

Teacher Talk: An ETT Podcast
Episode 2: The Power of Reflection featuring Matthew Morris

Chey ([00:00](#))

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Chey ([00:27](#))

And welcome to Teacher talk and Et T Podcast. And I'm your host, Chey Cheney, middle school teacher. And my guest today is Matthew Morris, elementary teacher, author, TEDx presenter, I would say impactor and influencer and really excited to talk with Matthew today about some of the nuances of teaching and the stresses associated with teaching. Because too often in this world we get a really simplistic notion of what a teacher's day is like and what is the drain that the system is putting on teachers to keep it together. Matthew, welcome to the show. Please introduce yourself to the audience. And as you introduce yourself, I would say share what are the things that were going on in your life or what you were seeing and teaching that sort of inspired you or led to this manifestation of, this is the space I want to be in, I want to be a teacher. This is what I'm seeing and this is why I'm here. And welcome to the show.

Matthew ([01:23](#))

Thank you, Chey. Thanks for having me. I appreciate it. I think you did an awesome job at introducing myself. So I'll start from why I initially wanted to get into teaching in the first place. I was big into sports and when I was in university, before university, I earned a football scholarship. So my thing was I was living the student athlete life and hoping, like all young student athletes, that one day I'd make it to be a professional and make millions of dollars and play till I was 45 years old, like Tom Brady, and just ride off into the sunset. But obviously, after a few surgeries and a dose of reality, I started to have to think, quote unquote, practical and what I was going to do with my life after college. And initially what I wanted to do, I wanted to go back to my old high school and coach the football team. So that was my initial spark of an interest into teaching. I wanted to go become a teacher so that I could coach football high school. And fortunately, when I got to teachers college at that time, I don't know what teachers college is like now, but at that time was a one year thing.

Matthew ([02:37](#))

We had lots of cutting out and lots of coloring and conversations. And to be honest, it is hard to train someone to be a teacher unless you're actually thrown into that classroom and experience it firsthand. But one of the things that we did when I was in teachers college was a lot of reflecting on our school experiences. And for me, that was beneficial. That was the first time I actually looked back on my school experiences. And as a black male growing up in Scarborough. Luckily, I did have sports as my backbone, as my foundation, to push me through academics, to give me that motivation, to maintain a certain standard for myself. But a lot of my friends, a lot of my some of my family members, they didn't have that same experience with school with school and schooling. So in my community, there was a lot of black boys like me that didn't necessarily have the best experience in public schools. And unfortunately, their life determinism the money that they're able to make, the job opportunities and just the overall well being and quality of their life was impacted by the decisions that were made for them.

Matthew ([03:57](#))

And I guess you could argue that some of the decisions they made between the ages of, you know, four to 16, four to 18, their high school, their schooling experiences and I wanted to get into teaching to kind of help become a conduit to change some of those life goals and to change some of the conversations around what it means, what blackness means, what Black masculinity means, what Black excellence looks like, what Black abundance looks like. And I wanted to shatter some stereotypes of what an adult black male can become and can be. So it's been a journey. I don't really exactly know the number of years I've been teaching, and I do that to keep a little bit of sanity. I know it's double digits, I'm over double digits. I'm somewhere between eleven and 13, somewhere around there, and I don't even really care to do the math. I think it keeps me more sane to not even know because I could keep saying eleven for the next ten years. But yeah, that's what kind of got me into teaching. And then from that point, I actually didn't want to do anything with phys ed or coaching.

Matthew ([05:15](#))

My major in university is I double majored in English and history. I wanted to get in the classroom and teach academic things and kind of spin the language around what success can look like. And yeah, here I am.

Chey ([05:30](#))

Matthew, that is a fantastic answer. My notepad is already full, and it's fantastic because it's so authentic and I think many of our audience is going to connect to it, and I think many of our audience is going to learn from that. I wrote down here a conduit of change, like just seeing that the system wasn't working, and you saw it wasn't working because you knew, you talked about how it in pieces, it worked for you, but I think in other ways you saw it wasn't working for my friends, my peers. I was watching it fail. And one could maybe argue, maybe from my white male perspective, you see things not working and maybe I have the privilege to be able to walk away, but you didn't take or you didn't have the privilege to just walk away. You felt this burden might be the wrong word. But this desire that I need to be back in these spaces because I see that it's not working. And I think that is something really for me to really learn and appreciate. I really was even curious a little bit, not even curious. The sports background. I connect with that because I had a similar story, although not university, American University.

