

Elena Aguilar:

Hello, and welcome to the Bright Morning Podcast. I'm Elena Aguilar. Hi, friends. So, this is the final episode in our five-part series with Jessica. This is a real coaching conversation, again, the fifth one in a series. So, if you haven't heard the previous ones, you might want to go back.

Now, folks, before I jump into telling you about this episode, I do want to acknowledge that the audio in some of the previous episodes was not great, and I'm really sorry about that. I really want you to access the content and the learning. And for each of these coaching conversation episodes, we do have transcripts. So, at the very least, you can read the transcripts and listen to what you can.

The one that you'll hear today, the audio is much better. So, thank you for your feedback and your patience. Before I tell you about this episode, I do want to shout out some of our supporters. And today I want to thank Sasha E. from New York for their support of the podcast. If you want to become a podcast supporter, you'll find a link in the show notes.

I also want to thank someone who left a lovely podcast review on Apple Podcast. And the username there is Haley DHH. And the review was entitled Absolute Must Listen. Now, this review was a longer one, so I first thought I wouldn't read the whole thing, but then I realized that the detail provided in how Haley uses the podcast episodes are really wonderful tips for other listeners. So, I want to share their ideas with you as well.

So, Haley writes, "Ways I've used this podcast. Having devoured Aguilar's books, these episodes feel like a way to continue the conversation. This has helped me internalize my learning from books, making it a richer and more secure resource for me to draw from in my practice.

I have shared individual episodes with clients and colleagues when they relate to something we are working on, when we need to establish a common understanding, and or when I think the resource could support their growth, when helping a client get organized, drive to an offsite observation, or do other tasks involving our hands more than our minds, I've played episodes and then discussed what we've both heard.

When preparing for a situation where I can expect some discomfort or I may have to work hard to be intentional about my way of being, I often listen to an episode of this podcast. Doing so helps me center in my philosophy and purpose, tap into my coaching expertise, and reminds me that I am part of a community of educators invested in this work."

Haley, thank you so much for taking the time to share this review. And if anyone else out there hasn't left a review yet, please hop over to Apple Podcast and do so. Thank you. Okay folks, so this episode, I think it's really a great conversation. It was the fifth conversation in this series with Jessica. Jessica is a coach and a relatively new coach.

And in the first episodes I was really trying to use the phases of transformational coaching. If you're unfamiliar with those, check the show notes and there's a resource there for you. I write about the phases of transformational coaching in coaching for equity and the art of coaching workbook. So, I really wanted to guide Jessica into a reflection on these conversations to help her identify her growth, the changes she's made in her practice, and the conversation was authentic for me. It went where it would go if it was a real coaching conversation, which it was.

So, we got into talking about resistance and self-compassion, and I left Jessica, as she said, feeling kind of raw. I felt a little conflicted about the fact that 10 minutes before we ended, she was experiencing a lot of strong emotions. I was recording this on video, and so I could see her crying, and I thought, "We've only got 10 minutes left, what have I done?" But this was authentic. This is what happens in coaching. I'll let you listen to it and then I'll come back at the end and say just a couple more things. All right.

Well this is our final conversation in our series, and I am just really looking forward to step back and think about how you've explored these questions that you came in with around building trusting relationship and authentically being yourself as a coach, and then looking forward into how your exploration of those questions might lead you this year. So, first, just how are you, how has the last week been?

Jessica:

Oh, man. So, I'm in the building, finally. So, that's exciting. And getting to know people a bit deeper. I got to run a PD this morning, I got to do a small session with our teachers that are in their first three years this afternoon, and it just felt really good. There was some things where there was some pushback, but I experienced it really differently than I did last year. It has a purpose, it has a reason. They're in their second full week of school. There's stress that's starting to mount for teachers, and I feel I have a totally different perspective going into this year than last year.

Elena Aguilar:

Say more about that, a totally different perspective. That's big.

