonna land on us and when it lands on us that is when we're gonna do that thing, you know, it's like, and so we don't give out for the run or we don't mark our reports or our essays or we don't do those important things we are not enamoured by, but we need to do because we don't feel in the mood or we don't feel right and we think, "No, I'm just not motivated enough to do that right now".

But the reality is, is the starting of the task that leads to motivation. And if you sort of, so if we can get people to just take that first small step, then often motivation will come. And if you think about, say, getting in touch with a friend that you haven't been in touch with for a long time, and it becomes this sort of bigger and bigger issue in your head and you're like, "Oh,(UNKNOWN) I really must call them or write to them". And in the end, you think, "Oh, I'll just send them a quick one-line message or a quick five-minute call just to check in to let them know I'm thinking of them". And before you know it, that quick message or that quick call turns into a big conversation and the catch-up we needed to have all along. Because as soon as you start investing in the task, motivation comes. So, there are absolutely other social cognitive factors. But for this sort of thinking about the time we have today, I think there are some of the most important ones I want to highlight because there is one final area that I want to mention while we still have time today and time and sort of area of this overall plan of understanding intention to behaviour, and that is physical factors.

So, it's sort of very convenient and useful and helpful to separate social, emotional and cognitive sort of factors from our actual physical health and well-being. But of course, these are all part of the same. Our physical health and well-being has a huge impact on not just our energy levels, but how we think about things, our attitude, our competency, our capacity and so this is a sort of real core to make sure that we work to support physical health and wellbeing as a means of supporting overall self-directed motivation, engagement and overall well-being in young people. Our energy levels really count. And I've sort of talked about sleep very briefly and vaping have touched on. But certainly, there is a lot of factors that come and go that need attention in terms of physical health and of course, that were arguably one of the sort of the biggest barriers to really supporting good lifestyle habits in young people is technology. Now, technology is this sort of I feel it's this bittersweet gift that we have in the world today.

You know, thank goodness for advancements in technology 'cause here we all are in this webinar. But at the same time, technology is turning us into a world that's finding it harder and harder to engage with the sleep deprived that is maybe more overwhelmed and overloaded than ever before. There is certainly a downside to technology. And so, you know, as much as I sort of initially thought, I'll talk here about diet and sleep and exercise, I think the bigger thing here is to actually talk about technology use, with technology use in classrooms. So, you can give young people information, you can give parents information about technology use at home. But what's really within your control is how much technology use you are supporting in classrooms. And I mentioned earlier that I've been doing some well-being audits in schools of late, which is something I'm increasingly keen to do. And when speaking to students, lovely students, all types of students, every single senior school student that I've spoken to across a variety of private and public schools in Australia and elsewhere in the world, I'm finding that they are all saying that in classes when they're using laptops, they're in every single class, young people are using those laptops for reasons that have nothing to do with the class.

So, it might well be catching up on 'Succession', 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians' , which is quite popular in one school I've visited. It could be online shopping, it could be gaming, boys seem to prefer gaming, girls are more about online shopping, 'Disney Plus' was actually a big win in another school I went to, how they managed to spring that in class but they do and because you can just with a touch of your screen change your screen. It's almost impossible for a teacher who's trying to engage and actually teach a class a subject to keep on top of things. I feel that at the moment, we're so concerned about how much time young people spend on technology. And although I totally understand that not all technology is the same, having a chat with a grandma who lives overseas is very different to watching, you know, cats do cute things on TikTok, totally get that. But nonetheless, the overall time that is spent online or on technology per se, I don't think is doing us very much good. And the time that we give to technology in schools, I don't know is overly helpful all the time as supporting good education.

So, on that note, I just wanna use this opportunity to put a call out to considering is the technology that you're using in your classrooms actually doing more than you could do without it or is it just a replacement for the textbooks and pen and paper? So, just something to think about there. But absolutely sleep really important. But again, technology gets in the way of diet, really important, exercise, really important. So, let's sort of now start to sum up and sort of come to the end of this session. So, we started off by thinking simply about how do we help ourselves and young people in supporting to shift from having goals which we consider and they consider to be important into self-directed motivation and engagement into actual behaviours, behaviours that are driven in an autonomous way. By sort of introducing the theory of transfer failure, we can really see that we're likely to put intentions into action when we feel a positive attitude towards those things when we think that that's what's the norm in our environment and we feel a sense of perceived behavioural control.

But this model alone doesn't explain a huge amount of the variance. So, more significantly, we need to think of what is driving attitudinal change, subjective norms, a sense of perceived behavioural control and a direct ability to engage. Motivational factors may seem to be particularly important. So, within the context of school life, helping young people to feel a sense of autonomy, a sense of relatedness and an ongoing sense of competency is key. More important than giving them more information or knowledge about their (INAUDIBLE). It's also really important and in a related way, to pay attention to social cognitive factors. And those that I've really sort of emphasized today are thinking about self-efficacy and thinking about time and working out how far ahead the young people in your care, plan or think or consider their lives. And I think that's something that's maybe worth reflecting on for yourself as well. And then that final will call out to physical factors and being aware that sleep, diet, exercise, stress levels all make a huge difference.

And for anyone who's really been short of sleep or I think about my years when I had young children or especially, you know, very young children when they were waking up every night or coming in and sleeping with me and how disturbed my sleep was and how sort of gravity seemed a lot stronger in those days and it is hard to keep that energy going. So, that is a big model and I thought that maybe just to sort of, it would be helpful to just finish with a few comments about what does that mean for maybe what you can take away and really think about. And that a lot of that comes back to those factors that drive that model of plan behaviour. So, I would say think about consistently building class cohesion and not thinking, "I'm gonna sort of fit that around all of the content in what I do". But being really aware that if you don't do this, the time that you spend trying to manage classroom behaviour or help students catch up because they just weren't present emotionally or actually were physically absent from the class, is an inordinate amount of time.