Chey ([06:29](#))

I played some Canadian university ball and that was my way in through sports. And then as I got there I love when you talk about that. Then it wasn't about the sports. The sports is still important, but I think I as a teacher sometimes feel that sports is on. I don't want to say it's overrated, but we forget so many things in teaching because we fixate on sports. And so when you talked about that, I said, yeah, I feel like I understand what I was doing in teaching when you talked about that, that the sports was a way in, my comfortable way in. But then maybe I saw there was other needs in the sports still part of my teaching, sort of character traits, but not what I always hold on to the most. I want to do some other work as well. You didn't talk about it yet, but I know when you've talked about this active reflection, you are an author and you really put those artifacts in. Like, I've read your blog a few times about decentering classrooms by getting rid of desks and chairs. And I've heard you talk about sort of the conversations around in staff rooms that can be sort of a little toxic.

Speaker 2 ([07:27](#))

And so you really provide content for people that want to see what teaching looks like through the black male experience, really authentically so people can get a real great look of that. And I know that I'm very happy that you share that work because it can be a real challenge or it can be threatening to put work out there. So I want to say thank you for putting all that content out there because I am as a teacher, am a better teacher, a more reflective teacher because of the work you're putting out there. And I think as teachers, we often talk about reflection, but we don't honor it as much as we should. I'll deviate away from my curated questions. How important do you think is that reflection for you as an educator? And do have you seen the impacts your reflection, you creating these artifacts has had on other teachers in education?

Matthew ([08:10](#))

Yeah. I mean, firstly, chay, I appreciate it. I started writing my blog Matthewrmorris.com years ago, maybe seven, eight years ago, initially when I started teaching as something for me just to personally keep me balanced and keep me centered. There'd be experiences that we go through as teachers throughout a day that.

Matthew ([08:36](#))

For.

Matthew ([08:37](#))

Me, I find that unless we somehow get it out of our insides, whether that's through having conversations with our friends or with our partner, it just sits there and you let it to fester. And for me, writing was my quote unquote therapy of dealing with situations that happened in between those school bells and trying to reflect and rationalize what the meaning behind why I still have this feeling in me. And it could be good things, it could be bad negative things. It could be points of contention. It could be the dynamic experiences that happened and occurred between me and one student, between me and my entire class, between me and a colleague, between me and administration. So for me, to be honest, you asked about reflecting and how important that is. I think it's key. I think teachers, educators who do not reflect and they just walk into school in September and they leave in June and they come back on Monday and they leave on Friday and they take their sick days when they need to take their sick days, but they keep it pushing. And they never reflect on themselves, on their pedagogy, on their practice, on the experiences, whether good or bad.

Matthew ([09:51](#))

What ends up happening, from my experience, what I've noticed is that they blame students, right? When you don't reflect, as a teacher, and I'm trying to keep the language as simple as possible, right? The accountability gets lost. And it doesn't fall on the onus of accountability is not on the teacher no longer. It's on the students. It's always the fault lines lie at them or their family or the community in which you teach in. And I'm not saying that we should absolve students from anything that occurs within classrooms and school sites. But if educators do not reflect on their practice, it's hard to maintain objective and a rational approach to exactly what's happening in your class. What are the challenges within your class, and also what are the solutions that need to be made right? Like, we share the similar background of sports, right? When you get to a certain level in sports, you play the game, and then for the next few days, you review the tape, right? The coaches sit with the players

in meeting rooms, and you watch the game that you played in order to improve. Right? And one thing, obviously, in teaching, we don't do that, right?

