

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.

Hi, everyone. Welcome to the July edition of the Evolved Education Podcast. Today, we're talking about teachers. The most important person in your school-aged child's life is the teacher who is teaching them in the classroom.

We want to talk today about a conflicting or a difficult message that we give our teachers: that is that they need to do the work necessary to teach our children, while at the same time sacrificing their own financial, emotional, social ... every part of their wellbeing in the process.

These messages that we have as teachers, that don't allow us to care for ourselves, are ingrained in our systems. They're ingrained in our society, and we need to become aware of them. We need to become unaware of them, and then we need to make room for some new awareness. And that's what I want to talk about today in this podcast.

I've written a book; it's called Unaware. You can find it on Amazon, you can get it on Kindle, or as a paperback. And I really want to talk with you about a character that I have in the book, called Anna. I'll read you a couple of paragraphs from the book now.

"In 2022 when she enters teaching, Anna's salary is \$61,000. Her net pay is 46,880 per year, or \$3,907 per month. Rent for a studio apartment in Manhattan is typically \$3,500. So she needs to find something with a longer commute and with a roommate.

"Affording \$1,500 for rent, she meets Marco. And he rents her room in his two-bedroom apartment in Queens. It is 40 minutes by subway from her school."

Think about that for a second. So we've got a teacher bringing home, let's say, \$3,900 per month. She goes into her school building at 6:00 AM. She leaves about 4:30, 5:30 PM.

And her task involves not only being the tactician; meaning she's working with the children in their learning processes; but she also needs to be a manager of the entire process, of the entire curriculum that the students are learning. And, she has to be the visionary of the entire situation.

In addition, she goes to meetings with other teachers and her supervisor. She has to be resourceful in finding different kinds of materials and resources for her classroom, too. The job is certainly not necessarily being compensated to the degree that Anna is working.

So what does she have to do? She has to go get a second job. She needs to go tutor. Most teachers find their way into tutoring, which is the space I live and work in. This is because they need to find a way to make some more money, using the skills they know how to do.

And so often they will spend their days teaching, and then go and meet with students after and tutor. This is how they end up making their salaries comparable to another character in the book, Marco.

So Marco is a technician. He's a software engineer, and he makes \$124,000 annually. He's new to his profession, too. They graduated college in the same year. His net pay is \$84,000, and he has \$7,000 monthly to spend.

His rent is the same as Anna's. So he has extra money to spend on clothes, eating out, and traveling. His work outside of the workday is minimal, too, so he has a lot more free time.

All of this is true, and all of this is happening in 2022, 2023, 2024. This is what we have going on in the K to 12 space. And there are messages that teachers have. They're ingrained in our careers, in our society, that make it very difficult for teachers to advocate for changing their situation.

So I explore that in the book, and I talk a little bit about some of those constructs. One of them is a document that was published in 1983. It's called A Nation at Risk.

It was published by the US Department of Education, and the report aimed to assess the state of education in the United States and highlight areas of concern.

It talked about declining educational performance, mediocre academic standards, inadequate preparation, teacher quality and professional development, educational governance and accountability, recommendations for reform; overall, A Nation at Risk served as a wake-up call for the United States, emphasizing the urgent need for comprehensive educational reform.

The report significantly impacted subsequent educational policies, sparking national conversations and initiatives to improve the quality of American education.

And who was at the chopping block of that entire wave that followed?

Teachers. Because teachers don't know what they're doing, they just don't know what they're doing. And that's the message that we have going on, especially as schools adopt curriculum that teachers have to learn and follow, because they just don't know what they're doing.

So we have to give them a whole bunch of curriculum to follow, and we have to make sure that they're spending hours in professional development to learn how to do what they need to do.

And in fact, that's not true. Because it's just as true that teachers do know what they're doing; we can find a lot of evidence to support that idea. And that comes later in the book, of course.

But another constraint that we have is that there are women and children involved in K to 12 education. And we don't value you. We don't value you. There are 70% of the workforce in education in 1983 were women. And of course, 100% of the people served in the education system were children.

And even in the '17-'18 school year, we have 76% of public school teachers in the United States are female. And 100% of the people served were children.

In the early 20th century, women faced significant challenges in the workplace. They were often relegated to lower-paying jobs and faced discrimination, hiring and promotional practices.

The prevailing societal norms considered women as secondary income earners, primarily responsible for household duties and caregiving. As a result, their work was undervalued and underpaid, compared to men.

And so this is going on. We have this notion that we don't value you, we don't value the teachers. So why would the teachers value themselves?

And in the book, I talk about Anna's journey and how she moves from the public system to the private system. She's offered more money than she made in the public system to work. But she didn't ask for any more than that. She just accepted what they offered her.

