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Get motivated to transform learning this school year. This is episode 111 and the start of Season 2.

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: Welcome to Season 2 of the 10-Minute Teacher. Today we have one of the most motivation people I know for our Motivation Monday, Eric Sheninger @[E_Sheninger](#) has a new book that he has co-authored with Tom Murray @[thomasmurray](#) called Learning Transformed. <http://amzn.to/2tWOSLF>

So, Eric, how can you get us pumped up to transform learning this school year?

ERIC: When we think about transforming learning I think we have to look first and foremost at why we do what we do and ask our kids. **All kids have greatness hidden inside them, it is the job of an educator to help them find and unleash it.**

How do we help them unleash it? You know what, first off, we got to focus on the 'what ifs' instead of the 'yeah buts'. We have to look at the opportunities and the potential of the tools, the ideas, the pathways, the strategy that we have now to unlock creativity and limitless potential of our kids.

I think as we begin the year it really comes down to this, **don't prepare students for something, prepare them for anything.** So as we reflect on our practice, how do we prepare kids for anything, how do we move past the status quo, how do we change our thinking? Because if we utilize the same old thinking we're going to get the same old results. And when we think about transforming learning, Tom Murray and I spent well over a year looking at the research.

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We unearthed over 180 research citations to focus on the why. I love the work of Simon Sinek @[simonsinek](#), and if you have not watched his TED Talk on leadership

https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action and focusing on the why. It is a great way to start the year.

But if we don't articulate the why, our vision, our mission, our values it is kind of fuzzy. My message, Vicki, to everyone listening is as we think about our beginning of the year, **celebrate our success, celebrate what we do well, but**

keep an eye – where do you want to be? And what are those areas of our roles that we can do what we do better?

VICKI: The why is so important and I hate say this – and my mom won't be listening to this particular podcast, I hope, but sometimes our big 'buts' get in the way, they really do because so many times you talk about something transformational and then somebody look at you and here you see, and it's coming and it's coming and they say, 'but' and you're like, "Please, let's just focus on these students."

ERIC: Yeah it's interesting. 'Buts' really put up a barrier, a roadblock. And that road block inhibits us from building a culture of trust. We need to build a culture of trust with our kids, with each other. When we think about our work, when we think about learning, it all comes down to relationships. Without trust, there is no relationship, without relationships, no real learning occurs. And those 'buts' just enable us to, again, revert back to a fixed mindset, status quo, this is the way we've always done things and yeah, I guess it's worked.

But when we think about kids the world is different. Kids are learning differently, the environment in which they learn is different. So we need to think, learn and act differently.

VICKI: Yes, **you have to relate before you educate**. Now, Eric, I want you to travel back to the time when you were principal and you're looking at those teachers and you're thinking about the first day and you're about to give the a pump-up speech to really reach those kids and leave the past behind and move behind, what do you say?

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ERIC: Well, I can tell you what I did many, many years ago. Part of my mindset shift was reading a lot of books. I read Drive <http://amzn.to/2umGyCr> by Dan Pink, Linchpin <http://amzn.to/2un6Kgk> by Seth Godin Outliers <http://amzn.to/2gT82MT> by Malcom Gladwell, The Alchemist <http://amzn.to/2uKJAD4> by Paulo Coelho, and I read another book, it was called the No Complaining Rule <http://amzn.to/2uInjuL> by Jon Gordon and the rule was simple. Let's not complain, we don't want our kids to complain but complaining helps to create an environment that's not conducive to change innovation. So when we think about our complaints and we think about our challenges which we have, we have realistic challenges. I would encourage everyone to think about solutions. If we focus on solutions as opposed to excuses and challenges we can truly begin the process of implementing the type of changes that our kids will appreciate.

And the other thing I would say is put yourself in the shoes of your students. Would you want to learn under the same conditions as your kids? Would you want to learn in the same environments as your students? And I think that gives

us a lot of motivation to begin to change our practice, help our kids see value by modeling and implementing a better way.

VICKI: So Eric, what's the biggest mistake educators make when they start the year?

ERIC: I think the biggest mistake is we're so focus on getting the schedule set up, going through our syllabus, going through the rules the expectations, going through them monotony of school. Basically, we're prepping the kids for another year of school. And I think we have to flip it. I think instead of going through the monotony of the job and what we think we have to do because that's the way it's always been done, what about thinking about asking kids, engaging them, why are they here? Why is learning important? How can we together create an amazing learning experience for you? What do you need to be successful?

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And I think taking Simon Sinek's Golden Circle <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5Tw0PGcyN0> , the why, the how, 'the what' to sort of flip that first experience we have with our kids can really jumpstart learning and begin to set the stage for a pretty exciting things as the year goes on.

VICKI: So Eric, how do you have that conversation? Because honestly, some kids, if you say why are you here, it will be "because mama dropped me off"?

ERIC: And that's the challenge. If kids don't see the 'why', we don't engage kids enough at understanding the significance of learning. And I think we have to have those more conversations, we can't be afraid of having difficult conversations because if we let that mentality go on, as the year goes on we just run the risk of losing kids more and more. And I think that 'why' is tying into the bigger picture, the bold new world of work, the exciting world and thinking about our interest of our kids, aligning that in the beginning days to the work at hand. It's a difficult conversation, Vicki, but I think it's a conversation we shy away from much too often.

VICKI: Well, **and I believe that a remarkable school year starts by captivating students on the first day and I don't know if anybody's syllabus is exciting enough to captivate someone's mind and capture their heart.**

ERIC: I don't think so. And I think in our book, Learning Transformed, Tom and I talked about redesigning learning experience and we really don't focus as much on personalized learning as we do personal learning. Get to know your kids, find out how their summers went no matter how old they are. Find out what books they read, what did they do with their free time and use that as a catalyst to plan future lessons, future units, future projects. Get kids excited about why they're in your classroom and what they're going to gain from that experience.

VICKI: So Eric, we're going to do a giveaway of your book, the information will be in the show notes. Tell us quickly about it.

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ERIC: Learning Transformed was Tom Murray and my attempt to bring all of the research together to, again, emphasize the 'why' but the showcase innovate practices in action. We don't just present a ton of research, we present educators across every position that are implementing change, that are getting results. Sir Ken Robinson @[SirKenRobinson](#) said in his words, "This is a manifesto for the change that we need in schools." And that's a lot coming from Sir Ken who's work on creativity we all appreciate.

So I think educators will find it research-driven, evidence rich and sort of it showing how we can bring efficacy to all the amazing ideas that we're talking about.

VICKI: So educators, let's get out there and have a remarkable year. And Eric is giving us so many wonderful ideas. So let's get motivated.

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VICKI DAVIS @COOLCATTEACHER

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