# Transcript

**Podcast episode 8 – Richard Gerver links leadership, passion and purpose in education**

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**ANGELA SCAFFIDI:**

Welcome to the Bastow podcast – conversations with big thinkers about the big questions in education and leadership today. I’m [Angela Scaffidi](https://senateshj.com/our-people/angela-scaffidi/).

[Richard Gerver](http://www.richardgerver.com/)’s career is one characterised by change. He’s been an actor, a copywriter, a real estate agent, a teacher and an award-winning principal. He’s now an international speaker, best-selling author and world-renowned thinker. Richard draws on his experiences in education and other fields to explore the links between great leadership, human potential, change and innovation. He has been described as one of the most inspirational leaders of his generation and we’re delighted to be speaking with him today. Welcome, Richard.

**RICHARD GERVER:**

Thank you.

**ANGELA:**

So, Richard, you’ve had quite a varied career. What led you to education and to the work that you’re doing these days?

**RICHARD:**

I wish I could start off by giving you some really deep story about what led me to education at sort of eight years old, or something, I saw the light and just desperately needed to be a teacher but I’m going to tell the truth. Really, teaching was never on my radar. I actually wanted to be an actor and left school, at 18, thinking I was going to be Olivier and very quickly realised there was a very serious flaw in my plan, which was I had no talent. So eventually, after a couple of years of trying various things, and realising it wasn’t going to happen, I chose to go back to college. In my first year… And I was doing a drama degree and a degree in writing for publication. It was a really interesting amalgam.

I met a young girl at the student union who I really, really liked so I wanted to ask her out on a date. So I did that thing that shallow young men do in student union bars. I asked her what she was doing, what course she was on and she said, “Oh, I’m training to be a teacher.” And so I went, “Oh, that’s…that’s incredible. Teaching? Oh! I just… Honestly, I can’t… I admire you so much. It’s always been a dream of mine.” Anyway, she was a tough, North Yorkshire woman who took no prisoners and for whatever reason, she stuck with me. And at the end of my degree, she gave me a present and it was really her way of going, “I remember.” Because what she’d done is enrolled me on postgraduate teacher training course and said, “Right. Now, show me how much you care.” So that’s where it all began.

I mean, luckily, that woman has been my wife for 26 years, so something worked. And she introduced me – joking apart – to a profession I never would’ve considered but the first time I was in a classroom, I truly, truly believed I belonged and that’s… I’m not making light of that, you know? It was just an epiphany moment. And I think, up until that moment, I’d been treading water, as a young person leaving education myself, and the energy I felt in that classroom, that sense of purpose and belonging is something that’s never left me.

**ANGELA:**

And what about the work you’re doing now? What lead you to this work?

**RICHARD:**

I think, my whole career has been a series of happy accidents. So, over a period of time, I progressed in the system from class teacher to assistant principal and eventually to principal. And I took over a school in the UK that the government felt was doing so badly they were considering shutting it down. This was at the turn of the millennium. The only person that didn’t know the government were going to consider shutting this down was me because I was the only applicant for the principal’s job and frankly, the fact that I was breathing was enough, so they gave me the job. And what happened in the next seven years was extraordinary.

The community trusted me. We just had a chemistry. And the extraordinary kids, teachers, parents, the entire community, within 18 months had turned around the school from being in the bottom 5 per cent in the UK stats to being in the top 5 per cent and the school won awards at UNESCO and various national awards. And what started to happen at that point, was people wanted to know what we’d done and the magic. It wasn’t really magic but, you know. So I was being pulled out, increasingly, to go and tell other people what we were doing. And eventually, it was very clear to the people around me - my family in particular – that that just wasn’t sustainable. I couldn’t be a school principal and tell people about the stuff too.

So, I made a choice, again driven by my wife. I was procrastinating. Because she said, “You know there’s two options here. One, you stay in the job you love or two, you go out and try and make it in the world as an author, as a speaker, trying to increase your understanding of leadership and all of that kind of stuff.” And I was procrastinating and saying, “But you know, really, I should stay in school. It’s a salary, pension, good job.” And she turned around and said to me something that I think is really profound. She said, “For pretty much 20 years, Richard, you’ve been telling kids to take risks and seize opportunities.” She said, “Are you going to be a hypocrite?” And what that meant was, “You’ve got to go do it.”

