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Betsy Kindall ([00:08](#)):

I'm Betsy Kindall.

Nicole Fairchild ([00:10](#)):

I'm Nicole Fairchild.

Stacy Moore ([00:11](#)):

And I'm Stacy Moore.

Nicole Fairchild ([00:12](#)):

And this is Arkansas Aware, a project to advance wellness and resiliency in education.

Betsy Kindall ([00:21](#)):

Welcome back to another podcast, everybody. Today, it's Nicole and I, and we're digging in deeper with Brene Brown's Atlas of the Heart. It's a beautiful, beautiful book. So if you have a chance to snatch one up, you should definitely do that. We're kind of jumping around based on some topics that have been kind of asked of us lately, or they've come bubbled up to the surface that we think would be helpful for you in the classroom, or for you as a parent, or for you just as a person navigating this crazy world sometimes. One of the trainings that we do on a regular basis is, and we get asked a lot about, and there's actually federal funding around adverse childhood experiences, and the adverse childhood experience study. And I think if you're listening to our podcast, you probably more than likely know about ACEs and adverse childhood experiences at this point in time.

Betsy Kindall ([01:11](#)):

But one of the things that we learned really early on is that when we do the training around adverse childhood experiences, we really have to have a caboose on the end of that training that is somewhat hopeful, because the training, while it's even with the brain research and the science around adverse childhood experiences, and what we've learned, and how insightful it is to learn those things about ourselves, it's kind of a dreary message at times, dreary information. Not dreary, I don't think that's the right word, but it's kind of like a hopeless situation. And if I were a teacher now in the classroom and I heard that, I would think, gosh, that's a lot. But so what? Now that I know this, now what? And so, when we try to end that, we always try to end with some sort of message around hope and things that you can do to reach those particular students that we're talking about, that may have a high ACE score. But there's a part of the Atlas of the Heart book that is particularly around hope, hopelessness, and despair that I think really fits to the conversation here.

Nicole Fairchild ([02:24](#)):

Yeah, so she's talking here about a researcher, CR Snyder, who has the trilogy of goals, pathways, and agencies. So what they say is that when we experience hope, we have three things going. We have the ability to set realistic goals, like I know where I want to go. We have the ability to figure out how to achieve those goals, and stay flexible, and be able to develop and go to different pathways if needed. You can stay persistent. You can tolerate disappointment. You can keep trying, and then agency, like I can do this, believing in ourselves.

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Betsy Kindall ([03:00](#)):

I know, and I love that part. I loved how she pinpointed those things, because, have you ever been in a conversation with somebody and it's more of a rant? Like they're coming to you talking, but it's more of a rant? And I know this about myself. I'm kind of a fixer person, and I just want to fix. I've learned over life, there's things that simply can't be fixed. But in doing this, I always try to wrap it back around to, and you guys make fun of me because you're like, oh, there's Betsy's clap. We're going to take action.

Betsy Kindall ([03:29](#)):

And I am an action-taking type of person, but I've learned that I think integrating these things into solutions offers that level of hope. When you're offering somebody a solution, okay, I'm really sad that you feel that way, but what are some things that we can do to move forward? And that's goals, able to figure out ways to achieve those goals. Step by step, what does that look like? And then first and almost foremost, do you believe that you can actually do it? And I love the fact that she just broke down something that was so simple, but she broke it down further into really a step by step guide on how to lift your spirits, to be honest.

Nicole Fairchild ([04:15](#)):

It reminds me of The Upside of Stress.

Betsy Kindall ([04:18](#)):

Yes, exactly. No matter how bad, no matter what kind of horrible situation it is, there is always hope. And the quote in here says, "We need hope like we need air," because that is the truth. I just love it, because when you're out there, and every single person that's listening has had some sort of really bad situation. And you think, what in the world am I going to do? And it makes me really sad, and I feel hopeless, and I feel despair, exactly. I love the steps, because it would be like, okay, what can I do to pull myself up? Or what is the solution? And she gives you a step by step guide on, no matter what, how to get there, and I love that. It's like a recipe for hope.

Nicole Fairchild ([05:04](#)):

Yeah, it does remind me of the book by Kelly McGonigal, The Upside of Stress, and we did a podcast on it. So if you want to go through the archives, you can find it, but in there, what they were talking about is any stressful situation can be not just tolerated effectively, but produce even better outcomes, when essentially these same things are going on.

