

Elena Aguilar ([00:00:01](#)):

Hi everyone, I'm Elena Aguilar, and welcome to the Bright Morning Podcast. If you are new to this podcast, well, first of all, welcome again, and let me tell you about it for just a moment. So on this podcast, some weeks we have an episode in which I've got a guest and we explore their life and their courage and what they do, because I'm fascinated by people and their courage and what they do. I hope that many of you have been listening to those. I am just loving having those conversations with people. Then we also have an episode in which I coach someone, a teacher or a school leader or a school coach, on how they can work in a way that's more aligned to their core values and to their vision for how they want to live their life or how they want to work so that they can access their courage, and I also love having those conversations. So I'm alternating between these two kinds of episodes, but once in a while I do break that pattern, because I can.

Elena Aguilar ([00:01:28](#)):

So today I've got a coaching conversation for you, and let me tell you in advance, when I do a coaching conversation, there's usually maybe two or three times during the conversation where I pause it and then I tell you a little bit about what I was thinking at that moment in the conversation, why I said what I did. Obviously, I have added those after recording the conversation with my guest, but I want to put those in so you can understand the coaching moves that I'm making. Now, along with this week's episode, I've got a blog offering for you that's connected to this week with a very special resource. You know what? I'm going to explain that at the end.

Elena Aguilar ([00:02:25](#)):

I really want this podcast, these coaching conversations, to be an additional support for those of you who are listening, who are coaches. All of these conversations are real, they're real people with their real questions and their real issues. For those of you who have listened to some of these coaching conversations, I would love to hear from you and hear what you're getting from them. Are they helpful? Is it useful? Do you have any requests? I really want to know how you're receiving them.

Elena Aguilar ([00:03:04](#)):

Okay, so today this episode is so special, I can't even. Okay, so today I am coaching Huber Trenado, who is now a fourth grade math teacher in Oakland, California and who was my student 20 years ago. I taught Huber when he was in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade because I had a group of students then that I was so attached to that I begged to loop with them for three years. It is just the best thing ever to see your students grow up, go to college, and become teachers. Anyone else with me on this? But now, to get to coach my former student? Okay, so I'm being totally upfront with you on this for one reason. I mean, aside from the fact that I just love this kid, and you'll hear that, but because I want you to know that there is very deep trust between us, deep, deep affection and care. It's the level of trust between a coach and their client that makes a huge difference in what can happen in that relationship.

Elena Aguilar ([00:04:42](#)):

Now, I want to be clear. Trust can be built quickly. You don't have to have 20 years of deep affection for each other to have an impactful coaching conversation. But in contrast to some of the other episodes for this podcast where I'm coaching people who I really don't know, this conversation was unique, and I want to tell you that. I want you to know that. So this is a coaching conversation, but if you're still listening and you're thinking, I don't know if I'm really into hearing a coaching conversation, maybe you're not a coach, I do hope you'll listen because this young man is an incredible human being.

Elena Aguilar ([00:05:28](#)):

I mean, I almost felt like this episode could have been the other kind of episode, where I have a guest and I probe them about their life and their resilience and their courage, because Huber is a model of resilience and courage. Talking to him made me miss teaching so much, in part because as a teacher I just met the most wonderful human beings. I really loved being with them even when they were 11 and 12 and 13 years old, my favorite age to teach. Some of my favorite people in my life right now are former students. So I hope you'll listen, just because you'll get to meet a gorgeous human being. So let me just start by welcoming you and introducing you. Huber, thank you so much for being a coaching guest on our podcast. Actually want to start off by inviting you to introduce yourself. How would you like listeners to know who you are in this conversation?

Huber Trenado ([00:06:38](#)):

I am Huber Trenado. My first name is Huber, a lot of people call me Huber in English, and last name Trenado. I am a teacher in Oakland. I'm an educator, I'm an Oakland native, and I am also a dreamer. Not like a DACA dreamer, but just dreamer in general.

Elena Aguilar ([00:07:00](#)):

Well, tell me more about that. What does that mean to you?

Huber Trenado ([00:07:03](#)):

When I was young, I kind of dreamt about how I wanted my future to be. It sounds weird, but I spent time in Alameda Beach just staring sometimes and thinking, I want to be a teacher. So I kind of had to live it in my head. I don't know, it's kind of weird, but it's kind of like I had to imagine it and dream it before I can live something. That's why I think I'm just a dreamer in general, I just dream about a lot of stuff that I want for myself, for my family, for my community, for my students, so that's kind of what I mean by a dreamer.

Elena Aguilar ([00:07:44](#)):

So when you were, let's say 12 years old, what kind of dreams did you have for what your life would be like now?

Huber Trenado ([00:07:54](#)):

That's a great question. I dreamt that I would be someday a teacher. I knew I was going to go to college. I think when I was 12 I dreamt about having my own house and having a cat. I do have a cat, I've had a cat for 10 years now. I feel like I have to envision something in my mind and kind of dream it, and then my next step is to make it a reality. That's kind of the part that I struggle with the most in life, it's kind of the practical part of things. Sometimes I struggle with what is the next step? What do I need to do?

Huber Trenado ([00:08:29](#)):

I had a second dream when I was 12 years old, and the second dream was actually to be a lawyer, to become a lawyer someday. So I feel like when I was growing up, I had callings. I love learning, I'm a life learner too, but it's been a great experience to teach in the neighborhood that I grew up in and also to still be part of that community and to still see familiar faces. Oakland is such a small kind of city where a lot of people know each other and it feels like a really rewarding job to teach. This has been the hardest year, I would say, teaching. Having to transition into distance learning has been kind of a struggle for

me, in that I feel like I'm more able to translate my values and create community and belonging in the classroom when I'm with students, and it's been so hard to just create that.

Huber Trenado ([00:09:31](#)):

I think last year I had an advantage because my students had been with me for several months already before distance learning, so I felt like they knew me. When I called them, they would pick up. We already had a relationship and that was so much easier. Now that I'm starting a brand new school year with a brand new cohort of students that I don't know, I have two feelings, curiosity, and also a little bit of anxiety on how I'm going to create that sense of community, sense of belonging, because I know it's so important, for me at least.

