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Mary Miele:

Hello, my name is Mary Miele. I am a tutor, a teacher, a parent, and the founder of Evolved Education Company. We are a full service tutoring and advisement company for all of your educational solutions.

On this podcast, we'll explore ideas, techniques, and resources that you can use to support your school-aged child to conquer any learning issue. I'm so glad you're here.

Miranda:

Hi everyone, and welcome to the June Evolved Education Podcast. We're so excited to talk with you today about the Evolved live virtual event that we are putting on for educators in July. And even though this podcast is typically for parents, we want you to know first of all that parents are educators too.

Moreso, you can pass this along to the educators in your life because they need this too.

I know many of you are used to hearing Becky interview Mary, and you might have noticed that this voice is new, so let me introduce myself to you. Hi, I'm Miranda, and I met Mary as a student in seventh grade, and I'm excited to interview Mary today about this live virtual event for educators that takes place on July 17th from 11:00 to 2:00 Eastern Standard time.

Hi Mary.

Mary Miele:

Hi, Miranda. So excited that you're here. I can't believe you're heading off to college. So exciting. It just seems so perfect that you're the one to interview in this really exceptional time.

Miranda:

Thank you for having me.

Mary Miele:

Thank you.

Miranda:

Can you tell me about this event that you are doing in July?

Mary Miele:

Yes. I am doing an event for educators for three hours on the 17th of July in order to teach them civic methodologies that I've used to help myself and educators that I have here at Evolved to level up their personal, professional and financial lives.

Miranda:

Would you mind giving me an example of some of these methodologies?

Mary Miele:

Absolutely. I think that one of the most interesting things that happens for so many educators, and we don't even really know this, actually, I didn't know this until I did some work on it, but there are so many limits that we hold really close to us, and we do that for real reasons. For example, the systems of education tell us to be small. It's a female industry. And so that also plays into us working small. There's

so many rules and regulations within our schools and within the work that we do even. And some of us are also really careful, for good reason, but very careful only to use research and evidence-based methodologies, and perhaps there's room in there to be creative and to think about what is actually going to impact the students that we work with in a more creative way, and how can we balance that research with how we're going to work with our students.

There's just a lot to explore within that world that we naturally live in as educators, which is really affected by limits that we place on ourselves. We're supposed to be in service. We're supposed to be poor. We're supposed to sacrifice ourselves to ensure childcare for children in addition to education, in addition to working with parents, in addition to working with administrators, in addition to all of the things. And when I have teachers come out of the school systems and come into Evolved to work in a tutoring capacity or a consulting capacity, and we're now working in business, with families, I have to teach educators to value themselves and what they innately bring to the work for their students. And I have to teach them to tie money to that service that they're giving. I have to teach them how to ask for money. I have to teach them how to manage money and how to also think outside of the box, and how to meet students' needs, not within a workbook or some kind of curriculum that we train and provide the teacher with.

So the main methodology that I'm teaching is a way of thinking, it's a way of operating, and it's action that you can take with you after this event to actualize what you're supposed to do in this world versus what the systems and the school operations and the profession have told you to do. And so by providing this event, which is really going to be an experience... And again, I'm still really thinking about you, who's listening, I'm thinking about you, and I'm thinking about what can I offer you to help you go through a process that will get you after three hours to a place where you can really understand who you are first and foremost, what's possible for you, and what are some of the actions that you can take with you going forward to do something really impactful but also really unique?

I want to go back a little bit because there's a tangible something I can give you that really made me think about doing this event with educators. And it was something that was well-intentioned and I understand the idea behind it, but it really caused me to feel a huge amount of resistance, I got a little annoyed by it, and I'm going to explain what I'm talking about. So there is an organization that was doing some professional development with a group of tutors, and part of that work was actually to empower other tutors to make the leap from the classroom into tutoring and show them how to start a business so that they could tutor for themselves and have their own work, that they could have flexibility, and go out of the classroom, have that work, have the flexibility, meet students' needs, maybe take care of their own family and have a little more work-life balance.

But what I didn't like about it was that it was very cookie cutter. And I understand there has to be some cookie cutter to a business because you have to have proper filing, you have to have taxes and forms, and there has to be some kind of regulation that you have to follow, so I understand that part of it. But what I don't like is when a person is feeling insecure about that jump from the classroom to tutoring and they hold on to something that has already been done before as the way forward. Because when you do that, you prevent yourself from coming out into that space and doing something in that space that's actually you and not something that somebody else has already done.

