

[Recording starts 0:00:00]

Vicki Davis:

“Yes, everything you do matters. Everything you don’t do matters just as much. Every little thing you do or don’t do steers life onto a slightly different course.” (quote from *The Little Things* by Andy Andrews) Teachers, you know I want you to be remarkable and I want to be remarkable too and I’ve been reading a book this weekend called *The Little Things* <http://amzn.to/2mJOTzb> by Andy Andrews. I’ll tell you more about it at the end of the show, I’ll be giving away copies of this book this week and I’ll also tell you about a free curriculum that Andy Andrews is releasing for teachers and our students.

Josh Harris:

“You ask 4th graders to learn news stuff every year. ‘I’m sure, you can learn this.’ And she looked at me and she was in [tutor mode] for a second and then she said, ‘You know what, you’re right. Where do we start?’”

VICKI:

The Ten-minute Teacher podcast with Vicki Davis. Every week day you’ll learn powerful practical ways to be a more remarkable teacher today.

VICKI: Happy Motivational Monday, we’re talking to Josh Harris [@edtechspec](https://twitter.com/edtechspec) <http://edtechspec.blogspot.com/> from California. Now, Josh, today we’re trying to get excited about trying new things. Oh my goodness, we teachers are so busy, how do we have time to try anything new?

JOSH: Well, I think trying new things is a matter of mindset, it’s a matter of being fearless and just deciding to push all the buttons. Whenever I’m presenting or training with teachers one of the things I also tell them is, “Don’t wait for someone else to show you how to do it because you don’t have time to do that. Plus, it’s also a lot more fun to push all the buttons and see what happens.”

VICKI: Okay. But now, push all the buttons – I mean, I could just imagine an IT person groaning and say, “Please, please, please, don’t go push all the buttons on your Elmo, don’t go push all the buttons on your big interactive board.” Okay, explain.

JOSH: Okay. So here’s what I mean. When we give kids devices, they don’t wait for us to tell them what to do. They just figure it out and when they goof it up, sometimes they kind of hide their device from us and sometimes they ask or they ask their friends. They just figure it out and then they move on and then they learn it. And when they break it and they figure out how to fix it, that’s something that they always know from then on.

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So this is what I tell teachers. I know the IT guys, I work in EdTech and the IT guys look at me and be like, “I wish you wouldn’t say that.” But that’s okay because the

IT guys don't have to teach your kids every day, the IT guys don't have to model you learning in front of your students and isn't that a powerful thing we can do with tech? Where we can model perseverance and learning from the kids. So maybe you take five or ten minutes, "What does this button do on my Promethean board? I've never tried that."

To me, there's a lot of power in showing kids, "I don't know this either and I'm not afraid of trying to learn new things and I'm not afraid of failing in front of y'all and we can learn together."

VICKI: Well, first of all I'm excited because you said the word "y'all" and I didn't know if anybody said that except those of us in Georgia so that excites me. But I love something you say in one of your [Ignite] speeches you give. https://docs.google.com/a/edtechspec.org/presentation/d/16YxSSuGp4EB13Pvrn mwOHfw5Qy2cRlzOZB1Vu86dGc/edit?usp=drive_web "Let's see what happens if" let's dig into that.

JOSH: Right. So let's see what happens if, well, there's two approaches to that. One of my favorite teaches that I use to coach used to tell 3rd graders, "Well, you're a third grader now." You see what happens if you do that. So there's two approaches. One is, I don't know what this does at all but I want to see what happens. So let's just see what happens. What could possibly go wrong? Honestly those of us who grew up in tech in the '80s and '90s are used to things going real wrong on a computer. But that's not really how it works anymore. So there's just the explorer mindset where I'm just going to look and try all these things.

But for me in lesson planning, let's see what happens if you we let our kids, for example, write and collaborate together, then publish to another class or another grade, then get comments and then reflect on our work as a team or as individuals. So instead of worrying about making the tech first, let's worry about what we want our kids to get out of it, what impact do we want them to have on the community? And, you know, technology is the tool through which they engage in so much in their world.

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So that's why it's been coming upon us as educators to do that too. But I think that we can say, "Let's see what happens if" and maybe even bring our kids as well as our colleagues into that. And one of the great projects I've kids work on is documenting community construction and community litter and they ended up doing a school board presentation and it kind of guided some policy and that was all possible because they had devices and they could record and make themselves a little video. But it all started with "Let's see if we had an impact on our community?"

