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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.

Betsy Kindall ([00:13](#)):

And this is Arkansas A.W.A.R.E., a project to advance wellness and resiliency in education.

Nicole Fairchild ([00:20](#)):

Hey. Welcome back everybody to the Arkansas A.W.A.R.E. Podcast. I'm here with my friends, Betsy and Stacy, and we are talking about school climate. So last week, we talked a little bit about doing a walkthrough in your school as somebody that you're not, maybe a parent or an administrator or whatever. And as we were talking it through, I was remembering a story that I used to tell in therapy all the time. So story time.

Podcast co-hosts ([00:49](#)):

Story time.

Nicole Fairchild ([00:49](#)):

Welcome to story time with Nicole. So in heaven, there's this giant banquet table. This giant banquet table, full of all-

Betsy Kindall ([01:00](#)):

Wait, just one second. This is why she's so good at stories, because for all of you listeners out there-

Stacy Moore ([01:04](#)):

You can't see her.

Betsy Kindall ([01:04](#)):

... you cannot see the dramatic effects that come with the story. Okay, now go right ahead. Sorry.

Nicole Fairchild ([01:08](#)):

I'm so sorry.

Betsy Kindall ([01:09](#)):

In heaven.

Nicole Fairchild ([01:10](#)):

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Yeah, I'm expanding my arms.

Betsy Kindall ([01:12](#)):

Don't apologize. We love it.

Stacy Moore ([01:13](#)):

People who have seen you in person can visualize it.

Betsy Kindall ([01:15](#)):

Yes, exactly.

Nicole Fairchild ([01:18](#)):

... your favorite foods. What's your favorite food? What would be on that table for you, if you were in front of it, Betsy? Mouthwatering-

Betsy Kindall ([01:24](#)):

Blueberry scones-

Nicole Fairchild ([01:25](#)):

... glistening, blueberry scones.

Betsy Kindall ([01:26](#)):

... since I bought them today.

Nicole Fairchild ([01:27](#)):

... with cinnamon. Oh, they were delightful. And Stacy?

Stacy Moore ([01:30](#)):

Pizza, cheese dip. I'm like, "Let's go bad, if we can have anything."

Nicole Fairchild ([01:35](#)):

It's heaven.

Betsy Kindall ([01:35](#)):

I'm with you. Chips and salsa, cheese dip.

Nicole Fairchild ([01:37](#)):

Oh.

Stacy Moore ([01:38](#)):

Oh, yum.

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Nicole Fairchild ([01:38](#)):

Yeah.

Betsy Kindall ([01:38](#)):

Steak tacos.

Stacy Moore ([01:39](#)):

Glistening turkeys.

Nicole Fairchild ([01:40](#)):

Yeah. All of it. It's beautiful, beautiful. And all of the people in heaven are eating and enjoying one another and having a lovely, lovely time. In hell, the scene looks very similar. There's a giant banquet table. There is beautiful food all over it. It smells delicious, but everybody is sitting around the table moaning and groaning with hunger because their forks are three feet long. And so they can stab into a piece of food, but they can't get it into their own mouth.

Stacy Moore ([02:12](#)):

Can't use their fingers?

Nicole Fairchild ([02:13](#)):

No.

Stacy Moore ([02:13](#)):

They've got to use their forks.

Nicole Fairchild ([02:14](#)):

They have to use a fork. There are rules. So-

Stacy Moore ([02:16](#)):

Oh.

Betsy Kindall ([02:16](#)):

They could feed each other. That's what they're doing in heaven.

Nicole Fairchild ([02:20](#)):

Oh, but they wouldn't do that down there.

Betsy Kindall ([02:21](#)):

No. Oh.

Stacy Moore ([02:22](#)):

I wondered where this was going.

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

That's what they're doing in heaven, and I think that's what we are doing in good school climates.

Stacy Moore ([02:29](#)):

Ooh.

Betsy Kindall ([02:30](#)):

Oh. Tell us more.