I'm going to give you a quick example of the fact that I've been there, I've done this process, and I learned a lot. When I was looking to tutor and make a real business for myself in that way, meaning I was already working on my own as a solopreneur tutoring in about 2013, I was just going around and I was meeting with students and so on and so forth, but I wanted to establish something greater than what I was doing. I had an urge to go and work for a tutoring company. That's what I thought was in the path for me.

And so I went around town and I interviewed at all of these different tutoring companies. And at the time, there was only really test prep companies, the Advantage testing or whatever it was, and they would do SAT prep and they had a workbook and you could be a tutor for them and follow the workbook. That wasn't for me. I wasn't going to be able to fit into that particular methodology, nor did I really care about tests all that much. So it was a complete no. It was like, "Okay, that's not going to fit for me."

But then I went to other places that were possible fits for me, but they were still doing things that just didn't fit me. Meaning they wanted to write curriculum for their tutors. They wanted to have me write the lesson plans for the tutors. And I knew that wasn't going to work either because when I went into tutor, as a tutor, I could come in with some ideas, but I had to be responsive to what you guys needed. If you came in, you're like, "Mary, I don't know what this math is doing." I can't say to you, "Well, I have a lesson plan. We have to get through the lesson plan today." No, I have to be able to connect with you on the math. So I knew that wasn't going to work for me, but that's what was available when I was looking around for work.

Now, if I hadn't had this methodology, meaning, do you. Don't do somebody else; do you. So if I didn't have that lesson, then I would've jumped into whatever was there because it was there. I would've jumped into that tutoring role at that particular company. I would've written lesson plans. I would've always felt small, and I would've always felt not great, but I probably would've just been okay with that because I wouldn't have had the lesson of, you don't have to do that.

And that's what I want to provide for educators in this experience is to say, "If you're thinking about doing something different, if you're in a classroom, if you're tutoring, if you're providing speech and language services, if you're a parent and you're teaching your kid, then just look at what you are doing and how you're doing it, and first and foremost, just make sure it's a super good fit for you."

And sometimes you don't know it. You don't know the answer to that question, because it's a kind of a deep question. I don't know that I got that lesson right away at that time in 2013, like what is you? Somebody didn't come to me and say, "Hey, Mary, before you make that jump, make sure that that jump is you."

Miranda:

Yeah, because who is me?

Mary Miele:

Right. Right. I would've loved that. I would've loved to have an event like this to go through and somebody to say, "Bust out your journal. Well, why don't we take five minutes and write down what's actually really important to you when you're working?" Because you know me enough to know that there are certain things about tutoring that are important to me versus maybe another tutor that you had versus another tutor that you had. Everybody kind of came into life differently. And so if we're just brave enough to lean into the things that are really ours, then we can produce a practice, let's say, of tutoring or a methodology of tutoring, or a workbook or a course or a curriculum, whatever it is that is coming literally from our hearts.

I think that the importance of this time in our professional world in education is to provide that for students. We've been held back for a long time. We've gone through so much in education that has really limited the profession; anything from standardized testing to a lot of times, schools aren't getting their teachers trained in curriculum, not in empowering educators to dig deep into their souls and do

what they're meant to do in this world. Wouldn't it be amazing if we had more people doing that in education?

And think about how also... Just to jump in and say this a little more expansively. My sisters are in healthcare and I'm in education. My sister is such a brilliant nurse, and she has all of these ideas for how patients can be better cared for. And I know there's an educator listening to this right now who knows how to make their classroom work better, their tutoring practice work better, their homeschool work better, whatever it is. They know it in their hearts how to do it, but they don't really know the actions to take to get it accomplished. So this event is for that too. It's not just who are you; it's what are you going to do about it?

I really think we can do this together. These three hours are going to be magic. They're going to be a time in which you can take that three hours. You can grab your computer. You can close the door. You can hear from the teachers who I've been so lucky to learn from, because they're going to be there and they're going to give everybody their wisdom. And you're going to write it down. You're going to take it with you. And by the end of the time together, you're going to have actions to take that are going to allow you to put yourself into your personal, professional, and financial future. And that is exactly the vision that I have for this event.

I know that was a methodology question, but hopefully it was helpful. So what stands out as a question as I was talking, because you'll have to remind me what I even just said, but I think you might have a question based on what I was just talking about that educators might be wondering about too.

Miranda:

I honestly was just making a connection between your whole child approach, and it's sort of a whole educator approach, and it goes both ways as you need to address all the needs of a student, you need to address all the needs of an educator. And I think seeing both perspectives is really important.