Betsy Kindall ([05:25](#)):

Are happening. Even just the question, we've had this conversation over and over and over, and if you are a long-time listener to our podcasts, you've heard me say this before. But my kids, and I know you do this, no matter what the situation is, I ask my kids, what have you learned? Many times, you learn more in the valleys than you do the mountaintops. I think that's some meme out there or something, because that is the truth. And I think as a parent and as a teacher, sometimes that is the hardest thing to do, is to step back and let our kids or our students not fail necessarily, but struggle. But it's in those struggles where they learn the most. They learn about resiliency. They learn about hope. They learn about how to develop skills that will last them a lifetime.

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Nicole Fairchild ([06:17](#)):

Well, and here's what I'm thinking about when I look at this. I think about the kids who are struggling the most in the classroom, whether they're struggling behaviorally, or academically, or both. When we look at that student, I think it would be worthwhile for us to ask ourselves, does that student have the ability to set realistic goals for themselves? Are they a perfectionist, and their standards are entirely too high, and they give up because they can't meet their own standards? Or do they feel like the goals everybody else is setting for them are unrealistic? Are they missing skills? Are there developmental gaps? Are the goals realistic? Whether they're being set for them or with them, are the goals even realistic? I think we need to ask that question. And then I think we need to ask the question, if the student doesn't know how to develop alternative pathways to get there, do we?

Betsy Kindall ([07:13](#)):

Yeah.

Nicole Fairchild ([07:14](#)):

And how good are we coming up with pathways that are really beneficial to the student? That makes me think of RTI.

Betsy Kindall ([07:21](#)):

Yep. And then the very last thing too is, do we have agency? Do we believe in ourselves? And this is what makes me think, in a classroom, so many times, this is what I believe. Students will rise to the expectations you set for them. If you believe in them, that's a good first successful step. If you believe they're not going to be able to do it, more than likely they won't.

Nicole Fairchild ([07:47](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. And I think the more your belief in them matters to them, that's based on your relationship with them, how much they like you and you like them.

Betsy Kindall ([07:56](#)):

Yes.

Nicole Fairchild ([07:57](#)):

Yeah, that really plays into that [inaudible 00:07:58].

Betsy Kindall ([07:58](#)):

Absolutely. I just feel like in a realistic way, those expectations need to be high, but realistic. Because I feel like if you're a great teacher, and you have a good relationship with them, they will reach for the sky for you because of that relationship.

Nicole Fairchild ([08:17](#)):

And when we're talking about that, you can even just sense that hope is in the air in that kind of environment.

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Betsy Kindall ([08:24](#)):

Yes, that's exactly right.

Nicole Fairchild ([08:25](#)):

Hope is in the air. But when you think about these situations where they've got young people who their behavior is off the charts and nobody knows what to do with them, my question would be, what kind of hope are we looking at here? And what kind of hope can we have on that student's behalf? And does everybody feel hopeless and despairing about the situation? If so, can we come back to these questions, and can they help us to find a new way to move forward?

Nicole Fairchild ([08:52](#)):

And I think if Stacy were here, and Stacy, you can correct me later, but I think if Stacy were here, she would say, this is why we need to do this as teams. This is why we need to have several people around the table talking, because if I'm out, maybe you have a little bit more. Maybe your perspective can help me come up with an alternative pathway that I haven't thought about before, and that if we lay all this responsibility on one person to figure out how to have hope, and do all the things for the student, then that's not maybe realistic. That may not be a realistic goal.

Betsy Kindall ([09:27](#)):

Absolutely.

Nicole Fairchild ([09:27](#)):

We need teams to be able to help support these students that need more of our time and more of our attention. I

Betsy Kindall ([09:33](#)):

I absolutely agree. And I think, going back to what we said earlier about the struggle, one of the quotes in here says that "hope is a function of struggle. We develop hope not during the easy and comfortable times, but through adversity and discomfort." And again, I think that we have to find a way to manage that, to allow a little bit of struggle to happen where the most valuable lessons can be learned. That makes sense, and I think that is the hardest part, always.

Nicole Fairchild ([10:07](#)):

Yeah. And then further on, she introduces Martin Seligman's research on resilience, and what many people call his three P's, personalization, permanence, and pervasiveness. And so, this portion here also made me think about student motivation. So the three P's are basically, these would be kind of the quick definitions. Personalization is believing that we are the problem, and we don't think about maybe larger issues or context. We just think I'm the problem in this situation. Permanence is that it's never going to go away. It's going to feel just like this forever. Tomorrow's not going to be any different. And then, pervasiveness is believing that this one thing has tainted and ruined everything. The pervasiveness, Betsy, actually reminds me of one of the Finding Focus videos where they showed that it's raining, and then they zoom out, way out where you can see that the cloud is really only dropping rain on one portion of the world, not the entire world.