Nicole Fairchild ([02:30](#)):

I think that, and I've noticed this in other environments, even in my work in churches, and we think about, "How do we make this place ..." Because churches think about climate a lot too. "How do we make this a friendly place for you to come, and make you feel welcome, and make you feel like family when you walk in the door?" We think about that stuff a lot.

Nicole Fairchild ([02:51](#)):

And what has always occurred to me is that as humans, we want somebody else to initiate it. We're waiting on somebody else to initiate it. We're waiting on somebody else to set the standard, somebody else to say the kind word, somebody else to make me feel welcome. And we rarely take on the responsibility of it. So if you imagine sitting around that table with the fork in your hand, at some point, somebody has to say "Here, Betsy. Here's a bite."

Betsy Kindall ([03:17](#)):

I'm an aide. That would be probably be me.

Stacy Moore ([03:19](#)):

Yeah. And I would be avoiding everybody.

Nicole Fairchild ([03:22](#)):

Well, and here's the thing. Some people are just made that way. One of my favorite people, Erica, is just made that way. It's her ministry at church to just go around and say hi to everybody. Everybody's got to get big hug from Erica. It's the best ever, and that's just what she does. She has no concern about what you're going to think about her. She loves you and she assumes that you're going to love that attention, and it's just natural for her. And everybody loves her because she so willingly gives. And I think that in some school climates, what ends up happening is everybody becomes so hungry and so focused on themselves that they can't hand you a bite. They're starving.

Stacy Moore ([04:07](#)):

Knowing that if they reach out, they're actually going to help themselves.

Nicole Fairchild ([04:11](#)):

And it has an effect that goes all over. And I think those school climates that we've been in where we can feel this is really warm and wonderful, it's because people have been in the habit of feeding one another,

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giving each other kindness. There's a safety with doing that. You don't feel like you're going to be taken advantage of. And in terms of how do we get there, I think at some point, you have to say, "I'm going to give what I'm not getting. How can I do that? How can I give a little of what not getting, and is there some way I can be rooted or have some sort of other feeding stream? Feeding tube? You know what I'm saying?"

Betsy Kindall ([04:50](#)):

Yeah.

Nicole Fairchild ([04:51](#)):

Can I get this at home? Can I get this from my faith community? Can I get this from somewhere else so that when I'm in this environment, I can be a little bit purposeful about giving to this community?

Stacy Moore ([05:03](#)):

So the one word that comes to mind when you talk about this, to me, and you've said it, was community.

Nicole Fairchild ([05:09](#)):

Yeah.

Stacy Moore ([05:10](#)):

So I'm going to go somewhere weird.

Nicole Fairchild ([05:13](#)):

All right.

Betsy Kindall ([05:13](#)):

Okay.

Nicole Fairchild ([05:13](#)):

We're down.

Stacy Moore ([05:14](#)):

So I'll think about my Amish books.

Nicole Fairchild ([05:16](#)):

Ooh. Yeah, but they have a beautiful community.

Stacy Moore ([05:19](#)):

They're beautiful and community. And so what you read, anyway, the ones that I read and why I'm drawn to them, is that it's, "This person has a need and we're here. We have you. We've got your back. And I will lend, and I will get when I need to get. Or I will take in, but I also freely give, and we've got each

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other." And that does describe the schools when I walk in and you're like, "Oh, this would be an awesome place to be and to work." It's that peace.

Betsy Kindall ([05:50](#)):

But so don't you think, I don't know. Maybe this is the question, because last time I said it can start in your classrooms, but it can also start top down. You can set the stage for that. You can model that. Even if you're in a building where that isn't typical, you can set the stage for that. Don't you agree?

Nicole Fairchild ([06:10](#)):

Oh, absolutely, but it doesn't have to start top down. It can start classroom out.

Betsy Kindall ([06:14](#)):

It can. Yes.