So that was 11 years ago now, that I took that step, and the 11 years since, which we might come onto has been unbelievable adventure. It’s taken me all over the world. It’s taken me to work with audiences and organisations way beyond education as well as within education. And the learning that I’ve had the privilege of embracing around the understanding of leadership, human potential, change, the links back into education, honestly has been the most incredible privilege.

**ANGELA:**

So, you talked about Grange Primary School and obviously, it went through an extraordinary transformation and people are keen to understand how, what happened, what did you do and what did the staff do to make that happen in the school.

**RICHARD:**

The first thing I want to say at this point, it’s a really important caveat for people. Because I remember listening to people like me when I was on the job and thinking, “Oh, that’s just so unattainable. I don’t have that level of wisdom and knowledge.” And the truth is nor did I. It’s only in hindsight people sound wise. What myself and my community were doing was just doing what we felt right for our kids and what we assumed everybody did. But it did start in a place where the school had been in a spiral of decline for about ten years. They’d had eight principals in eight years. They’d had no principal for nearly two. And what I found when I walked in there was a team of people who, I think, had just had layers of concrete poured on top of them, you know, a school starting to get out of control and not doing so well.

So what happens is people start parachuting in systems and structures and approaches and targets and what happens, of course, is you disenfranchise professional people and they start to…their passion bleeds away, their confidence bleeds away, their desire bleeds away but they’re good people, right? And that had very much happened at the school in the previous ten years. And I walked in there and I just, you know what, I thought I could do what every other principal’s done and all that’s actually going to do is continue the decline or… And it’s a very privileged position to be in, when you take on a failing organisation because actually it’s much easier to innovate because you’ve got nothing to lose, right? So that was, in hindsight, an incredibly momentous point of luck.

So we put a pause on the whole thing and we just started again with really simple, fundamental questions. So, the first one was what do we actually want our kids to look like as human beings when they leave us, not what the government want or the governors or the board, what do we want our kids… And we were talking to parents and we were talking to each other and we just came up with a kind of blueprint of the kind of human being we wanted and we built from scratch again.

The next thing that I remember saying to my staff and it was a very profound moment, although it sounds like a crazy question, was now, how do we create a school that’s as exciting as Disneyland. So, in other words, how do you create an environment where kids are prepared to turn up and do tough stuff. Because Disneyland’s quite a tough place for kids to be because they have to queue up for hours and hours on end for moments of magic. And that really was where the conversation took us, which was learning is a really complex thing and actually very challenging because in order to learn, you have to be prepared to fail and in order to be prepared to fail, you have to go through those tough moments. Schools cannot be unicorns and rainbows but how do you create an environment that is so embracing to young people, where they feel so valued and the grain of every experience ends in a wow moment for them. Could we create that and therefore reignite the passion in our community?

And that’s really how the journey began and from that, it was about me as a leader setting that groundwork, setting the conditions and the climate, helping the staff to build a vision and then say, “Now, go and research, through action, how we can make that happen.” And my job as the leader is to constantly say to you, “And what’s our demonstrable impact?”

**ANGELA:**

And you talk about serving the people who work with you and I’m interested about how do you balance serving the needs of the people who work with you, serving the needs of students, serving the needs of your broader school community, how do you get that balance right?

**RICHARD:**

I think, for me, it’s actually, kind of lumping that whole thing together. You know, I honestly believe that the primary responsibility of a leader is, in essence, to do themselves out of a job and that, therefore… I know some people baulk at this kind of as a soft, fluffy word but, for me, it’s genuinely about empowering the people in your community and that meant three things. Because it was a socially challenging community, I had to make the parents feel that they were empowered. Because often, in schools in challenging circumstances, the parents are partly the problem, not because they’re aggressive or nasty or deliberately destructive but because they don’t provide the 360 balance and support you need to create really active and dynamic emergent citizens, i.e. your students.

So we have to embrace the parents and part of that was to go to them on their ground, rather than expect them to come to me on mine. So, you do things like hold Q&A mornings and coffee mornings down at the local café rather than pulling some of those parents who, by the way, are often school-phobic, into the school. So, it was very much a signal for me about, “Look, I want to understand your community. I don’t expect to just layer my middle-class values on you.” And of course, you win the parents and the families over, their trust grows in you. And the kids are often the easiest, particularly in areas of social debt I’ve always believed that the greatest kids I’ve ever taught come from areas of high social deprivation because those kids just want to be loved and nurtured and if you give them that and you give them the opportunity and the enthusiasm, you create learning that is both contextual and experiential so it really matters to kids. Then, they’re going to buy in, and they’ll buy in big.