Mary Miele:

I agree with you. I agree with you wholeheartedly, and I think it's really high time I also step into that work. I am fully retiring this year from tutoring. I know I didn't get to tell you that.

Miranda:

I know.

Mary Miele:

I haven't really publicized it too much. It's been, "Hello everyone. It's happening." I know. Now I can't really peddle back. I've always peddled back every year. I say, "Okay, okay, I'll just take on one student." But I really am not. I let families know officially, those who've stayed with me this time. But I am retiring this summer from tutoring students, and I am moving myself to tutor educators, as I like to say. It is meaningful to me. I think sometimes the universe gives me messages too, where sometimes it's a whisper and then it's a very loud voice, and then sometimes something comes and knocks me right over the head and says, "Come on, Mary, let's go. Do it."

I think just as I started Evolved, and you were right there with me, but I was writing about how important it's to look at the whole child. You benefited from that because I wasn't just looking at you from executive functioning or math or anything like that; I was looking at literally the whole person and seeing you and really seeing you. And I want to do that with educators now. I want to help them to see themselves holistically all the way around, not just as maybe the system sees them or as they have been

used to being seen. And so they feel so familiar with it, that it feels comfy and cozy, like a warm sweater that you're always wearing. Maybe it's time to get rid of that old sweater and get something like... I'm wearing this hot pink dress today. So why not just throw one of those on?

Thank you for bringing that full circle and getting me to really punctuate that retirement.

Miranda:

No, I'm sorry.

Mary Miele:

I know. It needed to happen. It needs to happen. Yeah. Yeah.

Miranda:

Okay. As we're talking about your holistic approach to educating students and how teachers and educators and how those two things are very similar, your approaches to educating people holistically are very similar, but yet I imagine that there are a lot of differences when you're teaching teachers versus students so I was wondering... Maybe that's going off track-

Mary Miele:

No, I think that's about right.

Miranda:

... how it's different educating educators.

Mary Miele:

Yeah. Well, the beauty of it at this point is, I don't know where this is all going to take me exactly, but I know enough to know that when you're working with educators, we are all students because we are sort of those people in the world who are just lifelong learners. We're really happy to be learners. We like to learn. That's why we teach, because so much of teaching is actually learning. And so I have this idea that the audience I'm speaking to right now... Hi all. Hi you... you are the person who is open to learning and developing and growing and changing and leaning into what's possible for you. I know that to be true.

But it's on a different level because a student is someone that we also are caring for. We're editing that work. We're not going to throw everything and anything and all the things at a young person who's in a learning experience. Our job is to really guide them carefully and thoughtfully and using methods and things of that kind. But an educator is a grown person. And so really what we can do with grown people is we can actually invite them into processes that are deeper, I think, that are expansive, that involve their teaching gifts that they really know they have. And so in many ways, it's a similar, yet really different experience. Does that make sense?

Miranda:

Yeah.

Mary Miele:

I think the beauty of it too right now for me because I'm coming out of the lens of working with children for so long, moving into a space where not only can I teach educators, but really I almost see it as more of a facilitation. I feel like educators know a lot. They just haven't really been given permission always to say what they know or to sell what they know or to benefit from what they know. All of those things are not really actually common for educators.

I have been able to do those things in my career. So I'm excited to share that as something that's possible for this group in the world, and that's a conversation I'm excited to have.

Miranda:

I've loved everything you said, but one of my favorites is when you said that educators they tend to be trained more in curriculum and not in self-empowerment. I think that was just such a impactful line because it's hard... I'm a student and I always want my teachers to feel empowered and to be confident in their knowledge because they have a lot of it. And I think being only taught one thing, which is really important, but you should be taught both things. You should be confident in what know.

Mary Miele:

Yeah, I agree. We have so many conversations we can have with educators in this particular area, and one of them surely is the influence of curriculum based professional development versus educator and personal, professional, financial, development, which is what we're talking about. I think the reason that we have experienced as educators so much curriculum led professional development is that honestly, it's meter. And people in the business world love to have metrics that are standardized, and they love to have the way forward based on a standardization.

And our education system is also based on standardization. We trained kids to learn in the way that mirrored the industrial revolution. We wanted kids to all sit in rows. We want to teach them to comply. We want to make sure they all know how to read at the same level. We want to teach them the math. We want to check off all the boxes and say, "We've done the job. Check off. Goodbye. Get out of the classroom. Go to the next level." And that's the way the system feels very comfortable is in that particular scheme.