Nicole Fairchild ([06:15](#)):

Because you can think of the people where you're like, "Oh, they always make me feel so good, or they make me feel seen, or I really ..." Of course, because it was a podcast recording, you didn't see this, but the moment we saw Ms. Cooper, she was cupping to us-

Betsy Kindall ([06:28](#)):

Oh yeah.

Nicole Fairchild ([06:29](#)):

... dancing along, so happy to see us. Okay. She's giving that before we ever gave her a drop of it. She was ready to give it from the get go.

Betsy Kindall ([06:38](#)):

Sure. Yeah. But [crosstalk 00:06:40]-

Nicole Fairchild ([06:40](#)):

And so she brings that with her wherever she goes.

Betsy Kindall ([06:42](#)):

She does, yeah. It's a way of being. But I do think for you administrators out there listening, and you're thinking about, "Okay, how can I build this into my buildings?" It can start from you as well. You can model that behavior. You can carry that with you and demonstrate that as you walk the halls, as you interact with your staff, as you interact with those kids. And I think you can have a light and playful attitude and still hold the line and-

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

Firm and [inaudible 00:07:11].

Betsy Kindall ([07:11](#)):

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You can do both. You can do both.

Stacy Moore ([07:12](#)):

I see this in classrooms where teachers can teach the kids to be community, like, "This person needs us to be quiet. This person did this awesome so we're all going to get 10 extra points, because we're going to celebrate that they were able to succeed and do this," and being able to truly make communities, and I see teachers doing that. I see with teachers, I don't know. I'm trying to go back in my mind and think about sometimes, you get into these valleys where you feel like you give, and there's no bank to draw from to fill yourself back up.

Nicole Fairchild ([07:48](#)):

And we can't expect people to stay in that kind of environment very long.

Stacy Moore ([07:51](#)):

Right.

Nicole Fairchild ([07:52](#)):

Right. You'll lose your good ones.

Stacy Moore ([07:53](#)):

Yes.

Nicole Fairchild ([07:54](#)):

You'll lose your good ones.

Stacy Moore ([07:55](#)):

And is that sometimes what's happening?

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

Yeah. Yeah, [crosstalk 00:07:58]-

Stacy Moore ([07:58](#)):

Yeah, because they give and they give and they give. And so establishing that community, definitely leaders being able to show we're here for each other. And just like a teacher would for her classroom, "We're going to celebrate this. We're going to help this one out. We're going to give to this. We're going to recognize this in building that community," but we don't want that well to become dry.

Betsy Kindall ([08:17](#)):

And I think to help avoid that from happening, to make sure that that well doesn't go dry, I think we have to do it intentionally. And we have to go about the day, every single day, intentionally thinking about school climate, thinking about how to set that stage, thinking about how to model that behavior that we're wanting in return and intentionally giving it, if it doesn't come natural to you.

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Stacy Moore ([08:40](#)):

Oh my gosh. Okay. So Betsy, what that made me think of is when we did our training several, or now, it'd been a couple weeks ago, that we talked about good climate versus climate that you really don't want to be in or don't want to work in. And one of those of the good climates, and I love this word and it's such a simple word, but in education, you don't hear it a lot, and it was what we need more of is laughter.

Nicole Fairchild ([09:02](#)):

Laughter.

Betsy Kindall ([09:03](#)):

Laughter.

Nicole Fairchild ([09:03](#)):

I was thinking of that exact word. I wondered if you would say it.

Stacy Moore ([09:06](#)):

And I just think when you talk about that, and being able to intentionally do that, I just think how do we bring that back? Joy back? Laughter back?

Nicole Fairchild ([09:17](#)):

Yeah. And Alice Cooper, Ms. Cooper, talked a lot about that on her podcast, about how she starts each of her classes, and about how she brings joy. And she sings a song-

Betsy Kindall ([09:25](#)):

Yeah. She actually used the word joy multiple times.

Stacy Moore ([09:29](#)):

Yeah she did.