And a man had come into the same school, he negotiated his payment, and received more money for the same exact job because of that negotiation. So this is happening for teachers.

It's important that we change that narrative. Instead of, "We don't value you," we value you. And teachers in their own brains can say, "I am valued. I am value. I'm inviting and accepting value into my brain and into my energy that I am giving. And that's important."

The next constraint is a law. In 1976, FAPE, or Free Appropriate Public Education law, was passed in the United States. It said that all children under 14 are entitled to a free, appropriate public education.

And the word "free" came into play. It is an important word, because it means it's of no cost to the student. The student can come in and take this course, and learn how to read and learn how to do math for free.

But it has seeped into a thought that teachers should be free. Because it's free for students, now we have something where government doesn't want to pay teachers too much. We don't want to pay them too much because we have to watch our budgets and we have to be sure that we don't pay the teachers too much, because the kids aren't really paying, actually. It's free.

But it's all really not true. Somebody's paying. And there is a lot of commentary, even from teacher to teacher.

I was just listening to a talk that one of the teachers sent to me. In it, there was a professor who was talking about how we had to really do the work to make sure that students are becoming literate. And it was important to do it in a way that is correct, even if the system doesn't allow that. We have to influence from the middle, she says.

And I love that. I think that's exactly true. Of course we should do all that.

But then she says, "We didn't come into this to get rich. You do it for the work." She said that to all the teachers who were listening.

And everyone just nodded in and was like, "Yes, you're right. You're right. You're right. You're right. I should sacrifice myself, my family's financial health, my financial health, what I have in this world. I should sacrifice that in order to do this work. Because I won't be able to do this work unless I just do it for free."

But couldn't both be true at the same time? Couldn't we do the work for the children and be rich? Couldn't that both be true? Why is it a conditional? Couldn't it both be true?

I think it could both be true. If we decided that it was both true, then it would be true. And it has to come from the middle. It has to come from within the energy of the teachers to make that change.

It's not going to be handed to us. No one's coming to save our day. No one's coming with a new budget that's just going to drop another 100K in our salaries. That's not happening, because the energy that we're giving off is, "I'm not valued. I should do the work. I should sacrifice myself for this work. That's what I should be doing."

And I'm just here to point out that we can become aware, unaware, and then aware of something different. "We feel you are free." That's the message that we have just ingrained intergenerationally in our brains. It comes in, and we look for evidence of it.

"Oh, you're right. These kids, they don't have anything else. So I just have to do it. I just have to sacrifice myself. It's okay if they don't pay me enough, it's okay. I'll just do it anyway."

I've been there. I've done that; been there, done that. I get it. Aware, unaware, aware of something different. Both can be true: we can do the hard work, and we can be valued.

Unions: we use unions to protect ourselves from the inequities and injustices of bureaucratic systems. But we also use them to keep us from individuality, innovation, outside-of-the-box thinking, new techniques, and the zone of genius within ourselves.

How could this be? If we are part of a community with rules for operating within our work, then when our work deviates from the status quo, we are no longer a full member of the group which ties us together.

Even if what we intend to do does not evaluate any rule or regulation within the union, by working uniquely, we will have to overcome a one-size-fits-all safe and pack mentality to follow our own light. The one that will surely break free from what has been within the union.

And even if you're not in a union, guess what? You're still affected by this construct. You need to do what everyone else is doing. "You need to use that program. You need to use this program. You need to follow this rule. You need to have it done this way."

But what if you don't? What if you need to do what you need to do? What if that's true?

The next constraint: workbooks. It's funny; these days that I look back, I wanted to work for a test preparation company called Advantage Testing. Advantage used a proprietary method for teaching the SAT or ACT. And when colleges prioritize these exams for admissions, tutors could earn good money by knowing how to prepare students.

Advantage provided students with drills and worked them through systematic timelines until they received the perfect score. The best tutors worked with the best students. So the tutor's results records were impeccable. It almost didn't matter who was at the helm of the instruction.

But from a marketing perspective, they only hired people who had gained a perfect score in these exams. For indeed, being able to do something meant you could teach it.

Ha ha, this is just another strange conceptual idea worth challenging.

I go on, of course, to say more. But the notion of a workbook, to me, is that there's a belief that, "You need us to tell you what to do."

As soon as A Nation at Risk was published, all of a sudden now we have these big Pearson companies and different curricular associates, all of these different companies coming in and selling curriculum to schools because, "You got to have the curriculum. I don't know, those teachers may not really know what they're doing."

"So if we have the curriculum, they could just follow it. And then we don't have to worry about their brains and what they might bring to the table, because we need to control everything that's going on. Because they really don't know what they're doing."