Jessica:

Well, the last time you were together, you asked me to think about the beliefs that were shifting, and I was doing this thing for a different PD where we were thinking about what it meant to be a good leader. So, I wrote down, "Someone that says sorry, ask questions, validate, affirms." Then, I realized that I think that validate and affirm should be the first thing that you do before you say sorry and before you ask questions.

Then, I was trying to think about that deeper. So, validate and affirm, the core value of that is love, where it's, say sorry, ask questions is more logic. And I think that I used to really lead with logic first and love second, or not at all. Now, I feel I want to center it and lead more with love.

Elena Aguilar:

Wow. Center love and lead more with love. That's huge. That sounds like a vision statement.

Jessica:

And along with that, I think I also realized that, through this experience, our beginning sessions, I felt I had a lot of pain that I was talking about. So, I was looking at that further, and I think I was self-centered in my interactions with people because my pain was centered, where now that guarded feeling is not how I'm going into relationships with people. So, I think I did some healing that allowed me to get there.

Elena Aguilar:

Say more about that. What's your awareness or insight about the healing that you did?

Jessica:

I think the experience that I had last year was really triggering for me. In my professional life there were some undealt-with feelings of inadequacy that I felt personally, and I didn't realize how much they were seeping into my professional life. And because I had points of pain, I was walking into spaces really self-centered and on guard, and not feeling I belong in that space, and I feel I can see that now.

And walking into spaces in a self-centered place was not effective for coaching because living in that logic, value, I really wanted to hold on to control and have things done my way. And I don't think that's fully resolved, the control piece, but when things didn't go the way I imagined them or there was pushback, that was like an attack on me and my personhood versus being a statement of where that person was at.

So, today I had a math teacher who is equity-minded and she likes talking about it, but sent me this long email about the PD that we had this morning, that her PLC just needs time because their basic needs aren't being met. And I think I would have looked at that as resistance and a rejection of me and what I was bringing to the table. So, instead, I met with her briefly and I said, "What can I take off your plate," with these new staff members that she has on her team so that we can access the learning.

Also, I told the staff, "This needs to be done by Friday," but with her and that team, I said, "Hey, we're not meeting until October 5th." So, the parameters changed because I could be more loving and affirming and validating to, "Wow, that sounds really hard right now," versus taking it as a personal slight.

Elena Aguilar:

That's what I really hear, you didn't experience it personally. So, the response wasn't to try to control. You were available to listen and problem-solve together and be responsive and demonstrate kindness and compassion.

Jessica:

Within that though, I think, realizing I need to come back to my core, and I really thought about the warm demander stance, and that's who I would like to be as a coach. With that math teacher, I said, "Hey, we're meeting October 5th. How can I help support you to have this done by then?" So, the learning keeps moving forward, but how we do it can change, and being more flexible and creative to get there. And I think, coming back to my core of wanting to be a warm demander, that was really helpful to think that's an example of that in action.

Elena Aguilar:

I hope you are journaling or capturing some of these phrases and ideas because they will come together, and again, give yourself some time to create that manifesto or the vision statement, but pulling together something that can remind you of who you want to be, especially when things get a little harder, when people get more tired or cranky or you do, having something that you can re-look at, be reminded of your higher aspirations will be really helpful.

So, I want to push you a bit to identify the things that you've already done, the actions you've taken so far this year to build trusting relationships. So, I want to see if you can name five or 10 or 15 things that you've done.

Jessica:

Asking about people's families, asking them my big dream questions of who they want to be, what would it look like in a perfect world? So, dreaming alongside people. Appreciating contributions, uplifting and amplifying interesting thoughts that teachers have brought forward, spending time together, doing quick fixes for small things that are helpful, but also not trying to fix complex problems with a gloss-over, saying, "Sorry" when I've misstepped, checking back in and repairing, not taking things personally or being reactionary, demonstrating consistency. I think that's what I've got right now.

Elena Aguilar:

That's a lot. How does it feel to acknowledge all of those things?

Jessica:

It feels good, but I want to get better at dismissing some of the good.

Elena Aguilar:

That's normal. We do that. And it's also partly what can contribute to making you really strive for excellence or refine your practice. I think I would add some things to that list though. I think all the reflection you've done on yourself and your identity experiences, your experiences as a child, the intersection of identities, all that reflection as well as the healing that you've done, that contributes to building trusting relationships.