And the third, then, of course, is the staff. And again, as I said before, rather than going in there and telling everybody what we were going to do, one of the things I’m passionate about is the belief that I don’t believe that systems and structures change anything, people do. Now, systems and structures are great but only if people have a context and understanding of why we’re doing this and the impact it can have. So, for me, it was very much about that transactional relationship with all three elements of my community, and being very strong about saying there are non-negotiables here and that non-negotiable is our founding vision on what we want our kids to be like as human beings and then insisting that parents, staff and pupils themselves bought in to be prepared to develop those principles. And then to design a curriculum that was unique for us, that genuinely met kids at their start point, gave them a context and experience and then pushed and broadened their horizons through the knowledge and skills we were working on with them.

**ANGELA:**

What were some of the challenges along the way? So, what went wrong or what was harder than you thought it might be?

**RICHARD:**

I don’t mean this to sound Utopian. I think it was a lot easier than I anticipated. You know, there were a number of staff that were deeply scarred and quite negative at first. You know, these were the cynics. I call them the ‘alpha teachers’. They’re the ones that lurk in the corner of staffrooms, just waiting for to take you out. And what was really interesting was I kind of knew that those were the people you had to win over first in a staff room and I also realised – I think this is something very important for me – that whilst there are awkward and difficult teachers in most schools and there are definitely a few that really shouldn’t be in a classroom, most of the awkward and difficult teachers are awkward and difficult for a reason in the same way that a lot of misbehaviour amongst students is for a reason. The behaviour is just a kind of signal.

And one of the things I truly believe is I don’t think I’ve ever met a teacher that chose to become a teacher to deliberately screw up kids’ lives and I also don’t think I’ve ever met a teacher who wakes up in the morning and says, “I can’t wait to do a bad job today.” So, the real challenge was getting those cynics to believe this was for real, that I wasn’t a fly-by-night, I wasn’t going to be there for two minutes, I wasn’t going to layer systems and structures on them, I actually wanted to reignite their passion.

I’ll give you one example, right. So, there was one teacher who I would call the ‘supreme alpha teacher’ and in this case, it was a man. His name was John. And I remember one day, being in the staffroom and really not having the experience or wisdom to know how to deal with John. But, you know, these moments occur and later, you think, “Thank goodness they did.” I went into the staff room and John, as a lot of alpha teachers do, was holding court in the corner with his minions and doing the usual. And he saw me walk in, because I was going in to get a cup of coffee. And so, he saw me walk in and so his volume rose. And he goes, “Of course, I never wanted to be a bloody teacher anyway!” And you go, “Oh, here we go. This is a show for my benefit.” And I’m over making the coffee. He said, “I blame my father. My father owned a local shop. It was a little convenience store.” He said, “I loved that shop. I used to work in it as a child. I dreamed, as a child at school myself, that one day, I’d take over the business and turn it into an empire.” He said, “I blame my bloody father because he was so bad at business, the business went bust before I got a chance to take it over, so I needed something else to do. So, I became a teacher.”

And you just think, “Uh-oh.” Anyway, I went away. I kind of dwelt on it a little bit. We were starting to look at how we could develop programs in the school where we would match role play and real situations with learning. And it was a eureka moment. And a week or so later, I went back to John, called him into my office and he sat there in that way, like, “Oh, what? What now? What now? What have I done?” I said, “John, I couldn’t help but overhear you in the staff room.” He says, “Yeah. Retail. I know. I love it.” I said, “Well, I’ve just spoken to the local superstore and they’re running a management training course that’s a week long, on retail management.” And I said, I’ve managed to blag you a free place if you want to go because what I’d like you to do is come back and build a shop in the school and then train the children to run it.”

Well, what was really interesting was his eyes lit up. And he went on this course, came back, built this thing, the kids loved it. They adored him for the first time in a generation. And honestly, I promise you, John’s entire approach and attitude to what was happening that school was transformative to the point where, by the time I left, he’d been promoted to the position of assistant principal. And so, I suppose, it was tough but one of the real lessons for me is that we mustn’t just lead by consensus, an expectation that everyone has to come to the mountain or the well to drink and that actually, one of the great sophisticated challenges but also, I think, one of the greatest privileges of leadership is to try and unlock in your staff, the same way you would in your kids, the passion and then to find a way to use that passion to help ignite a greater sense of professionalism and purpose. And so, I think, for me, that was easily amongst the proudest moments of my professional career. And as I say, it’s only in hindsight I realise the power of what those things really meant.