Nicole Fairchild ([09:29](#)):

And about how she finds joy in her work. And I think there's something to be said for that.

Stacy Moore ([09:34](#)):

Which fills your tank too, right?

Nicole Fairchild ([09:36](#)):

Yeah.

Stacy Moore ([09:37](#)):

Which is like that whole idea of the forks, which is three foot. So when I'm giving, instead of just giving and giving and giving, I'm filling myself right back too.

Betsy Kindall ([09:45](#)):

Yeah. Okay. I have lessons from a five, from an Enneagram five. So you guys know my tank is usually on low. They'll often say, "Fives, they wake up in the morning with 20% battery." That feels to me a lot. And so when I was in ministry in particular, I was like, "I can't give all the time. These people are going to wear me out." Then I would think to myself, "Okay. I need to be rooted. It's not like it's all about me. I've got a well that I can draw from," but here's what else I learned. It actually doesn't take very much. It really doesn't cost me very much to send a quick text and say, "I'm thinking about you today. Anything I can pray for?" It costs me hardly any energy at all.

Betsy Kindall ([10:31](#)):

It doesn't cost me that much to make myself a note to remember that that person's child's surgery is on that day so I can send them a quick text. It actually, it doesn't cost me that much to give a compliment. It's tiny, tiny little bits. And if I can just add a few of those in, then people magically see me as a positive, supportive person even if I don't think I really am because it just costs a little tiny bit.

Stacy Moore ([10:56](#)):

And the reverse of that too, right? One kind word fills my tank. It doesn't take a whole bunch coming in to fill you back up too.

Betsy Kindall ([11:07](#)):

Yeah. It's really not. It's like a little, "Here's a bite. Okay." It doesn't take that much. It was just shocking to me because I thought they're going to bleed me out. I'm going to be absolutely dry. And the thing is, when you're shepherding and serving people, is that you get just as much back from the beauty of those relationships.

Nicole Fairchild ([11:27](#)):

Well, and I think there's something to be said for that kind of work because how many times has somebody reached out to you and said something that touched you in a way and you think, "I cannot believe they remembered that?" Or, "Oh my gosh, that means so much." I need to do more of that.

Betsy Kindall ([11:43](#)):

Yeah, because it wasn't a big deal to me.

Nicole Fairchild ([11:44](#)):

They're right. It wasn't a big deal. It mattered to them, and now, it matters to me that it mattered to them, and I need to really care about that for someone else. It's all about modeling that behavior. So you get so much back and it's almost like, what's that phenomenon where they say, it's like a ripple effect or whatever? They just keep on giving. It just keeps on happening because I think that it just is the way that it works.

Betsy Kindall ([12:13](#)):

Yeah.

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Stacy Moore ([12:13](#)):

Both of you all have alluded to that personal connection too, right? I told you all both I was walking down the hall the other day and a teacher came out and ran and gave me a newspaper with my daughter was pictured in and I didn't even know it. And oh my goodness. That just overwhelms me that she was that kind and thoughtful, and that it was that personal that she-

Betsy Kindall ([12:32](#)):

Kept it.

Stacy Moore ([12:33](#)):

Yeah. And she gave that to me.

Betsy Kindall ([12:35](#)):

And to her, it's probably no big deal.

Stacy Moore ([12:37](#)):

Maybe not, but for me, I'm still thinking about it, and thinking how nice that was. And so that personal thing, like you said, writing down that surgery date, or remembering that important appointment, or those things make a big difference.

Betsy Kindall ([12:48](#)):

And I've realized some people maybe just do that naturally, and I don't. I know I don't. I have to put it on my calendar.

Stacy Moore ([12:54](#)):

You have to download the app to do that? That's for sure.

Betsy Kindall ([12:57](#)):

It's so funny. Do you know what is that? A lot of you guys don't know this about me, but I also teach online for Purdue. I've taught for them for decades, to be honest, and I've had a lot of Dean of Students, but the Dean of Students now, her name is Dina. And it's clear that she does that intentionally on purpose all the time. So she's been my Dean for, I think, three years. So every year on my birthday, she sends me a handwritten card. And every Friday, she sends out a personal note to all of her staff that says something about you, and she appreciates you and to have a great weekend.