The ability to make a distinction between what someone else is coming in with and what's going on with them and your own stuff. The refraining from making assumptions, you said not taking things personally, all of those things. That's why, again, I talk about this so often, this idea that a transformational coach, we have to start with ourselves.

We have to come back to ourselves, we have to attend to our unresolved experiences or emotions, we have to come back to our identity experiences. And you've been doing that not only with your childhood experiences as a student who was not served, but also your experiences last year, and really being able to make a distinction.

And again, sometimes I think we talk about healing and in it's abstract, and it's, "What is healing?" But you're doing it. And these are the things you're reflecting and making these distinctions and being able to see what's possible now. So, I would just add all of those things. Those contribute to building trusting relationships.

Jessica:

I didn't realize how much my body told me, and I think I realized when I don't get choked up talking about something, that means that I'm healed. So, that's a feeling that's like, "Oh, I can talk about that now," and it doesn't have the same reverberation in my voice that it once did.

Elena Aguilar:

Yeah, that's a great indicator. So, that's also really valuable insight for you to have about yourself, to know, okay, so this means there has been some healing. It could come back and sting again. You could experience that swelling of emotion in your throat, but right now it's not present. When you think about you want to get better at it, let's explore that. What are the opportunities for improvements, what would you like to see yourself doing or not doing?

Jessica:

I'd like to see myself exploring with people rather than fixing, and I'd like to see myself starting sentences with validation and affirmation. So, there's two situations today. There was a staff meeting, there was something else that was contrary, and I didn't start with validation of that person's lived experience, but then I got an email, and I thought about it, and I could write back with validation. It's not muscle memory yet, and I want to have that as muscle memory as my stance.

Elena Aguilar:

Okay, so pause there. Let's talk about a scaffold. So, now that you have that awareness, when someone says something... Did you say "contrary"?

Jessica:

Yeah, in disagreement.

Elena Aguilar:

So, when someone says something like that, what are the cues that you might be aware of in your body that tell you that, basically, what you need to do is say, "Let me give that some thought," and not respond right away? That's the scaffold. The scaffold is, "Let me give that some thought and I'll get back to you." It gives you a break. But what you need to be able to identify are the cues. And for you, I'm going to guess that there'll be physical ones that'll be apparent, that will alert you to, this is one of those moments.

Because what's happening is, essentially, you're feeling attacked. That's the thing. You feel defensive, you feel attacked, and so you might say something back that might be the logical, you might respond to the surface words rather than the underlying. So, you need to figure out how do you give yourself a little pause so you can process so manage the fear that's coming up for you. So, just hearing that, does anything come to mind in terms of those physical cues that might be arising for you to notice?

Jessica:

Oh, it's tightening of body and a zing with the tightening?

Elena Aguilar:

Yeah, that's what we do when we feel defensive, is protective.

Jessica:

And I think the fear is loss of control of a situation.

Elena Aguilar:

What other fears might be arising in those moments?

Jessica:

Well, I can only think about the example this morning, and this is upon reflection, but it was the fear of, "Oh, man, I don't want a kid to be in that space if that person is upholding oppressive thoughts." So, protection.

Elena Aguilar:

That can be a part of it. I wonder about the fear of not being taken seriously, not being able to influence the situation, not being respected, not being seen. It's possible that there's some activation of the hurts from childhood. So, feeling protective and defensive of children is also an echo of your experience and not feeling safe as a child in school. There's probably a bunch of things that come up, and you might just see, if you start noticing trends in the thoughts, you'll have physical sensations arise, you'll have thoughts arise.

The thoughts might be, "Kids aren't going to be safe in that classroom," or the thoughts might be, "Is this person shutting down to me and I'm not going to be able to influence them?" So, just seeing if you see a pattern. Again, these are just cues. It's, every time you notice one of those, you can feel grateful because you've noticed the cue that says, "Jessica, get into protective defensive mode."