**ANGELA:**

In that school situation, in your school, who did you work most closely with in that process? I imagine, to some extent, everyone but were there particular groups or individuals?

**RICHARD:**

Do you know, I think this is another really important thing, particularly for the buck-stopper, the leader at the top of an organisation. It can be a deeply lonely place and one of the things I’ve often witnessed throughout my career are really great people in leadership who feel that, actually, they’re paid to bear the burden of that loneliness and it often leads to stress, mental health problems and, ultimately, breakdown. And I actually think that that reflexive selflessness… There are times when leaders need to be selfish and that means you’ve got to have a confidante and not your partner at home because that doesn’t help. You’ve got to have a professional confidante. Now, it may be a colleague principal down the road or somebody you’ve worked with years ago, who you’ve grown up with professionally and trust.

I was really lucky because the other male in the school was a guy called Les and Les had been teaching in the school for 35 years and was just one of those remarkable experienced teachers who loved it as much on his last day as he did on his first day. And he was wise, you know, and I knew. There’s a wonderful African proverb, actually, I heard for the first time the other week. An American filmmaker called Rick Stevenson shared it with me. And I think it’s really just apposite at the moment. He said the African proverb is when somebody dies, an entire library burns down. And the reason I say that is because, sometimes, I wonder whether we undervalue those deeply experience teachers who are coming towards the end of their career for their wisdom and knowledge and experience.

And I was very lucky because Les instinctively wanted to guide and help and I used that. So, I didn’t feel, “Well, I’m the leader so my responsibility is to know all the answers and, actually, I’m going to park that.” I absolutely knew that he could become the confidante. And also, where I’m quite energetic and, “Oh, that’s a great idea. Let’s do that,” Les, because of his wisdom and experience, is a bit more considered. And so, he would challenge, constructively, my thinking and my ideas. He would also be there to encourage and support me. And I think that gave me a profound sense of confidence and wellbeing and it meant that in those moments where I really didn’t know whether to turn left or right, he would be there with an objective eye and an arm round my shoulder and I think that is invaluable. And I think, as leaders of the top of a chain, we need to remember we all need a Les.

**ANGELA:**

Very good advice. Find your Les. Has your idea about what makes a great leader changed over time, particularly in the work that you’ve been doing?

**RICHARD:**

Yeah, I think so. And it’s kind of mellowing now, in what I’m talking to you about. I remember when I first got my job as a school principal. I mean honestly, my ego was in overdrive because I was quite young to be a school principal. And honestly, I walked down the street thinking, “Do people know by the way I’m walking? Can they tell that I’m now a school leader?” It’s like something from Saturday Night Fever in education. Can people tell?

You know, as a new leader, I often joke with people that you carry into a job, your first proper leadership position two really important characteristics but also two really dangerous ones. One you’re arrogant enough to believe you’re right and two, you’re ignorant enough to not know what could happen to you if you get it wrong, right?

And I think I carried all of that baggage into my headship and thought it was about me providing the answers, you know, all the things I’ve already talked to, really. I had to provide the answers. I was the one. I had to solve all the problems. And I think, what happened over the first year or so in that school was a growing realisation – and I think it comes with the confidence of maturing into leadership – that, actually, your job isn’t to be the boss who just tells everybody what to do but is genuinely the idea that the privilege of great leadership is to serve the people who work with you and for you and, actually, in essence, the job of a great leader is, perversely, to do themselves out of a job.

You know, for me, great leaders should never try to be the person people depend upon. You actually need to create the climate where people are self-leading, self-managing and you’re there to steer and support. But you shouldn’t be the one that has to control and drive everything that goes on in the school or any organisation. And I think, for me, that was something that as I grew into my leadership is definitely something that I both mellowed into and bore the fruits of. It was a huge privilege, by the end, to see a school that was basically capable of running itself.

**ANGELA:**

So change and improvement are not necessarily the same thing. How do we know when the change we’re leading has the impact that we’re actually looking for?

**RICHARD:**

I think that’s a really interesting and crucial issue around education. The danger with change, so often in our school system, is we are so under pressure and so committed to trying to do the right thing, we are both seduced by and pressured into endless silver bullets, endless new strategies. You know, people go to a conference like the one I’m at now and they hear somebody, and they love what they’re saying. That’s the answer. They grab it off the shelf, they take it into school, their staff go, “Oh, God, not another one,” they put it on top of everything else they’re already doing, the scepticism grows, within days that new idea’s hiding in the cupboard full of good ideas that’s been building up over 20 or 30 years. And what you do is you lose con…your staff lose confidence in you. They become sceptical. They’re exhausted because you’re not really talking about change because you haven’t got time to truly build a culture of change. What you’re doing is just layering new stuff on top of everything else they’re already doing.