VICKI: Love that. Okay. So could you hear somebody saying, I'm old school, I don't do tech. What's your response?

JOSH: Well, yeah. I've not only could imagine that, I might have heard it a couple of times. But I think it's interesting because the other one you hear a lot is, "I'm not really a math person." But you have a credit card, don't you? You've got a checking account, don't you? I mean, there are certain things we allow ourselves to be kind of excused out of, but if you look at this day and age I don't know that it's okay to excuse ourselves out of that domain. And I'm going to go back to what I said before, most technology is created in mind with just your everyday person. And I think that if you just sort of said, okay, I'm going to be techy, I'm not going to be the best techy or maybe I'm not going to be techy yet. That's another one of my favorite words, not yet. Because yet allows you the wiggle room to grow, it allows you the space to decide it's okay to improve and nobody says you have to be there tomorrow, don't compare yourself to anyone, just compare yourself to where you were yesterday.

VICKI: Well, and the other thing is, if somebody says "I don't do blank" what they're really saying is, "I don't learn." And weren't we a huge hypocrite if we're a teacher and we're trying to teach learners and we want them to learn but we're saying, "I don't learn myself?"

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JOSH: Yeah, absolutely, I've had to have that conversation with a 27-year-old classroom veteran. She said, "Well, you know, I'm getting close to retirement, I'm not sure I can learn this." And I'm like, "But you ask 4th graders to learn new stuff every year, I'm sure you can learn this." And she looked at me and she was in [tutor mode] for a second and the she said, "You know what, you're right, where do we start?"

VICKI: Love it. This just thrills my heart. Don't you have to start with a willingness to learn?

JOSH: I think you really do. I think teachers can look at resources. If we pulled out kids and asked them how many things they learned from YouTube other than how many cute cats in one video, they learn a lot of stuff off of YouTube. And it's amazing how many teachers have taken to YouTube not just to learn but to teach each other. There's a fantastic community out there and it kind of gives us some insight into how 21st century kids are going about acquiring their own knowledge.

VICKI: Okay, Josh. So we need a Monday morning pep talk. We're driving to school, we have so much to do, we're behind on grades, we've got a staff meeting, oh my goodness, we just have so much. What is your encouragement for something new we can learn in an attitude of finding that thing?

JOSH: Pushing buttons, be fearless and try to break stuff. And the last one can sound kind of scary but when we're pushing those boundaries is, I think, when we're stretching. And I'm not saying push all the buttons and I'm not saying try and break all the stuff. Just pick one or two things once or twice a month and don't be afraid to mess it up. Because, especially, if it's web-based like our Google tools or our iPad apps, a lot of those things you're pretty awesome. And in fact, if you're an educator in today's world, you're awesome, but you're not so awesome that you're going to break the

internet. There's always an undo button, there's always a way to get something back.

So just sort of let go of that techy fear, don't get overwhelmed, pick one thing at a time, you got this.

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VICKI: Yeah, Josh. And you know what? I have to tell this story to finish up. I'll never forget; I've always told my student, we're on the leading bleeding edge, sometimes we lead, sometimes we bleed but we always learn. So the first week Google Docs came out we have used Writely before it became Google Docs. The first week Google Docs came out, we took as many kids in Google Docs as we could and we tried to break it. Well, I blogged about it and guess who called within the next few weeks, Google called. Google called in the first few weeks that Google Doc launched and wanted to know feedback from me and my students about the experience of using Google Docs which partially explains why Google Doc is so great because they were calling all the people who wrote about it.

But it was like, by going in there and trying to break it, we actually had an opportunity to be part of history.

JOSH: Yeah, you helped improve it.

VICKI: Yeah, it's so exciting. So teachers, for motivational Monday, just get out there and have that fearless attitude, try something new and remember, my motto is innovate like a turtle. Just move forward a little bit every day, you just don't have to do a lot. The question is; is your progress a forward progress? Because there's no such thing as holding still, you're either going forward or you're going backwards. There's no holding still. So innovate like a turtle and have a happy Motivational Monday.

So my book of the week this week is *The Little Things* by Andy Andrews. I'm giving away five copies of the book. Just head over to iTunes <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/10mt-10-minute-teacher-show/id1201263130> or Stitcher to be entered to win and leave a review along with your twitter or Instagram handle. Also, head over to his website at andyandrews.com/media-education to take a look at all the really cool free curriculum that he has there for you. Now, get out there and be remarkable.

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