And when you notice that, you can say to yourself and to the other person or people, "Let me give that some thought. I'll get back to you," and then it gives you that break so you can process.

Jessica:

I think, generally speaking, the "Let me give that some thought and I'll get back to you," I see that fitting, but I'm stuck on this situation because the statement is, "That won't work." So, I think the fear of respect or the fear I'm not being taken seriously, or this isn't valued from that situation specifically.

Elena Aguilar:

What thoughts do you have now reflecting back on that about what you could have said in the moment?

Jessica:

Something along the lines of, "I see how that could be the stance that we have right now. I wonder a world that could be imagined in a different way." So, taking a shutdown and just opening a door.

Elena Aguilar:

So, when someone says, "That won't work," they're expressing fear. Resistance is usually a mask for fear, sometimes for grief, sadness, anger. So, when someone expresses fear, this is a perfect moment for you to lead with that affirmation and validation. And again, I'm not sure if you were one-on-one with this person or in a group. So, there's a bit of a difference between how I might respond.

Jessica:

It was in a group setting.

Elena Aguilar:

There's some different dynamics when you're in a group, but saying something or asking something that communicates your willingness to understand more can help to soften that resistance, because you're not saying, "I'm gonna show you how you're wrong and there's something that you're not seeing," and it can't happen. Saying something like, "I'd really like to understand what you're thinking, what you're feeling. Would you be willing to share that with me," or, "Tell me more about how that seems true right now for you."

This is taking a coaching stance, and you can watch people walk themselves out of their resistance when you give them some space to explore it. So, you don't have to try to break down their defenses, you don't have to try to make them stop being resistant. In fact, when you accept them for being resistant, which is just being afraid, it softens it because they're going to expect someone whom they perceive as having more power to push back.

So, when someone says something like, "That's not gonna work for me," saying something like, "Tell me more. I wanna understand," so that they don't feel, "Oh, you're just gonna try to convince me or change me or tell me I'm wrong or tell me I have to do it." It softens them and it builds relationship.

Jessica:

The "accepting resistance", that resonates with me a lot. I'm making a different connection. So, my mom had breast cancer and she didn't really identify with the whole fighting breast cancer. She said she wanted to walk through it. And I feel that's accepting resistance.

Elena Aguilar:

Yeah. The dominant mental model in our society, really in our world is one of fighting, challenging, pushing, force, convincing, arguing. So, what happens if we soften, accept, explore, partner? Again, what I'm saying is, I can sense the feeling in my body. I know what it feels like to be in conversation with someone where it's arguing, where you're trying to convince them of your ideas. I know what that feels physically. And I know what it feels like to be in a conversation where you are exploring things together and open.

And I'm naming that because again, you're going to be able to tap into your body a lot for cues about how you're showing up and who you're being. I'm curious about the other question that you had around being authentically yourself as a coach, and I'm curious what learnings you've had about that.

Jessica:

I just want to be humble. I feel that's just the word that I keep coming back to. And I feel to be humble is to be honest. And I just want to be honest in everything that I do.

Elena Aguilar:

So, I'm hearing, again, elements of what is your vision for yourself, for who you want to be, for what's going to guide you. And the more you can identify that, the more empowered you'll be because those are things that are within your sphere of control. And the more you can name that, who you want to be, how you want to show up, the more agency you'll be tapping into. I want you to imagine that it's the end of this school year. What would be the evidence that you might be able to point to that you were successful in building relationships?

Jessica:

I'm thinking large to small. So, having a professional development plan that was not trying to do too much, that was really focused on one thing, like curriculum development is coming to mind. Then, having done coaching cycles with our Spanish department and whoever else would want to do the same work that we're doing, and then having three to seven people that I've done individual coaching cycles with. Because last year I think I had a lot of folks that I met with, but I felt really good about one person, and so I want to hit that three to seven mark.

Elena Aguilar:

So, I'm going to encourage you to keep thinking about this question, what would be the evidence that you were successful in building relationships, and encourage you to get as granular as possible. So, I would say, just completing a certain number of coaching cycles, I'm not sure what would be the evidence of relationship building there. Maybe you completed a cycle, but what's the evidence of the relationships being built?