So, we're actually saving time by constantly taking time to build relationships and behaviours. Let's make sure that we really work to rethink measures of success, to understand the power of belief and better support competency in young people. Let's help support autonomy and agency more effectively in the students and the staff in our schools, whether by really understanding what feels risky to every member of the school community and better managing risk so that everyone feels that they can have an authentic voice and they can make mistakes and take risks and get things wrong. And finally, let's really make sure that we pay attention to and try and support as best we can lifestyle and help them And that was today really wanted to make a call to considering how much technology we're using in our classrooms. And I know that's with an intent of trying to keep up with a fast-developing technological world. But is it the best way to use classroom time? So, a lot of the factors that I've suggested here really come back to context, to context, to context and how that concept is supporting the needs and setting the scene for someone to take part and pursue their goals rather than focusing on the content of the goals per se.

So, hence my sort of takeaway line to you there, so it's not the running that's necessarily hard, but rather it's getting around to actually putting on your shoes. Before I sort of like come to a final end from the final slide, I just wanted to say, I think it's worth saying as a final point, with all of the things that I've mentioned this afternoon, I think sometimes the best thing we can do to really support motivation and engagement in young people is to put everything I've just said completely aside and get off the plan entirely and just take some time out. And that really helps us to keep life in perspective as a whole. And as an example, as a parent occasionally, if one of my kids has been overwhelmed with school or they just seem so stressed and they're keeping up, is getting to them, we have an orthodontist appointment and we go for ice cream or we have hot chocolate or we just sort of take a bit of time off that treadmill. And I think in the schools, it's a really nice thing just occasionally if it's your birthday or just a random Thursday, it can be twice a year, once a year that you just say, "Hey, you know what?

We're just not gonna do any work today". And that can actually make all other days so much more engaging and worthwhile. So, that is me. If you wanna find out more about this particular topic, I'm doing a pre-conference workshop at Positive Schools Conferences this year, and the whole day is about motivation and engagement, so I'd love you to join me for that. And I'm also talking about contextual well-being soon, and that's another webinar completely free. If you want to find out more about that or message me, send me a message. I'm always happy to have conversations and support queries, but hopefully, we do have a little bit of time now. If anybody got any immediate questions or comments that they would like to make. So, I'm just gonna finish by again thanking everybody for giving me this opportunity at the Victorian Academy. And for all of you for joining me online to chat about motivation and engagement. So, thank you.

SIMONE EIRTH:
Thanks so much, Helen. There is just so many things to think about when you pose so many questions for me anyway, during that session. And one of them I think he's just the way in schools we create that contextual culture, like we build that culture to make sure that autonomy and agency is there along with the cohesion and belonging and the engagement and the competency and what deliberate acts we take to make sure that they are built into the context that our kids are learning in and that we can really help them showcase that goal, setting that importance of goal setting. And I particularly liked that story that you gave about the mountain climbing because one of the things is setting lots of goals to help keep you on the right direction. So, many kids can get hung up on one goal and adults too, and think if they don't achieve that, their total failures. So, bringing that perspective in, I think adds real richness and purpose to setting goals in our classrooms because we are doing a lot of that in terms of getting our kids engaged, thinking about their own learning and what it is that they want to achieve.

But understanding that there are lots of different goals and that's part of monitoring our learning journey and being able to track it in many ways and helping them to be able to do that. The other thing that really struck a chord with me was the way that we build psychological safety. And I particularly liked that question that you asked, what is it that feels risky here? Does this feel risky? What is it that's making it risky? And how we go about working with our, and this is part of building the cohesion within our class but how we go about building that understanding and having those conversations in our classroom and that's really about building that culture of trust. And the kids understanding or even your peers and your colleagues understanding if their opinion is different to yours, we're gonna work through that respectively, and that there are different perspectives and that acknowledgement and working through to understand what those perspectives are, also really builds in that empathy as well within that space.

So many things to think about and I think how you finished it about getting those runners on is the first step. And I liked that connection that you made about the importance of the first step. Sometimes we overthink it, overthink so many things. Just making that little first step is so key.

HELEN STREET:
Oh, thank you, Simone. That was a great summary. So, yeah, lovely. Thank you very much. And yes, you know, obviously I couldn't agree more that those are the points that I feel that we need to be paying attention to it. It's not, you know, it's not rocket science. It's sort of a real common sense approach to bringing back and understanding of how we engage in life by thinking about sort of making that experience of day-to-day life as rich and rewarding and connected as possible, as opposed to thinking we're gonna completely ignore everything that happens in our context and bring in some magical program on the side, which just sort of doesn't make sense. So, it's a really sort of grounded return to thinking about, well, what allows us to feel this belonging and engagement in school.

SIMONE EIRTH:
Thank you.

HELEN STREET:
Yeah.

SIMONE EIRTH:
Thank you so much, Helen, and thank you to everyone that's come along tonight. The Academy really appreciates how you've privileged this time. And just to let you know that we do have lots of other learning opportunities and you can find those on our professional learning website. And there's some really good ones and exciting ones coming up at the moment around Leading School Improvement and leading, learning and wellbeing, which really just supports what we've been hearing about from Helen today. So, please get online, have a look and thank you so much, Helen, for your time today and sharing your learning with us. And hopefully, we can take that away and bring that into the context that we're all working in. Thank you very much. I feel like seeing everyone put their hands together and give a round of applause. It's very different in this virtual world.

HELEN STREET:
Thank you. I appreciate it and all the lovely comments. Thank you very much.