Nicole Fairchild ([13:34](#)):

That's intentional.

Stacy Moore ([13:35](#)):

That makes a difference.

Betsy Kindall ([13:35](#)):

It's intentional. And you can tell that it's intentional, but it's important to her for her staff to know, "You know what? I care about you, and I know you." And I had some stuff going on back last year, actually when I had COVID and I reached out, and also a curriculum design specialist that we have there that I have ended up working with ... I've never even met this woman. Isn't that fascinating? And I've worked with her for 20 years. Never met her. When they realized I was really sick, she emailed me every single day for weeks. Every single day, and told me that she was thinking about me and that if there's anything that she can do to help. And you know what, guys? It's means so much.

Betsy Kindall ([14:21](#)):

And I'll be really honest with you. My kids went back to school, and not a lot of people really even asked how we were. And I remember thinking about them. I've never even met these people in person and they cared enough to do that. And it really touched me, and it changed the way I think about those sorts of things so much so that I think I want to be more like that. I want to be more like that.

Betsy Kindall ([14:48](#)):

And so in my spare time, because you guys know I have so much. I'm in the middle of a course revision and it's the curriculum specialist [Rhea 00:14:57], it's her again, and she's like, "So how are you doing?" And this woman is nearly 70 years old and she's been doing curriculum work for decades, and she drives around her van. I said, "You know what? When you're in Arkansas," because we're all over the country, "If you're ever in Arkansas, you just swing right on by and I'm going to buy you some lunch." And she's like, "Oh Betsy, that would be fabulous." But I've never met the woman in my life. We've just worked together virtually in that capacity, in my second life, but it just meant so much.

Stacy Moore ([15:30](#)):

You feel safe and supported by them.

Nicole Fairchild ([15:32](#)):

And connected.

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

Not even in a physical environment.

Nicole Fairchild ([15:35](#)):

Yes.

Stacy Moore ([15:35](#)):

Yeah.

Betsy Kindall ([15:36](#)):

Yeah. Ain't that fascinating?

Stacy Moore ([15:38](#)):

Yeah.

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Nicole Fairchild ([15:38](#)):

That's climate.

Stacy Moore ([15:39](#)):

But how it can happen.

Betsy Kindall ([15:39](#)):

It is climate. It's how you can build climate, even when you're not even there. And if, to be really blunt, if they can do that when they're not even there, think about the magic that can happen when you are.

Nicole Fairchild ([15:50](#)):

Yeah.

Stacy Moore ([15:51](#)):

Showing you care.

Nicole Fairchild ([15:52](#)):

Yeah.

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

Yeah.

Nicole Fairchild ([15:53](#)):

Smiling. Laughing.

Stacy Moore ([15:55](#)):

Listening.

Nicole Fairchild ([15:57](#)):

Telling good dad jokes.

Stacy Moore ([16:00](#)):

Laughter.

Betsy Kindall ([16:00](#)):

There's good dad jokes?

Stacy Moore ([16:03](#)):

Nicole's got some.

Betsy Kindall ([16:04](#)):

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Oh, Lordy. Oh, Lord. Well, that was fun. I'm glad I got to share another one of my therapy stories with you. I need an outlet for them. I'm not doing therapy now, so.

Nicole Fairchild ([16:15](#)):

Maybe you should write a book.

Betsy Kindall ([16:17](#)):

Yeah. No, I don't know.

Stacy Moore ([16:19](#)):

Stories from a therapist too.

Betsy Kindall ([16:21](#)):

Yeah, no kidding. Thank you guys for joining us as we dive into school climate, and we hope you walk away with some ideas about how you can impact the school climate wherever you are in whatever role that you play. We'll see you next time.