And I think that kind of change is very, very damaging and it’s why so many people in education, I think, when somebody talks about change, they roll their eyes. Because they’re not really hearing ‘change’, they’re hearing ‘so you want me to work harder, do you?’ And I think what’s really interesting in our space is to realise that, actually, what we’ve got to do is not just pursue an endless commitment to making what we’re already doing more efficient. That’s exhausting, it’s reactive and it’s not very cool and sexy. What we actually have to do is provide time and space as leaders in our school systems, if you have a captured and strong vision, is to start to look at how we create a capacity to evolve. So rather than change, it should be evolution. It shouldn’t be transformation, it shouldn’t be revolution, it should be evolution, you know, back to that old kind of Japanese principle of ‘kaizen’ – incremental, small steps and small changes.

And I think, if what you do is you build on a vision and you assess and action-research your practice and you reference against new thinking, but you have the courage to say, “No, that’s not for us,” or, “Yes, but we’ll tweak it.” But actually, if at the heart of that change is a laser-like focus on your vision and values, your principles, then actually, what starts to happen is the staff can see an impact of their hard work and their labour. They can see they’re actively involved in a change process. It feels more proactive than reactive and you then create a culture of sustainable change which actually reflects what should be a 21st-century, evolving school.

**ANGELA:**

So apart from you, who are some of the great leaders in education that you worked with, worked alongside, watched, in the work that you’ve done?

**RICHARD:**

Well, I mean, I think, for me, it’s a whole range of people in a whole range of different fields, actually. So one is a man called Eric Schmidt, who was the executive chairman of Google until very recently, who talks with real clarity about how difficult it is to lead a successful organisation. His point being when he started at Google, it was this melting pot of creativity and ideas. The more successful they became, the more the focus of their company wasn’t on their founding vision, which was to organise the world’s information, make it available to everyone and by so doing, diminish evil. That was dissipated into a fixation with what everybody else was doing. And he said, “Do you know what, when I look at our greatest disasters, they’ve always come from when we’ve tried to copy or respond to what one of our competitors is doing, rather than staying true to our vision and values.” And he said, “and that’s been the greatest for me, in my time in the organisation.”

Another, Steve Wozniak, the co-founder of Apple, who said to me, “You know, Richard, when we set up Apple properly and we realised this was a company that had to go places, one of our commitments, at Apple, was to recruit and develop our people so that they didn’t need managing.” Now, that’s a heck of a challenge, isn’t it? But that’s what we’ve been talking about, that transference of responsibility, power and trust. And I think, one of the things that all of the leaders that I’ve had the privilege to see and work with have in common is this idea that they’re committed to believing they run an organisation on assumed excellence. In other words, they truly believe in their community and their people and what they don’t do is run an organisation based on assumed incompetence. In other words, my job is to manage everybody UP to doing a good job. And actually, they realise that the point is to create a culture where your job is to allow, to create the conditions for those people to achieve excellence and only intervene is people fail to do so.

And I think those human traits are the really important ones. And, of course, I can’t, not talk about my personal mentor, my professional dad, who is in the education space, who I know, these days, is quite a controversial figure with some and that’s Sir Ken Robinson. I met Ken before he became ‘Ken Robinson’, ‘Ted Ken’, as I call him. And he was an invaluable source of wisdom and expertise to me, and support and guidance. And what I think, for me, I learnt from him was despite the battering and the controversy, his absolute passionate belief in his vision and values for education that would just never be shaken and his intellectual rigour in constantly challenging his own in thoughts and practice, I think, were the most important lessons in leadership I’ve learnt from anybody.

**ANGELA:**

What are some of the biggest challenges in education right now and if you were back in a school now, where would you be focusing your energy?

**RICHARD:**

I think there are so many. I actually think the world has turned so far since I left the job 10 or 11 years ago. I think there is so much complexity right now. I think, still, one of the biggest - and I’m not sure I know a cure to it – is continuous political interference. And I think, one of the things we have to do as school leaders is find the courage and strength to sometimes just say no, you know? And it’s a really courageous thing to do. But if you have true substantive belief in your vision and values and you have your community behind you, that makes that easier. I think that’s huge.