Huber Trenado ([00:10:08](#)):

For the listeners, Elena, you were my teacher from sixth to eighth grade, and it was one of the classrooms where I feel like I belonged the most, and just in school in general, I felt like that was my place. It was so natural to be at ASCEND and be a student, and I felt safe. As a gay, Latino man in Oakland, in East Oakland, I felt so scared to be myself at times. Would they like me? Will my family disown me? Will my friends not like me anymore? So I had a lot of questions inside of me and I just know that it was so much easier to have people who supported me and who were just supporting in who I was, what I bring. I want to create that for my students, even if through distance learning.

Huber Trenado ([00:10:57](#)):

So I want to be able to make whoever it is, all my students, just feel like they belong in my class and I want to build community, and I'm struggling with how to do that, with how to translate who I am, my values, or how am I going to create and cultivate a culture of learning and of belonging and community. My class last year was so on point in showing up to class, and doing the work, and using Class Dojo, and using the platforms that we used, but I think that was because I had... I'm a very relational person and I feel like I had already built those relationships with those parents, those students. This time around it's going to be a brand... I kind of see it as my first year teaching, I don't know, all over again, because it's a different form of not only teaching, but I feel like community is so important before teaching for learning. So how can I translate or create that sense of safety for my students to take risks to learn?

Elena Aguilar ([00:12:07](#)):

That's a lot. Yeah, I think your insight that it's like your first year teaching is really perceptive and probably actually will be helpful. But I think the other thing that we want to name is that you have also decided, this is your 10th year teaching, that this is your last year teaching and you are going to be applying to law school. It's a really unique and interesting situation you're in, but I'm hearing that you have a vision for this year. When you talked about being a dreamer, I hear that you have this vision for community and belonging and relational safety, and you're wondering how do you create that? What are the next steps? How do you make it a reality?

Huber Trenado ([00:13:07](#)):

Yes, and that's the part that I'm really struggling with. I have some ideas already on how to bring some of the things I did last year, but I am also struggling with how to create the beginning stage of relationship and building those relationships with students and parents. I have some ideas of how to do that, but I think one of the things that has been really kind of eyeopening has been how this virus pandemic has really pronounced the inequities in Oakland. I'm sure in the whole world, but I've seen

them firsthand here in East Oakland. I had a couple students who are homeless last year and were unable to access most of the curriculum and were not showing up to classes. I know that's one learning, that I want to make sure that all kids are able to show up. I know that there's a lot of extenuating circumstances that I have no control over, but I want to provide and do as much as I can that's on my end to make sure that the kids have a healthy experience in class and that they get to play with each other.

Huber Trenado ([00:14:17](#)):

Even I thought of creating kind of a recess space where I'm not only teaching them, but where they get to interact with each other and have social relationships. But I'm also struggling with just how do I start that? I think, as you mentioned, I am going into my 10th year teaching and I felt way more confident at the beginning of last year than I do now. But I don't know, Elena, I have this feeling where I feel like this is actually an opportunity too. I hate to be the person that says something positive out of what's going on, but I feel like it's an opportunity for us educators to also reimagine education and really think about how we've been doing things and why we do them that way. Also, just other aspects of schooling that have neglected Black and brown children, and where we have not seen huge outcome for Black and brown children, and I just feel that this could really also be an opportunity to reinvent education in a way.

Elena Aguilar ([00:15:27](#)):

So let me ask you, Huber, by the end of our time today that we have for our conversation, what would you like to be true?

Huber Trenado ([00:15:40](#)):

I think a sense of clarity as to how I'm going to do that for at least the first couple days for my students, how I'm going to build community.

Elena Aguilar ([00:15:51](#)):

So almost having the outline of a lesson plan for the first few days?

Huber Trenado ([00:15:57](#)):

Kind of, but I'm also thinking that that's not the direction that... Yeah, kind of like that, but I'm also thinking there's the bigger picture of creating the community and doing all that, and then the instructional part, and I feel like I want to just focus on kind of a lesson plan, but more for building community and-

Elena Aguilar ([00:16:18](#)):

Sure, yeah, a plan. I mean, we can just call it a plan.

Huber Trenado ([00:16:21](#)):

Yeah.

Elena Aguilar ([00:16:21](#)):

So let me ask you, I am hearing that you are in the stage of planning that I think about... Everyone plans differently, but I think about there's a stage of planning where, I mean we could call it brainstorming,

where you've got this idea, and that one, and this one, and that one. Where I hear your anxiety come up is around, will I be able to figure out the steps or the plan? How is this going to happen? Is that right, I'm hearing that?

Huber Trenado ([00:16:54](#)):

Yes, [inaudible 00:16:56].

Elena Aguilar ([00:16:56](#)):

So I want to actually address that little bit of anxiety that's in there, or those worries or wondering, and I want to ask you if you can recall a time when you were in a situation where you were facing a new situation, maybe that was uncertain or you wondered how am I going to do this, and you sort of felt similar, there's this idea, and this one, and this one, but how am I going to make it all work? Can you think of a time when you felt that way?

Huber Trenado ([00:17:39](#)):

Yes, I can think, yeah. Yes, I can think about... Yeah.

Elena Aguilar ([00:17:44](#)):

Were you able to figure out the plan and the steps to realize your vision or your dream?

Huber Trenado ([00:17:53](#)):

Yes, yes, yes.

Elena Aguilar ([00:17:54](#)):

Tell me, what I want to understand and what I want to help you understand, is the process you use for figuring out basically the how to make something happen, the action steps to make something happen. How do you go about it? Do you talk to lots of people? Do you create spreadsheets? How do you go about that process?

Huber Trenado ([00:18:17](#)):

First, I've been in PD since yesterday and I've been taking notes. I have them, Post-its, white pieces of paper, lined paper, all sorts, my computer. The way that my brain works, it's kind of strange, I talk to a lot of people and so I get their ideas or what they think, and then I kind of look at all my notes, and then I kind of create a plan from taking some ideas and then in the process realizing I don't want to incorporate some of them, but then some of them are promising for my purpose. But yeah, I have definitely been in a lot of those situations, but my process is talking to people and then gathering my own thoughts and what I think is the most right thing to do, and then going from there.

Elena Aguilar ([00:19:10](#)):

So I hear you're using a lot of different strategies. I mean Post-its, notes here and there, talking to people, putting it all together, and then you use your own critical judgment and your decision making criteria to create something that aligns with your vision and your values.

Huber Trenado ([00:19:28](#)):

Yes, yes, yes.