But humans and the development of humans is not clean. It's messy, and it's complicated, and it's deep and it's quite personal, actually. And tell me a person in this world who does not have a teacher in their life who made a personal connection and a difference for them? Seriously, think about one person that you know. I know I had a teacher in my life who made a dramatic impression on me. I mean, not every teacher made a dramatic impression on me, but one of them did. And if you think about that one person, is the way they made a connection to you through the way they taught you multiplication tables, or was it through connecting with you in a way that was really driven by who they were?

I had a teacher who was literally just herself. She was so herself that she's shown through to me as herself, and that was how we connected. I didn't have to do anything else in that relationship. She just showed up. She was so confident, and she was so connective to me because she was so herself.

There is research done to support what I'm talking about, actually. I've gone to learning in the brain conferences. And there is research that's done around how a teacher cares for themselves and how the self-care of a teacher matters to the outputs of their students and those test scores and all the other things. So there is a connection to all of it. But you can see that it can be very hard to unpack and really see, because it's so ingrained in how we operate in the education system that we don't think for a minute to say, "Wait a second. There is more to what we do than following the curriculum that we just learned in this professional development." Not to say that's not valuable, because it is valuable. And

we've done a lot of great work in how to teach reading and how to teach math and how to teach writing, and that all does need to happen. But where's the other side of all of this? Where's the humanity in this process?

And that's something I've been leaning into forever. It's me. There's no doubt about that. I am so fine with the human connection and the human process. That is exactly what I'll bring right into this education system. People that come in here can make mistakes. They can do something that isn't going to produce a fabulous result, but we can work through all of that and we can talk about it, and we can have conversations that are lovely and fabulous and help people to grow and evolve and develop. And you don't always see that in a lot of places.

I didn't always understand what was going on here until I really did. And then I really felt this urge to connect with people who are listening right now, and to say, "It doesn't need to be small. It doesn't need to be a cookie cutter. It doesn't need to be what everyone else is doing. It just needs to be you." And if I can at least just bring you that message, then I've done what I'm supposed to be doing right now, which is giving my time to amplify that message and to give people experiences to have that become a part of their own lives.

Miranda:

Can I add an additional thing that I'd be bringing to the podcast?

Mary Miele:

Yes, for sure.

Miranda:

I have a teacher and she is the head of academics at my school. She's just working on helping my boarding school's academic future. She's developing this master in learning record. It's supposed to help colleges have a more rounded view of each applicant. It's telling them additional things about the student and measuring them based on these competencies in addition to letter grades. So it would be like, "Oh, does this student care for other people in the class? How are they involved beyond the classroom and other extracurriculars and stuff?" I think that is sort of a way in which teachers are starting to stray from these standardized systems that you're talking about that are so ingrained in school.

Mary Miele:

Yes. That's so, so wonderful.

Miranda:

Yeah. I wanted to use that as an example of a way that I see it happening, and I think it just fits in with what you're saying.

Mary Miele:

Yeah. I think my role and what I'm hoping to do with this event and this podcast and anything else I do from literally here on out is to simply amplify and connect. Those are my two jobs. So I want to amplify that this is happening so that your teacher that you're noticing is leaning into something that's her calling that she can do because of literally who she is, and then she's so brave to just put it together and take action to implement it. Now her job is going to be to amplify and to connect. Meaning we need to

have her come on this podcast. We need to have her talk about what she's doing and then connect with other people in the field to get this to happen. Because it is a great idea, and it also needs to happen in other places, but it might not be....

For instance, I have another teacher here, she's so brilliant on every level. As soon as I start talking about her, she'll know I'm talking about her. But she is a beautiful educator, but she cares so very much about the social, emotional development of students. It's like what she was stamped with. That's how I believe it is. She was stamped with this care from forever. She came in and she noticed that kids were needing more support in between therapy appointments. They were going to therapy appointments, and then they didn't have a place to really process or work on the things that were happening in therapy to actually put them into their everyday lives. She couldn't get the idea out of her head. It just kept coming into her head. And then every time she was meeting with students, she would notice they were all coming to her with this need to create this program.

So we're talking, and I said to her, "You have to write it up. You have to because we need it. We need your idea, but you have to amplify it, and you have to connect it because otherwise you are doing your work in your silo." And by the way, the reason it's not happening is because... and I don't know all the reasons. I can't really speak for her. But I've been in this position where I've sat there with ideas before and I've said to myself, "Oh, I don't know. I mean, I'm not a Harvard educator. I'm not doing research on this. I probably shouldn't write it up. Who's going to listen to this? I mean, are we really going to do the program?" You almost talk yourself out of it, because our systems have taught us to play small.