I think, there are growing concerns about resources in schools and, I think, one of the things we need to do as heads… And again, I can’t just wave a magic wand and go, you know, “There’s more resource.” But, I think, we have to, as school leaders, learn to be a little bit more entrepreneurial. I think we need to go out into our wider community and not just ask for money, and stuff like that, but see where talent pools are, see where skills bases are, see where mutuality of support and learning can take place. I think there’s a huge challenge at the moment, with the explosive rise in social media. And it’s something on a very personal level that really troubles me because I do think that things like Twitter and other forms of social media could be some of the most powerful learning platforms in the world.

But what I worry about is, at the moment, I think they’re being hijacked by just a few voices who are actually set about creating a really dangerous and nasty polarising environment. And in my mind, most teachers always have, and certainly are now, not interested in the daft polarising debates. They just want to be better at being teachers. They just want to be better at doing a good job. And I would want to find a way, as a leader, to help filter that conversation but still use social media for the connectedness and power of what it has as a learning tool. And I think, the most important thing we’ve kind of covered, really, which is to help my community understand the nature of what positive change can feel like in a sustainable and incremental environment.

**ANGELA:**

So, the best leaders are also lifelong learners. How can we support educators in their leadership journey? What do you see, from your work, works?

**RICHARD:**

Yeah, again, I think the really important thing is for school leaders to allow themselves to be a bit selfish. They’re so selfless, right? And one of the things we see in school leaders all the time is the sort of guilt complex about, “But I can’t be out of school. I can’t take time out for myself. I’ve got too much. I need to be seen to be as passionate and working as hard as everybody else.” And one of the really important things for me about leadership is if you’re to continue to generate and evolve a vision, you have to have, A) new experiences and, B) you have to have the mental space to be able to play with those experiences.

And so one of the big pieces of advice, for me, for school leaders is do not feel guilty about spending some time out, you know, meeting a colleague over a cup of coffee away from site, just having a conversation, visiting leaders in other organisations in other spheres of life, just to see what you can mutually learn from each other and make sure you give yourself the head space. Don’t jump in to try and solve every single problem because you believe your job is to be the plug in every hole. So, yeah. It’s that thing about, occasionally, really good leaders need to allow themselves to be selfish.

**ANGELA:**

And to find their Les.

**RICHARD:**

Yeah. And always to find their Les. They definitely need a Les. Everyone… Or a Lesette!

**ANGELA:**

So you talk a lot about system change. What does that look like and how do we ensure that it filters all the way down into what’s happening in a classroom?

**RICHARD:**

I think, for me, at the meta level of system in education, we have got too stuck in a loop around trying to make our system work more efficiently. You know, the pressures that we feel, as system leaders, around the press coverage, for example, from the OECD PISA reports and the relentless feeling that we need to climb some kind of league table in order to show our value. I think we’ve got too stuck in this loop of putting all of energy into just making the existing system be more efficient. And I actually think we need to have a greater sense of courage and vision, to say, “But is that actual system relevant, in its current form, to doing what we need to do?” Which is, of course, is about celebrating learning and just helping kids acquire and develop knowledge but surely, one of the great moral purposes of education is to help provide young people with a sense of possibility in their lives and that includes preparing them for work spaces and workplaces. And one of the big problems, I think, we have at the moment, is a friction between that efficiency drive versus really getting our heads up and looking at the bigger issue, which is how do we prepare our children for a world that is evolving as fast as it is and is as uncertain as it’s becoming.

**ANGELA:**

So what’s the best way to help people prepare for the future, particularly one that they may not recognise?

**RICHARD:**

I think what that’s about is not trying to cling onto what we think the future will look like but to recognise that the future is uncertain and therefore, what we have to do is help prepare people better to cope with uncertainty and that means they have to be more flexible, they have to be less preconditioned to depending on other people to provide questions, challenges and then answers for them. So really, it goes back to the Wozniak thing, which is how do we create generations of people that can manage themselves. And I think, if there’s one profound question I would love to think as a result of this podcast that is being discussed in schools tomorrow, it would be that. How do we create generations of students and teachers who don’t need managing? If we do that, we don’t have to be Mystic Meg, we don’t have to forecast what the future looks like because we can be sure those people won’t just survive in it, but they’ll thrive in it.

**ANGELA:**

What a wonderful way to end our conversation. Richard, thank you very, very much.

**RICHARD:**

My absolute pleasure. Thank you.

**ANGELA:**

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