Elena Aguilar ([00:19:30](#)):

I think it's interesting that you say you dream, you talk about yourself as a dreamy kid, dreaming about being a teacher, owning a home, being a lawyer, and you became a teacher, and you own your home, and you're on the path to becoming a lawyer. So when I listen to you, I think you're somebody who knows how to make things happen. You figure out how to pull all those pieces together and make it happen, and I'm just wondering if you see yourself in that way.

Huber Trenado ([00:20:07](#)):

That's so interesting that you say that because I don't, until I get to the point of, oh, this is how I'm going to do it, or something clicks where I'm like, oh, she said that, that makes so much sense, I'm going to do this. But I think I view myself as that sometimes, and sometimes I feel like I internally don't own my confidence, for lack of a better word. Sometimes I feel like I question myself a lot and I feel there's a aspect of perfectionism in there that I feel like really limits my creativity sometimes and just my decision making sometimes. I think the first steps for me are always so hard, Elena, and what I realize is, after I take the first couple steps, I feel so much more relief and I can kind of sit back and feel like, okay, I got started with this and now it wasn't that bad. But overall, I feel like when you asked me right now, I'm like, oh, I don't. I did go to Berkeley, I did apply to colleges, I did get a full ride scholarship. I don't forget about those things, but-

Elena Aguilar ([00:21:18](#)):

You took yourself, you got to Thailand as an exchange student, you got to Chile as an exchange student. I mean, the number of things you've done and made happen in your life, that you made happen. What I would encourage you to keep cultivating awareness of, because you have a lot of awareness, but keep building your awareness of how much this of level of confidence plays a role in what you perceive as your ability or challenge to figure out the next steps, or even to think about this first phase of distance learning with your new group of students. Let's just try this for an experiment right now, when you're thinking about creating the kind of community that you want for your students, on a scale of one to 10, how confident would you say you feel that you can create that vision that you have?

Huber Trenado ([00:22:33](#)):

I would say probably a seven, six or seven.

Elena Aguilar ([00:22:41](#)):

Okay, so what would it take for you to feel an eight or nine?

Huber Trenado ([00:22:50](#)):

I think probably going back to my... So I planned out the first week of school and then realized that I didn't really like it because it didn't achieve the purpose of that I wanted initially. But I feel like when I got started, I feel more comfortable once I just started and I did the week. Even if I didn't every single day that I planned, but I was like, I like some of them, so I felt more confident when I started. But I think what would make me more confident is having more options or having more ideas on how to do that.

Huber Trenado ([00:23:31](#)):

I think I'm also internally just really battling with the fact that I won't see them at the beginning of the year and that makes me really anxious. Just that part where I'm like, oh, I cannot shake his hand or I cannot talk to him or her, that part feels really kind of frightening to me, not having a relationship and doing it online. But I also know that once I start and I put all my ideas that I gathered yesterday and today and revise my plans that I created on Sunday, I think I'll feel more confident. So I think part of it is just starting, even now-

Elena Aguilar ([00:24:08](#)):

Just getting started.

Huber Trenado ([00:24:10](#)):

Yeah.

Elena Aguilar ([00:24:12](#)):

So Huber, if you could see your students in person, what would be different about what could happen that can't happen? What would be different? Let's just unpack that a little bit.

Huber Trenado ([00:24:27](#)):

I think having kind of the one-on-one conversations with students during recess or in the hallway. I think some of the things that are the relationship building part, which I feel like I as a teacher rely so much on that, building the strong relationships, but I feel kind of stuck in that part. I'm going to have my students write a letter to me, because I do that every year, even before the pandemic, and I feel like that's just going to bring me, I guess, a sense of normalcy too, to what I do and having students share with me what they want. I also think once I talk to the parents, I'm going to feel more comfortable or more confident, because I feel like I rely a lot on parents too for communication.

Elena Aguilar ([00:25:16](#)):

Can I just clarify, will all of your students have a computer or some way to get onto virtual platforms?

Huber Trenado ([00:25:24](#)):

Yes, that's what the school admin said, that we will, yes.

Elena Aguilar ([00:25:29](#)):

Okay, so you are about to hear me get really directive in my coaching, and by that I mean I'm going to give Huber some ideas. I'm going to say, "Try this," or "Maybe don't do that." Being directive is something that as coaches we want to be cautious about overusing, because it can feel satisfying and sometimes really easy to just tell someone what to do. I tend to be very facilitative, I'd say 90% of the time, with people I'm coaching, but there are times when I sense, I hear, I know that I just need to get directive, and this was one of those times. The reason was I could hear the way Huber was kind of going around almost in circles through his concerns, his worries, his questions, and I was getting ideas for what he could do in the classroom and I was like, I'm not going to hold back, I'm going to share these ideas and I'm going to see how he responds now.

Elena Aguilar ([00:27:06](#)):

Of course, you always want to give people the option to reject your ideas, but sometimes it really is the right thing to do to throw out some ideas, to be directive. What you want to be very attuned to is how your client responds, and you will hear and see when someone is not appreciating your directive coaching or they're not on board with your ideas. That's when they're like, "Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, okay." But listen to how Huber responds and listen to how that shifts what's happening in his thinking. In this conversation, okay?

Elena Aguilar ([00:27:54](#)):

I have a couple ideas that I want to raise. First, I want to encourage you to think about every activity, every assignment, every interaction for the first, I would say, two or three weeks. I want you to ask yourself, will this create more sense of community and belonging or less? It can only go up or down. So on a scale of one to 10, you take away the five and you basically say, where would this action land if I was to measure the impact in terms of creating community? I think, like you said, you have to rethink everything, but thinking through this lens of the sort of one dimensional platform that we're in. But the other thing to do is to think about where and when do students feel more or less comfortable, more or less safe. You're right, all of the informal moments of connection, that's sending you into the negative in terms of how much relationship building. So that means every interaction actually needs to work for double or triple the usual impact, right?

Huber Trenado ([00:29:25](#)):

Wow, yes, you're absolutely right.