So, I want to push you to keep thinking about that. And I'm suggesting that because I want you to feel successful this year, and you need to define what it will look like, sound like, feel like, to be successful.

Jessica:

Yeah. I think the only thing that pops into mind is that people want to do it, and so that's where I think the three to seven number, because I know that I had one person who wanted to last year, but now I'm thinking about what I want it to look like. So, it's the finding value, the expression that it changed their practice or help them move forward.

Elena Aguilar:

Think of someone who you trust, a colleague, a supervisor. How might they know that you trust them?

Jessica:

I reach out, I express gratitude. There's evidence in what I'm producing that it's been impacted by our shared thinking or shared process.

Elena Aguilar:

So, maybe there might be another way to think about what the elements of evidence are. I know it's a challenging question. I think about some of the things that my coaches or my clients have told me that indicate that there's trust. And some of those might be things like, when I've worked with White educators who are exploring racial equity and they'll say things like, "I've been so ashamed of this for years and I haven't had anybody to talk through what came up in that situation because I've just been so ashamed, and I feel like I can talk about this with you, and you're helping me figure it out," to me that's an indicator of trust.

Things like when a client has to cancel a session and they ask, "Do you have any other times this week when we can meet? I really don't want to skip this week." To me, that's an indicator that there's some trust. It's hard to draw a direct line, but I would really just encourage you because this is your question that you wanted to explore, at least in the beginning of the year.

Or things like whether it's direct feedback or to others, but saying things like, "You were really helpful in the beginning of the year," or, "I felt like you really took time to talk to me or listen," or people recommending you as a coach to others, "Oh, yeah. It was really great working with Jessica. You should give it a try." Just thinking through so that when evidence does appear, you'll recognize it also.

Let's talk a bit about just what you feel you are taking away as a coach from these conversations, perhaps more broadly than the two questions that you came in with, just an opportunity to reflect more broadly, anything you're taking away?

Jessica:

Quite literally what we just talked about, evidence of, that's really hard for me to identify, because the things that you said feels self-congratulatory, and that's hard to tap into for me. When you just said, "I really appreciated the support that you gave," I've heard that quite a bit so far. It's, "Oh, that's evidence of something," but I just wouldn't have thought of that as evidence.

Elena Aguilar:

It's appreciation. And we don't know if it's evidence of you building a trusting relationship. That's why I say it's a hard one to draw a direct correlate to, aside from when people say things like, "I really trust you." And they will say that as well. Or they'll say, "I feel like there's not a whole lot of people here I can trust. I can really trust you," that's more obvious. But I'm wondering, just more broadly, how open you

are to appreciation. And that self-congratulatory statement makes me wonder just how you take in appreciation. Is it hard? Do you brush it off?

Jessica:

Yeah, dismissively.

Elena Aguilar:

Well, since this is our last session together, and I should demonstrate being confrontational, I'll say, "That's a problem, Jessica." This is after you build a little trust with someone you could say, "That's a problem." Yeah, it is a problem. It's something to explore. It's really something to dig deep into because that's about worthiness, and it's a really powerful area to develop in, to be able to accept appreciation that's connected to self-compassion. And if you can't love yourself, you actually can't love anybody. So, it's hypocritical to think that you can go and love others when you can't accept appreciation and receive that love. These are opening up areas for you to reflect on.

Jessica:

Yeah.

Elena Aguilar:

What's coming up?

Jessica:

Just that that's a hard truth, that it's hypocritical to think that you can love others and not love yourself. And just, to what I was talking about at the beginning, it's easy to lead from a place of logic if you don't love and appreciate yourself because you can live in your head so much. It's not an all or nothing, right? It's not that I don't love myself, but it's uncovering what that could be. I think I have appreciation for myself that I do love myself now in a way that I never have before. And I think that's why I'm thinking about love so much more.