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Nicole Fairchild ([11:12](#)):

And so, pervasiveness is feeling like you're under that rain cloud, and it's never going to move. So the perspectives we need to zoom out and say, this is not pervasive. This is not my whole world. The perspective to be able to say, this feeling will ebb and flow. It's not going to feel like this forever. The perspective to be able to say, there are other issues. This isn't just me. Those things are required for resilience, and they have a big part to play in hope, and I think, Betsy, student motivation.

Betsy Kindall ([11:44](#)):

Oh, yeah.

Nicole Fairchild ([11:46](#)):

We hear all the time, how do we motivate these kids? And my question is, what is going on under the surface? I wonder if one of these three P's is holding that kiddo back. Do they believe that tomorrow won't be any different?

Betsy Kindall ([12:02](#)):

Yeah.

Nicole Fairchild ([12:02](#)):

Do they believe that there's something flawed about them that's never going to change, and they're just a screw-up? Do they believe that this is pervasive, and this touches every area of their life? And so, kids are not just unmotivated, quote unquote, for no dadgum reason at all. There is a reason why, and it may be different for every student. But I think we got to figure that out so we can tap into the hope.

Betsy Kindall ([12:29](#)):

Oh, I agree. Tap into the hope, and not just tap into the hope, but nurture and grow it. My friend, Sharia, she used my computer here. It's been a while back, and she must have been having a bad day. I was in Little Rock for work, and she was here. And she said, can I use your office, because she had a Zoom or whatever. And I have this little thing sticking, and I think another coworker had given us this little thing that has questions on it. And it was sitting there, and she took a picture and she sent it to me. And she's like, I really needed that. And the questions are, it's basically about putting things in perspective, and bringing hope, and growing that hope. And the question is, remind yourself, will this issue be a big deal in five minutes, five hours, five days, five months, or five years?

Betsy Kindall ([13:26](#)):

And what's the lessons that you can learn? And all the things around hope that we're talking about, those were the questions. And I leave it stuck right there, because at least one time during the day I'm like, oh my gosh, what am I going to do about this? And so, it's a daily reminder that, put it in perspective, exactly what you said. Is it just raining over my head? And in five minutes, is it going to matter? In five days, is it going to matter, really? Is it really going to matter? And finally, what can I learn from this? What would I do different? And all of those things, while they seem so simple, they bring those sprinkles of hope that will absolutely change the way you move forward.

Nicole Fairchild ([14:15](#)):

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And they are important skills to learn, and you can imagine that when kids have the ability to do those things, put things in perspective in a large way, you can imagine that they're more gritty. And they're more willing to persevere, and try again, and have what we might call a growth mindset, because hope underlies that.

Betsy Kindall ([14:35](#)):

That's right. It is the foundational girder, so to speak.

Nicole Fairchild ([14:38](#)):

Yeah, it's the water that those roots are sucking into. That is a part of it, and so when we have kids that are unmotivated, kids that are lacking hope in some way, man, let's use some of these ideas. Let's use some of these things that we've talked about in this podcast today. So, getting perspective, asking those questions, and then also analyzing, taking a look at, are the goals realistic? We need to have realistic goals. We need to have alternative pathways with flexibility. Okay, kiddo, if this isn't working, let's try this. You don't like the red crayon? Let's try the blue crayon. Can we be flexible? Can we teach them to be flexible? What kinds of things can we do there to continue to give them more agency, a feeling like, I can do this?

Betsy Kindall ([15:28](#)):

I can do anything.

Nicole Fairchild ([15:29](#)):

I've got people on my side. I can do this. I'm not a mess-up.

Betsy Kindall ([15:33](#)):

That's exactly right, and if you're out there listening right now, whether you're a teacher, an administrator, a school counselor, a nurse, doesn't matter, if you go back into one of your classrooms, or you interact with a student, and you have a success story around hope, we would like to hear it.

Nicole Fairchild ([15:51](#)):

Oh, yeah, we would.

Betsy Kindall ([15:52](#)):

So reach out to us. We would like to share it on our podcast. We would love to hear from you, your feedback, and in the meantime, if you have a chance to pick up Brene's the Atlas of the Heart, go do it.

Nicole Fairchild ([16:06](#)):

Yeah, it's a pretty book. We love you guys out there. See you next time.