Elena Aguilar ([00:29:28](#)):

So I would challenge you on having them write you a letter, because when I think about kids coming back to school in the fall, they haven't written for a while, even in a normal year. In a normal year, they come back, they're kind of rusty, they've lost some skills over the summer, they're a little scared about their teacher, and asking them to write, for many students, can be kind of a higher anxiety performance task. But I wonder what it would be like for them to... There's other platforms, like recording a short video or something else, or even just having a conversation with you on Zoom. I would be thinking keeping everything that causes the effective filter to get stronger, keeping it all as low as possible. Because if your guiding principle is creating safety and community and belonging, you're going to need to lay a much thicker foundation than you ever have. I also just wonder, I mean, I'm like, why couldn't you see your students in person six feet apart wearing masks? Could you do home visits?

Huber Trenado ([00:30:54](#)):

I like that. I really love that idea, I probably could. I could, and I didn't think about that. You're absolutely right, six feet apart.

Elena Aguilar ([00:31:08](#)):

I mean, the interesting thing there is, I don't know if it's been a practice of yours to do home visits, but sometimes doing home visits can feel a little awkward when parents are like, "You want to come to my house?" In my first years teaching, when I taught elementary school, I did home visits for all of my students. But now you have an almost perfect excuse and the weather is nice enough, so you can stand outside, you can stand in the yard or on the street. They probably all live relatively close. You could even do a little walk in the neighborhood to just... I mean, I know you're familiar with the neighborhoods, but

I think even to be able to stand and see parents six feet apart. I was thinking, you could get masks made for your students to have something [inaudible 00:31:58].

Huber Trenado ([00:31:57](#)):

Oh my God, I love that idea, Elena. I love it.

Elena Aguilar ([00:32:01](#)):

Whatever your motto is for the year and you could go and deliver it. The other thing, this is just funny, I have a friend and the first day she told me she went and took a socially distant walk with her friend. She took a yard stick with her and she held the yard stick in between her and friend everywhere she went. She was like, "Stay back, this is exactly."

Huber Trenado ([00:32:25](#)):

I love that.

Elena Aguilar ([00:32:25](#)):

Then she also used to point things, but there's a math connection, right?

Huber Trenado ([00:32:32](#)):

You bet, a yardstick, yeah.

Elena Aguilar ([00:32:34](#)):

You could show up, give your kids a yardstick and a mask, and do right there when you're meeting them some kind of six feet apart math lesson.

Huber Trenado ([00:32:47](#)):

Yes, I love that. Oh my God, I'm going to totally take that. I love that idea because I think I am a very relational person and I don't know how much of it is in my head, my fears playing out or my anxiety, and how much of it is just real. So I feel like meeting them, at least for me and for them, I'm sure it's going to do a lot. So yeah, thank you, that's a magnificent idea. I do have a yardstick.

Elena Aguilar ([00:33:16](#)):

Yeah, it's not just in your head. We are relational human beings, we have never lived the way we're living now. We've never lived this way. So this is really new, and so how do we take the kind of precautions we need to, but still see... I mean, you know the impact of seeing people, even if it's just... It will do a lot. An even half an hour visit in the beginning of the school year will do a lot.

Huber Trenado ([00:33:50](#)):

Yeah, and they all live in that neighborhood, so it's accessible. I'm going to steal that and I'm going to use it and I'm going to share it.

Elena Aguilar ([00:34:01](#)):

I wanted to share both that, maybe don't have them write right away, and boost up the ways in which they interact where they feel comfortable, whatever formats you want to use. Then keep pushing yourself to think outside the box, because I think once you do, you'll come up with other ideas.

Huber Trenado ([00:34:24](#)):

Yes. Yeah, you're absolutely right, because I had an intuitive feeling like I can do something different, I just had trouble coming up, being creative in what I can do. So the home visits are definitely something I'm going to do because I think it'll be good for me too, just emotionally, and it'll give me a sense of connectedness and belonging too. Yeah, thank you. Thank you.

Elena Aguilar ([00:34:55](#)):

I think you can do things, when you do those, take photos six feet apart, taking photos and start creating photo boards. Just that kind of thing that if you had bulletin boards in your classroom, you might have those up, or having students create those bulletin boards, whatever introductory, back to school, here's how I share myself and who I am, and putting them on Padlet or whatever kind of platform you've used. But I think you need to think about what you've already done that works and then it's translating it, and I know you can do that.

Huber Trenado ([00:35:44](#)):

Thank you, it feels good to hear that. I think this year I'm very concerned with creating that because I'm leaving teaching and I want to feel good when I leave and I want to feel like I left something behind. I don't know, even this idea of visiting homes, the yardstick, that I'm leaving that for other teachers in the future to use. It's kind of like, I know for myself, I need to feel super connected to my students this year because I'm leaving and I want to feel connected to my community in East Oakland, and my families, and my students even when I leave.

Huber Trenado ([00:36:31](#)):

I just had my second class graduate from high school and a lot of them are going... It's crazy to be on the opposite end. I remember when I was the one graduating and you were the teacher, but now I'm on the other end. A lot of them are still emailing me, and my phone number hasn't changed so they're still texting me. It's like, I know that I want to continue to have a positive impact with this class too and that I want to be able to feel connected and like I make a difference, even through the pandemic and all the limitations.

Elena Aguilar ([00:37:14](#)):

So what would be the kind of evidence that you would want that would reflect or that would show that this was a good year? Next June, let's just start in June, when the year ends and you say, "This was a good year because," what would you hope you could point to?

Huber Trenado ([00:37:40](#)):

I'm going to start from the basic, what I feel like I want them to all get, which is I want them to feel supported. I want the students to feel confident in their math skills. I want students to still have a sense of, I want to go to college, I want to do this, I want to be this, I want to do that. I want to be able to still have communication with the families, because I feel like I still have some communication with some of the families that I taught years ago. I want to be able to just see smiles on their face, and I want them to

be happy, and I want them to be joyful, and I want them to feel loved, because I remember being a student and that when I left, that's what I felt the most. I know I was loved by you. I know I was loved by Kako, by Haysin, by Larissa.

Huber Trenado ([00:38:30](#)):

I knew I was loved by my teachers and educators, and just leaving, that love took me far. I carried that love with me and I want them to feel like they have a teacher who's constantly giving them love and care and who cares about whether they're eating, whether they're getting the nutrition they need or exercise. I want them to know how to have mindful exercises that they go to when they experience something traumatic at home or outside of their homes. Those are the conversations that I think are so touching and powerful to me. When I can replicate what my teachers did for me, just made me feel loved and like I could come to you guys, and I want them to leave and feel like they were loved and they belonged in my class and they felt good in it. I know that this year's, it's not physical space that they're going to be in, but I know that I want them to still feel like, oh, that was fun. I got out that class and it was fun.