So you see where these workbooks come in, these standardized tests and different ways that we really control and keep teachers from being their unique selves. And the energy that they bring into this profession is really squashed when we rely so much on the necessity to have a curriculum, to have a way that kids learn. And that's the only way that we find them to be successful. That's in and of itself a limiting construct, isn't it?

So if you have all of these limiting constructs as a teacher, you could make the argument that, "Wow, people who are teachers are pretty strong and are pretty amazing. Because not only are they doing this really amazing work with kids all day and every day, but they're also working within the tangle, this total tangle."

Think of it as yarn, kind of all over them; just holding them down and making it hard for their arms to move, making it hard to breathe, making it hard to speak, making it hard to walk, making it hard to move when music is played.

Think about that image for a second. That's who's in the room with your kids. That's what's going on.

So how do we work against that? How do we break that tangle, and come out of it, and allow teachers to share their ideas and do what they know works, and be more free with that? Have a flow in a way that teachers could impact kids as we know they already do, even as they're tangled up. How does that happen?

Well, it happens by, A), talking about it. B), becoming aware, unaware, and aware, working through that process. And having ongoing support throughout a career to make sure there's plenty of room in that brain for innovation, their own light, and the impact that they make on kids. That's what I'm dedicated to providing in the next opportunity that I will explain.

So tomorrow; I'm taping this on Sunday, it's the 16th; and tomorrow I'm having the Evolved Live event, which I'll have on our website for all teachers to download and to purchase for their own experiential process.

But this is an amazing event, because I'm having some of my teachers who've worked through a lot of this untangling with me over the years.

Kris Plachy is coming in, my CEO coach, Brittany Deer; my money coach, Jenny Aiello; my healer and life coach, Becky Reback; our teacher here at Evolved, who's going to talk with you a little bit about her experience also with some of this work; and Lindsey Bernay, who is a power stylist who helps women come into their own.

We're going to be talking about and giving teachers an experience of what it's like to care for themselves. What happens when they start caring for themselves? I mean, gosh, who even knows? Who even knows what would happen if every teacher whoever walked that career actually gave some time to an event like Evolved Live as part of their professional and personal development?

So we're going to start with that. And then the Teaching School is an open opportunity for every single educator. Each month we're going to tackle a topic that will help teachers to be the best versions of themselves, whoever themselves is, whatever energy that they carry and ideas that they have, whatever piques their curiosity. That's what we're going to make space for in those work sessions.

What you do is each month there's going to be a topic that we study. And then there's going to be one day each month that we have a live call, where I'll invite a speaker to come in and talk about that topic, and put the teachers through some exercises that will help them to evolve and grow and emerge, let's just say, through an important experience.

So it's a teacher revolution. That's what we're doing here. And parents; because I know you guys are the ones listening to this podcast, typically; I want you to know that I'll be dedicating some time on this podcast coming up into the new year for teachers to work through this. And I think you'll be excited to have a front row seat to this.

You are also the change makers in education, for sure. And if you can give a voice to the teachers in your child's life to make sure that they hear, without any shadow of a doubt, that they are valued, that they know what they're doing, that they don't have to do things like everybody else does, that they are not free, then you will be supporting the education of your child as a direct result, for sure.

All right, I'm going to end things there, I think. I think this was a good talk. I hope you enjoyed it. And I enjoyed giving you some of my brain and ideas that I have for what we have in our careers as teachers. I am going to leave you with this quick story, and then we'll go.

When I was starting Evolved back in 2024, it was important to me that I hire educators for teaching and tutoring. I was hiring teachers to come into tutoring, and they would ask me, "Mary, do you have a workbook for this?" Or, "Do you have a curriculum or something I could go off of to teach this?"

And I would say, "No. No, I don't. I know there's some out there, so you could research whatever you want. I'm sure you could follow it, but I really want you to connect with your student. I want you to assess your student. I want you to use that curriculum if you need it. But I think you have it within you to teach the student what you need to teach."

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It worked, and it continues to work. And we continue to do things that way, actually. And I never really knew that that was so important. I had a feeling it was important, but I never knew the massiveness of the importance until I wrote the Unaware book this past July.

In that space that I was providing just on instinct is exactly what we need to give our teachers: which is to say, "You know what you're doing. You do. You can learn well because you want to teach. Teachers will have to learn, and we'll teach you what you need to know. We will.

"But that's not the hard part. That's not the hard part. Not the hard part. The hard part is going to be asking for what you need to do this job at the highest level possible, and to go after that. And you need support to do that, too."

So that's what I leave you with. I hope you come to Evolved Live. I hope you come to the Teaching School. I hope you tell your child's teacher to come. I hope that you share this podcast. I hope that your child has the best, the best school year to come in 2023- 2024. Have a great day, everybody.

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