And our systems have said, "Are you sure you want to do that? I don't know." And sometimes other educators look at you and they're like, "That's too much." So you get it from that end. Or some people don't want what you have to offer. They just don't want it. And so they'll tell you, "That thing you're developing from the therapy appointments, I don't want to do that." Okay, so what? It's not for them, but it doesn't mean that you shouldn't do it. If it stamped on your heart and something that you should be doing, then you should be doing it.

I'm just simply here to make sure you have that confidence. And I'm here to also electronically connect us in these three hours to really dial down on this connection that we can all have in this work of amplifying and then connecting our ideas with each other. It's time to put down the notions that we hold so, so tight that keep us so, so small and cause us a lot of pain.

I've been witness to educational neglect and pain from an educator standpoint my whole career. I was in a system that cared very little for me as an educator coming up in the public system here in New York City. I found people, though, even in that system to help me. I found these angel teachers who came in and gave me their resources. They gave me guidance. So if you look, you'll find them. Even in the systems that are neglectful, you'll find support, and they're resilient.

And I would argue that's actually exactly what I'm talking about here. It's not like you have to change your environment to have that personal, professional, and financial success. You can do that, and in fact, you must do that within the systems that are really struggling. You must, because otherwise we have no hope there.

And it's not to say even in a well-resourced system. I worked also in very, very wealthy schools that are suffering because teachers have a mentality of that's not something I can do. We can't teach those kids, the kids that have the learning challenges that we're talking out of private independent schools. We don't want to have that here. That mindset is also very limiting. And it limits your potential to learn something and to reach a student that maybe you don't have the training to do that. But it doesn't mean the training isn't available. It doesn't mean that you can't do it.

I've also had teachers tell me, "I can't get that degree. It's too expensive." That's always another one. It's not too expensive. You don't need to have somebody hand you resources. You need to be resourceful. You need to go ask for money if you need it.

Miranda:

Advocacy.

Mary Miele:

Yeah, advocacy. Exactly. And this is what we teach our students to do all the time. We should be teaching educators to do that. I did.

The other thing I've learned in my work, early on in my company, when I was first starting out, I worked with a number of educators that had been really put down by their administrators and shamed and blamed and just really in bad emotional states. And they came into Evolved, and they learned pretty quickly that things operated very differently here. We're not blaming. We're not shaming. We're really working with you to empower you and to find what you were stamped with and to give you permission to use that in a service oriented way and to have a financial system that nurtures you.

But what I learned was that I would take care of those people instead of empowering them to care for themselves. And that's a big shift that I've done in my company, which I will talk about a little bit at the event. I used to give people my own money to support them. I used to give them salaries. I used to give them stipends. I used to do a lot of those kinds of things. And I shifted that purposely into a more empowering financial system. Meaning you earn your money in service, and you have a non-sealing contract, meaning there's multiple ways for you to earn money. Some of it is active. Some of it is passive. And there's also ways to make money that I can't even think about that they get to think about because maybe that's what they come up with, and there's room for all of that.

So listen, the lessons are abundant, and I've learned a lot myself because I've been very open to that process. And I'll share everything I have gotten to this point, but I know there's so much more to learn. And I'm particularly excited that this event is going to be spring-boarding the work that I'll be doing in this next chapter of my work in this field.

Miranda:

So am I.

Mary Miele:

Yeah.

Miranda:

Thank you so much for your time. I think I have so much to take away from this conversation, and I know a lot of people will too. So thank you again.

Mary Miele:

You're welcome.

Miranda:

So for the people who are listening, this is how you can go about registering for the event.

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Mary Miele:

Great. Yes. Basically we are going to have a link in the show notes for this podcast where you can join our wait list. Once the wait list becomes the registration opportunity, you will have a window of opportunity to sign up before it then goes away, so you'll need to check your email. We'll be opening up the wait list later in early July. Hopefully you'll be able to come and join the wait list, put your name on there, put your intentions on there so we can understand that. I'm really hoping to see so many of you there. I know it's going to be a life-changing, aha moments, mind-blowing, amplification, connection. You're just going to love it as I am as well. And I can't wait to have you there. Just can't wait to have you there.

So thank you so much, Miranda, for doing this today.

Miranda:

Thank you.

Mary Miele:

Thank you.

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