Elena Aguilar ([00:39:35](#)):

You have such a beautiful vision for your students. You almost made me cry, too. I wonder, do you have any doubt that you will love your students?

Huber Trenado ([00:39:46](#)):

No, I don't. I feel like even the hardest students that I've taught, during the challenging moments, in a way I love them harder or more. I love them more and give them more love, but I've never felt like I wouldn't.

Elena Aguilar ([00:40:10](#)):

I just say that because I have no doubt that your students are going to feel loved by you. It's done that. That one's like, okay, check. That's going to happen.

Huber Trenado ([00:40:18](#)):

Oh, thank you. That means a lot. I think the pandemic has been challenging for everyone, and us teachers too. I think one of the things that I didn't do last time was practice a lot of self-care. By last time, I mean a couple months ago when we ended the academic year. I feel like I was giving a lot and I was talking to families at 9:30, sometimes at 10:00 PM, and I basically made myself available at all times. That was kind of at the expense of my mental health for a moment. So now I want to come into this like, I'm taken care of, and now I can take care of them.

Elena Aguilar ([00:41:00](#)):

So I'm hearing, and I just want to name this as something, kind of flag it, but I'm hearing that you might have an additional either goal or intention that you might want to think about fleshing out, which is around your own wellbeing and your own health, mental health, joy, happiness.

Huber Trenado ([00:41:25](#)):

Happiness, yes. It's all activities that I have recently started to notice, oh, this gives me a lot of joy, this doesn't give me that much joy. So I started to run, for example. I used to do track in high school and that

really helped me during the college application process. It's crazy how, as an adult, I've forgotten some of... Not forgotten, but haven't gone back to them. Now as a 31 year old, I'm finding myself like, oh, when I felt stressed, I used to run three miles and I felt good afterwards. I know that I'm also an empath, I feel like I could cry if my student is telling me what they're going through. I'm very sensitive or have a inclination to feeling and what other people are feeling. I know that for my mental health and my wellbeing, I need to still feel, be empathetic to an extent, and not absorb that like a sponge.

Elena Aguilar ([00:42:27](#)):

So some boundaries, I'm hearing.

Huber Trenado ([00:42:29](#)):

Some boundaries, yes.

Elena Aguilar ([00:42:31](#)):

Let me ask you, I want to just get really specific and concrete, you are committed to having close partnerships with family and to having communication with family, and last year you were making yourself available at any hour, 9:00 or 10:00 at night you were talking to families. When you first communicate with families now in this school year and you meet this new set of families, what do you want to communicate about when you will be available to them?

Huber Trenado ([00:43:02](#)):

I want to communicate to them that I'll be available from 8:00 to 4:00, when I'm not teaching. I also want to communicate to them that I'll be having office hours twice a week, from 4:00 to 6:00 every Tuesdays and Thursdays, so that they can call me at any time. Of course, I would make exceptions for students at work at night or make a different arrangement. But I think my aim this year, I think I have started to feel a little bit more burned out, last year I started to feel more burned out, so I think it's really thinking about my self-care and boundaries.

Huber Trenado ([00:43:40](#)):

Sometimes I'm like, "Yeah, call me. There's no issue." Then I'm taking the call and then I'm like, oh my God, he's going through this or she's going through that, and then I kind of internalize things. Now that about myself, you're absolutely right, I need to create those boundaries. That's kind of a theme in my life, where I'm sometimes aware of things and then I forget to take that extra step. I feel like in a way it goes back to self-love. I don't know. Yeah, self-love, because it is, you're taking care of yourself.

Elena Aguilar ([00:44:14](#)):

I mean, I hear the intention and the commitment. Then I think there's a part that is like, you have to tell other people, because people can't respect your boundaries unless they know what they are. Sometimes we make assumptions about, oh no one would call me at midnight, or we make assumptions and other people also make assumptions, so being really clear with people. So you just were very clear, 8:00 to 4:00 when I'm not teaching, Tuesday, Thursday 4:00 to 6:00. I wonder about a beginning of the year survey or something, you ask parents to find out who works, who won't be able to make those times. But rather than saying, "If you're you're working at those times, you can't meet with me, I'll make another arrangement," but actually being on more the proactive side so you can find out, okay, there's actually three parents for whom this isn't going to work.

Elena Aguilar ([00:45:12](#)):

Maybe even saying something like, "I am really trying this year to make sure that I have all the energy I need to give to our children, to your students, and I am going to be committing to my daily running or spending time with my family in the evenings," or whatever you want to say so you're modeling for them as well. You're modeling for the parents, you're modeling for the kids in a sense. But you might also think about where are the other points where your boundaries are permeable and where you might need to make them sharper, whether that's with parents, or colleagues, or other folks at school. Then you need to make the commitments to yourself, write them up and put them up in front of you so you remember.

Huber Trenado ([00:46:10](#)):

Yes, I'm going to do that because I think I need a practice for remembering to do things. I've never done that, posted something, but my brother, Cruz, does and it seems to work for him. So I'm going to start doing that because I need practical things that I can do to remind myself and uphold what I communicate to my parents and my students.

Elena Aguilar ([00:46:37](#)):

See what happens if you put them up. I mean, visual reminders, we just have a lot going on all the time, so putting up visual reminders. Even doing something like keeping a weekly log or putting your weekly calendar where you're like, I'm off 6:00, you are putting down that you're going for a run or you're doing whatever, it is that is self-care. Then almost going back through at the end of the week and how did I do? Okay, what are my commitments for next week?

Huber Trenado ([00:47:08](#)):

Yeah, I'm going to do that. I'm going to try that. I'm curious to know how that's going to work for me and I'm going to commit to that and the survey too, for parents.

Elena Aguilar ([00:47:18](#)):

I think you will feel, if you do that and you keep it for a few weeks, you're going to start building confidence in yourself, in the sense that you'll build the kind of confidence that'll make you feel like, oh I can actually maintain this, this year.