Elena Aguilar:

Yeah. All of this is a process. So, sometimes we make tremendous growth in one area, and our mind or our words or our body is still catching up and getting into alignment with the updated operating system, something like that. So, it's even more an opportunity to be kind to ourselves. It's, "Yeah, I'm working on this, and I've made tremendous growth, and here's a little area for me to keep working on."

So, for you it might be really taking in the appreciation. So often when people receive appreciation, they'll say something like, "Oh, it was nothing," or, "Oh. Well, you really helped me too," something like that. It's the dismissive. And simply learning to hear it and say, "Thank you," and that's it.

Jessica:

I'm thinking about the circles, the beliefs, the being, and I feel the behavior that is dismissive, and that's what we talked about before where it doesn't serve me anymore. So, it's not aligning with how I feel on the inside. It's like stepping into this new job. There's been a lot of appreciation thrown my way, and it's that dismissive quality is a hindrance to me feeling I belong.

Elena Aguilar:

Wow.

Jessica:

Because I think the door is open, but I have to be willing to walk through it.

Elena Aguilar:

That's a powerful connection.

Jessica:

So, the sense of belonging, it's wanting to give that power to somebody else to make that decision rather than making the decision that I belong there.

Elena Aguilar:

Will you say that again even more affirmatively, just with your tone of voice?

Jessica:

I want to belong in this space, I want to belong with those people. I want to belong with the ideals. I want to be at a workplace that I can feel at home. And I think that can be this community that I've walked into.

Elena Aguilar:

Now tune into how your body feels making those statements, or say it again if you need to so you can tune into it.

Jessica:

I felt small to say that I want to belong, the first time. And it was making a conscious choice to feel bigger while saying it the second time. And it was uncomfortable, but it was true.

Elena Aguilar:

Yeah. And I really heard that the first time you said that in your tone of voice, the wavering, the threadiness of the words. But I hear that's the discrepancy between our way of being, our beliefs, our behavior. They're not aligned yet. And that's why I asked you to say it again with more conviction. And even again, because I'm watching you on video, your physical expression, more expansiveness, more body involved in sharing what you shared after the second time.

Jessica:

Yeah, because it was saying it inside to myself instead of saying it outward.

Elena Aguilar:

So, if you could look into the future and see that this is a community in which you will be deeply accepted, in which you will belong, a community where you will be able to build trusting relationships, this is a fact, we can see in the future, we can see this is going to happen, what would that mean about what you would do when you go to school tomorrow or Friday or next week?

Jessica:

I think it would be to be less uptight and to just talk to people like human beings, not with an agenda and not with a time constraint, I think, taking time constraints or to do this out of time, talking with people.

Elena Aguilar:

And you know how to do that, and so it's just removing the fear.

Jessica:

Also, just allowing myself to be silly.

Elena Aguilar:

And you know what, if people don't accept you, if you are silly, if you are just yourself and you are taking that time to connect with people and they don't accept you, then maybe that's not where you want to be. So, either way, nothing bad can happen. And the potential for it being a place where you really feel a sense of belonging, connection, that's there.

So, I want you to imagine going to school tomorrow, and you probably have some idea of what your day will be like in your schedule, and I just want you to see if you can identify, in your imagination, a few points tomorrow where you might be able to connect with someone, you might be able to be silly, you might be able to just be with them as a human and not have an agenda or a checklist or things that you need to talk about, and then let me know when you've thought of a few opportunities for tomorrow.

Jessica:

Yeah, definitely at lunchtime. We have a communal desk area, and I just think about whatever work I have to do just sitting in that space doing it, and adding to the conversation. So, not steering, but just adding into what is naturally occurring, because I think the control and the fear has me oftentimes trying to steer places that I'm in rather than just joining.

Elena Aguilar:

Do you feel safe at school?

Jessica:

I think I'm starting to. And I think that the jump for me is the number of people. I have a very small circle in my personal life. I was thinking about that today just in terms of going into a space being a leader with an instructional coach title, that means having to build relationships with a lot of people, and that is not a comfort zone at all.

Elena Aguilar:

It's a lot. Yeah. A new context, a lot of new people, navigating all kinds of things, it is a lot too.