Huber Trenado ([00:47:35](#)):

Thank you, that's super practical. I like that, because like I said at the beginning, I have these ideas and then sometimes translating into practice, it could be a challenge for me sometimes

Elena Aguilar ([00:47:48](#)):

The other thing that might be helpful is if you have a colleague or even a family member who wants to make similar commitments and you're kind of accountability buddies and you tell them, "No, this week I am not working after 6:00 on three days of this week, I'm not going to," or "I'm going to go for a run four times this week." You tell each other and then you check up on each other and like, "Okay, how are you doing?" Sometimes just having one other person to whom we feel accountable activates the part of us that wants peer approval. It's kind of like the part of us that can have an unhealthy desire for peer approval where like, okay, now you're going to get approval because you're doing the right thing.

Huber Trenado ([00:48:36](#)):

That's so true. But I mean, for myself, that's like what you just named. I am the main culprit of that, so I know that I need to work on that. These are all great strategies that I'm going to implement for myself, because I think part of my vision is taking care of myself too, because it's hard. It's been a hard situation to be in just for many different reasons, including my family, and I want to make sure that I'm here for my kids. Yeah, I'm first, but then my kids are second, that I'm taking care of myself, my family, and then my kids

Elena Aguilar ([00:49:15](#)):

You'll have a lot more to offer them. If you want them to experience joy, you have to be experiencing it.

Huber Trenado ([00:49:28](#)):

That's powerful.

Elena Aguilar ([00:49:29](#)):

If you don't know it and know what it is, you can't create those experiences for them. If you want that feeling of community and belonging and safety, again, you're creating that within yourself and you're creating that sense of... There's a lot of trust in community and trust and belonging, feel safe. You have to be able to trust yourself that you're going to keep your word, you're going to honor your commitments to yourself.

Huber Trenado ([00:49:58](#)):

Myself, yes.

Elena Aguilar ([00:50:04](#)):

Then you can draw on that to think about how do you create a safe community for students where they feel they belong, where they trust each other. I really have confidence in your ability to figure that out.

Huber Trenado ([00:50:21](#)):

Thank you, I really appreciate that. That means a lot coming from you. You did that for us, so I would love to even replicate, I don't know, 90% of what you did or the love, have the kids feel that way.

Elena Aguilar ([00:50:38](#)):

I think we're getting stuck. I mean, I'm not wanting to downplay the virtual world, because it's hard, and it's hard for little kids. But I think that we're also feeling a little stuck because in the end it's about what is inside of you. What are the feelings, and what are you bringing, and who are you showing up as? Yes, the virtual world is limited. But if you're showing up with all the love that I know you have for your students, and if you're showing up with the passion for learning, it's going to translate into a virtual world. It will.

Huber Trenado ([00:51:17](#)):

Yeah, thank you. Sorry, coming into this conversation, this reminds me, I was like, this is not possible, but I'm going to bring this question to Elena to see what she thinks. So now I'm coming to, now that

you're saying that, it's like, it is possible and it's going to translate, and I'm going to do it. I've just always questioned myself.

Elena Aguilar ([00:51:46](#)):

Yeah, but you're aware of it, which is what's kind of amazing. I think the more you keep brainstorming and talking to people and getting ideas, I think you'll feel more confident. But like you said, in the beginning we have this opportunity right now to really rethink learning. What the virtual platform gives us an obvious way to do more of is to talk to each other. We can emphasize and create more opportunity for sharing and conversation, for storytelling. I love your idea of having them have recess together, that's so great.

Huber Trenado ([00:52:33](#)):

Yeah, I just realized that because at the end a lot of the kids were like, "When do I get to talk to my friend? When am I going to get to talk to this person? Can we hang out?" I would be like, "Bye guys, have a great day. I'll see you, boys and girls, I'll see you tomorrow." Then they would be like, "Can you stay on for 30 minutes or leave the Zoom meeting on for 30 minutes so we can just talk to each other?" I felt like that, when we first tried to figure what distance learning will look like, I think we missed some of those aspects of human beings.

Huber Trenado ([00:53:10](#)):

Then I think just as a country, not only the organization that I'm part of, maybe we jumped right into, so this is how it looks to teach math on Zoom. I think we forgot that kids are human beings who are developing. We are too, as adults, but they're literally growing physically and mentally, emotionally. I know that I just want to replicate a community, even if it's a virtual community. Thank you for saying it's totally possible, because I feel like I needed to hear that. It's totally possible, it's just how am I going to do that? Spending more time on the how and the practical part.

Elena Aguilar ([00:53:53](#)):

Yeah, I mean you're asking all the questions that so many people are asking, and you're asking more and you're pushing it farther, but keep thinking about what have you done that has created community in the past, because I know you have. You've experienced it and you've created it for many years now, so what have you done? What are the kinds of questions that you've asked? How have you configured students? How have you grouped students? How have you listened to them and observed them and modified groupings or instruction or prompts, all of that? You already know a lot about how to do this.

Elena Aguilar ([00:54:36](#)):

I'm going to pause us here again just for a moment because what I'm doing at this point, and I've done this before in this conversation and I'm going to do it again, is remind Huber of what he already knows and what he's already done. I'm reminding him of his internal resources, his resilience, his ability to figure things out. I'm also encouraging him to continue critically questioning the decisions he's making, because every single decision is not the same as ones we've had previously in our lives. But I want to remind him that he knows what to do when he's faced with uncertainty, with challenges, with different situations. He knows what to do, he's done it before.

Elena Aguilar ([00:55:43](#)):

This is sort of a simple coaching strategy, really. I mean I would just say it's remind people that they're stronger than they're remembering at that moment that they're struggling in. Remind people of what they know, remind people of what they know about themselves, of their own capacity, their own skill, their own ability. Everyone has more internal resources, more skill and ability and capacity, than we usually remember. Remind someone and listen to the impact that it has on him.

Elena Aguilar ([00:56:23](#)):

I think that there are some interesting possibilities in terms of a temporary shift away from written language, because we rely on that so much in school, but oral language is so much more accessible and is a way that people connect with each other. So you have this opportunity to have a lot more oral language development and just interaction, and social interaction, and connection.

Huber Trenado ([00:56:57](#)):

One thing I didn't mention throughout our conversation and I just want to say, thank you so much. This means a lot, to hear your ideas and to be vulnerable with you, and to be really honest with what I'm going through as a teacher. One of the things that I thought about was that I built community and it's through dance. I'm not a dance teacher, but I love dancing. I'll have, after we reach a certain goal, we'll have a dance party, and my kids look forward to that and they look forward to seeing me make a fool of myself. But I think it's just in the normal interactions that I didn't think... I had a hard time conceptualizing the translation or thinking about how I would interpret those things to make it distance learning now. So how do I move that from the classroom to a [inaudible 00:57:52] activity?

Elena Aguilar ([00:57:52](#)):

Dance party. You can have a dance party, right? End of the first week.

Huber Trenado ([00:57:58](#)):

On the first week I always dance one time to each class and then they're like, "Ha ha ha. You like to dance? You know that song?" I'll be like, "Yeah." Then they'll be like, "Oh, you're not a stranger." So yeah, I'm going to replicate that.

Elena Aguilar ([00:58:12](#)):

Huber, let's say they log onto Zoom, they get on Zoom, and the first thing they see is you dancing. They hear music, they see you dancing. Then you're like, "Oh, I forgot, class is starting."

Huber Trenado ([00:58:26](#)):

[inaudible 00:58:30].

Elena Aguilar ([00:58:29](#)):

Their very first introduction to you is of someone who dances. What's interesting is I could see how even these are the opportunities that I'm curious about in Zoom or digital platform, is for kids who are shy, would they feel more comfortable? They're at home, maybe nobody can even see them or they can only see their head, or they can move a little out of the screen. Could they enjoy and be a part of this in a way that they wouldn't be in the classroom?

Huber Trenado ([00:59:07](#)):

Oh my God, that's so true. They are, yeah, that's so true.

Elena Aguilar ([00:59:13](#)):

I have seen in the kind of workshops I've been doing, that I do online now, everything's online, I see, for example, that introverts might be experiencing some of the learning in a way that actually works for them better. I have seen the possibility for more equitable interactions. I see a lot of possibility. For example, it sounds like you're using Zoom, but if you were to ask your students a question and then you're asking them, whether you're pulling equity sticks or just raising their hand or whatever, we have the opportunity now, you ask them a question and they all put their answers in the chat box. Then basically you're hearing the voice of every student, not just the handful whose hand you acknowledge or something, right?

Huber Trenado ([01:00:06](#)):

Yeah, you're so right. That's crazy that you mentioned that because last year I felt like there were some students that really stepped up and I didn't make the connection to like, oh, they're introverts, shy students who were stellar students through the last three months and were killing it, and were even participating in the smaller groups of seven people or eight students. I never made the connection to, oh, they're introverts. I knew they were shy and they didn't really participate in class, but I never make the connection to like, oh, now they are participating. I noticed that, but I didn't make the connection to like, oh, this is because of this platform. There is a lot of possibility in there.

Elena Aguilar ([01:00:49](#)):

I think we have to keep both the critical questioning about the impact this is having on students and how the inequities are being magnified. I mean, your students who don't have homes, that's a group of students whose needs aren't being met. At the same time, I think we also have to keep an awareness about where could there be opportunities that... I mean, schooling didn't really work for so many kids before anyway, and so what's possible now that we just haven't tuned into?

Huber Trenado ([01:01:26](#)):

Yeah, that's a great question.

Elena Aguilar ([01:01:28](#)):

I'm so excited to hear how things go. I can't wait to check in with you in a couple of months.

Huber Trenado ([01:01:33](#)):

Thank you. I feel much more in tune with myself. That's weird to say, but I feel more in tune with my myself after having this conversation.

Elena Aguilar ([01:01:44](#)):

So what feels true for you right now at the end of this conversation?

Huber Trenado ([01:01:49](#)):

It feels true that I can create community. It feels true that I can think about more ideas, like the dance party and showing up with the yardstick. Those are I ideas, things that I had never thought about that are amazing. Thinking outside the box, I think. It feels true that I can do this and that I can reach out to

more people and ask them what they're doing. I feel like I'll be able to do that the first week. I don't feel like I can guarantee the rest of the year, but I think for me it's mini steps, because when I look at the long term, I could get really scared or frightened and not go for it sometimes.

Huber Trenado ([01:02:36](#)):

I think that's kind of what I've seen myself as, a perfectionist. I'll either try to do something really, really, really well and be hard on myself or I'll be like, that seems like that's something I can't do, and I won't start it. To be honest, I haven't said this to anybody, but I'm going to say it to you right now, I feel like law school for me was like that too. I started the process of applying and it just seemed like a monumental process. Then I forgot, I applied to 10 colleges in high school, I can do this.

Elena Aguilar ([01:03:11](#)):

Remember that learning, what you just said right now, you thought, how can I do this? Then you reminded yourself, I've done this before and I did it effectively. Whenever you're feeling stuck, or stumped, or overwhelmed, I that's a simple sentence for you, I've been here before and I was able to figure it out last time. I mean, I know that we could add another dozen big things in your life where things have been hard and you have figured it out.

Huber Trenado ([01:03:47](#)):

Yes, definitely. So yeah, the law school process, I signed up for a Princeton Review course for the LSAT, and not even when I was in high school I took a test prep course. This time around, I am. I'm trying to be more disciplined about it, but I'm also going back to my resilience and going back to, I've done this in the past. I think when I've had the most traumatic moments in my life, I experienced a lot of trauma growing up, I always kind of went back to like, you were strong. You did that, you got through that.

Huber Trenado ([01:04:25](#)):

So even when I was going through a really hard time a couple years ago when my home burned, I struggled the first couple months kind of digging in deep in my spark or my fire. I feel like the spark is there, but it had turned into a spark and it was a flame. I think when I remember that there's a spark in there and that I've done this, it just brings me a sense of, yeah, you're going to get through this, or you are going to do this and just trust the process. Yes, there is a lot of doubts and questioning. The how I think is one step at a time for me, because I have noticed that if I think about the multiple steps, I feel it's too monumental or too big for me or I can't do it.

Elena Aguilar ([01:05:15](#)):

Yeah, just one step at a time, one week at a time. School year, the first week, dance party, yardsticks, socially distant visiting homes, all of that, lots of fun, lots of connection. You're going to figure out the rest of the weeks. You're being led by your vision for community and belonging in a classroom, may be virtual, but a classroom characterized by joy and love. You can create that.

Huber Trenado ([01:05:49](#)):

Yeah, and that's what I want to leave, I want to leave my kids feeling the love and feeling that they had a Latino teacher or a man of color who modeled for them, how to do all these things, how to take care of themselves, how to be comfortable with being gay or being different. I think this year just completely be myself and also completely do something different, because since I started education, I know that

there's good intentions, but sometimes there are a lot of negative outcomes for Black and brown kids in schools. I in my teaching career have constantly ask myself, what am I doing to help out my community? Which I see as Black and brown people, where I grew up. How am I going to impact their lives? I know that I want be positive, I want to be a role model, and I want them to see themselves in me.