Jessica:

It's just anxiety provoking. And by nature, I'm an introvert, even though I don't think that I present that way.

Elena Aguilar:

So, it makes come back to your question about authenticity and being yourself and what are the conditions in which you can be yourself and be authentic. Maybe being in the lunch room with lots of people isn't the place where you will feel most comfortable, energized, authentic. Maybe it'll be more in one-on-one interactions or small groups. So, again, this is an opportunity for kindness towards yourself as you figure this out.

Jessica:

What's funny, I think it's my behavior in large groups of people. So, it's being at the lunch table or being in this communal space, it's not feeling I have to fill it, that I can just exist in it. And I think that, I'm recognizing, makes me feel softer and safer, and it feels more truthful to who I am.

Elena Aguilar:

Yeah. So, honoring yourself-

Jessica:

Yeah.

Elena Aguilar:

... in those spaces. It's so interesting, because we're about to have to end our conversation, and this feels so authentic to a real coaching situation in which five sessions is not enough. We're just opening up more and more and more, we're opening up other doors and making connections, and there's so much more to explore. And I've heard you reflect so much on your behaviors and your beliefs and your ways of being and make changes and take new actions.

And the phases of transformational coaching are a cycle. So, we go around and around, and I feel, here we are back, actually, in phase one, two, because we're unraveling another layer. So, this feels like this is the intention in this podcast series was to show, what does real coaching sound like over a number of conversations? And I feel this is... Yeah, we're going to have to end, but it feels we're ending right at the beginning again.

Jessica:

And it's funny because emotionally, going through this experience, I felt I was really raw at the beginning, and then I reached this place where I'm, "Oh, I'm feeling great about these actions that I'm taking, and I feel really strong." Now, on this one, it's, "Wow, I feel really raw again," and I was not expecting that.

Elena Aguilar:

Yeah. Part of me would have liked to leave you with feeling, "Okay, that was all nice and tidy and neat and I can come away with my three takeaways," but that's not, to me, what transformational coaching is. There was an opportunity, and that's where I said, "I'm gonna take a confrontational stance now and kind of push deeper and say, 'Look at this as well, and open this up as well, and you're gonna have to look at this.'"

And I know that you have a coach and I know you have a therapist, I know you're super reflective, and I know that you can take this and keep exploring it. On that note, I just want to leave you with one final

area that you might want to explore that I think might be really deeply connected to all of this, which is about how you trust yourself.

Building trusting relationships with others has a great deal to do with our relationship when it comes to trust with ourself. Do we trust ourselves? Do you trust yourself? How do you know if you're trusting yourself? What's the evidence of trust in yourself? So, if we were to continue working together, that would be something else I would explore with you is, what is it to trust yourself?

Jessica:

Yeah, I definitely want to think about the evidence of.

Elena Aguilar:

Yeah, there's a lot more to think about. And you've got the podcast episodes to listen to-

Jessica:

Yep.

Elena Aguilar:

... and go back through. So, Jessica, really, just thank you so much for being our volunteer for this series and sharing so much of your journey with all of our listeners. It's really a gift for all of us.

Jessica:

Thank you so much. I feel I've learned a ton and I've changed a ton, and I just want to keep going. Thank you so much.

Elena Aguilar:

All right, folks, I hope that conversation was meaningful, interesting, useful, helpful. Jessica and I chatted just a bit after I stopped recording, and again, that felt like a real conversation. That's what my real coaching conversations sound like. We go deeper. I saw an opportunity to push her, as I said, to be confrontational, and I'm glad I did. I trust that she can continue exploring and that that will be helpful to her.

Friends, I want to just remind you, if you haven't already signed up for my Weekly Wisdom Newsletter, please be sure to do so. You'll find the link in the show notes, and that way you'll hear about new resources, free webinars, you'll get to hear from me a bit each week, so check that out. And thank you so much for listening to this podcast. I also want to thank Leslie Bickford, who is the podcast producer, and Stacy Goodman, who is the sound engineer. Take care, everyone. Be well.