Huber Trenado ([01:06:49](#)):

I want them to be like I saw myself in you when I was like, oh, Elena's Latina. Oh my God, my first Latina teacher. It was powerful, and it still is for me. I want them to feel like I was there for them, I was a competent teacher and delivered good instruction, that they felt cared for and that they belonged. That's so big to me, the belonging piece, because I think I was in classrooms growing up in Oakland in a traditional elementary school in East Oakland, and I remember one of my teachers told me in third grade, "You're not going to make it. You don't know how to read at grade level." I still hear that voice sometimes. Then I hear your voice and I hear Haysin, and I hear Larissa, and I hear Eve, and I hear a lot of those great teachers that I had.

Huber Trenado ([01:07:43](#)):

But I think about our students and how lucky I got to have you as my teacher and to have great educators. I think in a lot of ways, from my fifth grade up, I was really lucky educationally. I know that that's not the situation for most kids and I want them to be able to feel a sense of connection and just like, oh, I can relate to you. For my students, I want them to feel like Mr. Trenado cares about us, loves us, we belong in his classroom. Whenever I have a hard time, I can come to him. I can confide in him. I want them to be strong, have an emotional, strong love, so that if they do have a teacher like my third grade teacher, that they can be receiving and be like, she's wrong, I'm right, and I'm going to get through this year.

Elena Aguilar ([01:08:33](#)):

Well, you know what I can't wait for is, in about 20 years, when some of these students that you're about to meet get in touch with you and tell you about the impact that you had on their lives. I can't wait for that.

Huber Trenado ([01:08:46](#)):

Thank you, that means a lot.

Elena Aguilar ([01:08:47](#)):

It's like the best thing ever. It's the best. I mean, you've already experienced it from your former students who are graduating from high school and all, but when they're 30 years old and when some of them become teachers, and they tell you, "I want to be the kind of teacher you were for me," there's just nothing like that. It's like, okay, I'm good.

Huber Trenado ([01:09:10](#)):

Yeah, but it really is that I think... I'm getting emotional, but it really is that. It's like you have these positive role models. My father was deported when I was a middle school student, I was your student when that happened, and I can still vividly remember when you cried with me and when you said, "I'm here for you, I'm here for your family if you need anything." Even just hearing those words just made me believe there's good in humanity and there's people who are going to help me and who do support me

and who loved me. I didn't know anybody who had gone to college that was Latino, and so coming into your classroom and then being like, oh, she's Latina and she's a college student, and she's so smart, and that's so cool, I want to be like that, really changed my mindset, my worldview. I noticed there are Latinos in colleges, it's just because I grew up here and I didn't see anybody or know anybody.

Huber Trenado ([01:10:01](#)):

I think for me it created a positive identity of myself. I was like, I'm proud of being Latino. I'm proud of being Mexican American. My people were here during the Civil Rights Movement and they fought along with African Americans to receive rights. It just makes me feel like we're also in an exciting time where I feel like a lot of coalitions are being formed and where I feel like I want to be more active about being anti-racist. I feel like I've done work like that in my classroom, but I feel like we need to do something drastic and acknowledge that our kids are dealing with a lot of racism and structural racism, and also make them think.

Huber Trenado ([01:10:47](#)):

I know that they're fourth graders, but in the future they will have the capacity to recognize systems of oppression and work to dismantle them, and work to advance socioeconomically. I think as a son of immigrants, it's been really good for me to have gone to college and see that this is possible. I know that the American Dream is a facade, but at the same time, I feel like I benefited from a great education in this country and I know that that's not the typical norm for every Black and brown kid.

Elena Aguilar ([01:11:21](#)):

I think you're going to have an amazing year and your students are going to have an incredible year too.

Huber Trenado ([01:11:27](#)):

Thank you.

Elena Aguilar ([01:11:28](#)):

We'll have to schedule a part two to this conversation and hear how things are going. But yeah, I'm just so excited for you. I think it's going to be an incredible way to close up this part of your life. So Huber, thank you so much for being a guest today.

Huber Trenado ([01:11:47](#)):

Thank you, Elena. I really appreciate it, thank you.

Elena Aguilar ([01:11:52](#)):

I hope you enjoyed that conversation and learned from it, and I hope you feel as inspired as I did by meeting Huber. Now, I told you that I've got a resource for you to go along with this show, and let me just tell you a little bit about that. So as I said, one thing I was really aware of in this conversation was the balance I was going for between being facilitative and directive. As you heard in a few spots, Huber really responded well when I was directive and I felt like he needed just a few drops of that kind of approach.

Elena Aguilar ([01:12:36](#)):

In the beginning, when I first mentioned the yardstick and home visits, I wasn't really sure if that would be the right thing to do. I worried that it would be me just kind of reverting back into being his seventh grade teacher and getting up and doing some direct instruction, but I could hear and I could sense that he was stuck. I thought that perhaps if I threw out a few ideas, it would get his wheels spinning, which it did.

Elena Aguilar ([01:13:05](#)):

So anyway, I don't know if you know this yet, but in the last few months I wrote another book, The Art of Coaching Workbook. It is a big, fat workbook with over a hundred activities and exercises to help you deepen your understanding of transformational coaching. I just submitted the manuscript to the publisher and it will be out in October. You can pre-order it now, see the show notes for the link for that. So anyway, okay, I've got an activity for you from the workbook on the facilitative stances and it's just a taste of what's in the workbook and a way for you to start honing your understanding of how to use them, how to deepen that understanding. So of course, if you haven't read The Art of Coaching, this may not make sense to you, so you're going to have to go back and start with that book and then do the workbook activity, and I hope it's helpful.

Elena Aguilar ([01:14:05](#)):

All right, that's it for now, friends. As always, I'm going to beg you, if you have not rated us on Apple Podcasts yet, please do so, please. It still really matters. Just hop over there, give us five stars, it'll take you less than 60 seconds. If you want to leave a review, that's always great too. This podcast is produced by Leslie Bickford and Stacy Goodman, and sound engineering is also done by Stacy Goodman. Take care, everybody.