Matthew ([11:14](#))

But in other privatized sectors, there are annual reviews. We have certain elements within school boards, like an annual learning plan and things like that. But I don't know how honest you want to get with the conversation around some of these frameworks that are put in place where you literally can just essentially copy and paste from year to year. And there's no real, true, authentic accountability behind some of those things, unless you're like a new teacher and you're really trying to improve because the novelty of teaching is so different from year to year. Right. And to kind of circle back around in terms of reflecting and how has it helped other teachers? For me, I've kind of instilled it in my character, in my role as a teacher, with any school I've worked in, to try and have these conversations with colleagues on somewhat of a regular basis. Right. It's very hard to engage sometimes in a staff room where you see some of that toxic toxicity happening. But I think it's important if you are somebody that is concerned about your solution oriented and you do have the best interests of students and the community as a priority, it's important to challenge and to reflect as a staff, as a teaching community.

Matthew ([12:47](#))

Right. So that's why I love the fact that we could sit here and have these conversations on a Friday and that I could jump on Twitter and plug into what people are feeling, what people are experiencing through the course of their school year, through the course of the last couple of years.

Chey ([13:05](#))

Matthew, that is some powerful words right there. Again, I was jumping in on the notes and you were talking about that power of reflection. And I'll go back to maybe your 1011 1213. It's a haze back then when I saw my own pedagogy changing and I sort of positioned myself as I'm going to be a disruptor. But to tap into your reflection, I realized I wasn't ready to be a disruptor because I hadn't disrupted myself yet. I sort of erroneously positioned myself as I've got it right, everyone else has got it wrong, like on a really superficial level. And it took a little bit of time to say, wait a second, wait a second. You do see things, but you got to see things in yourself first before you make those moves. And I know we've always talked about for us, you talk about writing. For me, it's these conversations, these podcasts, these are my chance to reflect because I sit and I don't come to the conversation to tell you what I know. I want to be open to what I can learn and I'm learning through this conversation. So I just love you brought that up, the highlights.

Chey ([14:00](#))

Interesting. You talk about watching the game in detail and I think about my teaching. I said too often we only watch simple highlights and we get this, oh, I know exactly what's going on in the soccer game because I watched this kid kick top corner. I said, but they've been offside seven times just trying to get that one opportunity. And sometimes I talk with students about sometimes we only look at the highlights and we don't realize how many efforts went into getting that one signature moment. I want to come back to you talk about being balanced and being centered. And on this episode I wanted to come back to you really have been really open about this need and desire for teachers. Part of being good reflectors, part

of good pedagogy, I think, is also knowing when you can only do so much. There's space for resistance, is rest or trying to make a difference is making sure you're resting yourself. And by rest, there's so much that goes on during the day. And I think about systems that often our system. I feel like our system's on the verge, our government just lacks funding.

Chey ([15:00](#))

And what keeps the system functioning is teachers willingness to burn themselves out, to burden themselves, to take it all on. Because we feel like when we talk about our two stories, which I'm sure is shared by so many people, we're in this because we want to make a difference. And by default, we're always willing to do a little bit more. But in regards to creating something system wide that is long term, do we risk burning ourselves out, burning out great teachers because we just insistently take a little bit more? So if you could comment on that, on this sort of balance and centering yourself and through this idea of how can I stay fresh, vibrant, committed to my pedagogy by not just solely letting myself flame out, burn out, knowing that I'm committed to sort of long term growth and long term change, how do I find that balance?

Matthew ([15:48](#))

Yeah, those are deep gems you're dropping, and I can't help but agree. Right. The first problem is, if you work in a major city like Toronto, right, where you have there are more than one school boards. But naturally, the school boards are so big and there are so many moving parts that sometimes the objectives that initially start out positive get kind of lost in the sauce as they trickle down to the people who they're intended for. And I find that over the last few years, since what happened with COVID-19 and the pandemic and quarantining, we did initially start with something that was so pure and positive, the idea of prioritizing mental wellness. But one, it's almost got lost in the sauce. At this point, it's like we forget that we made an emphasis in prioritizing mental wellness. But this 2022, 2023, everything's, quote unquote, back to normal. It's back to how things were. And we've kind of put that to the wayside. Right. And for me, it's honestly trying to make sure that, number one, I'm counting. I try my best to look at things from a bird's eye view. Right. So if I feel burnout coming on, I'm going to try and get that rest.

Matthew ([17:06](#))

So last year was a very challenging year for me. Right. I was dealing with a lot of personal life struggles. My father was sick in the hospital. He passed away last June. And it was tough for me to balance life in school. And so many times we're expected I think teaching is one of the only professions where we're literally expected to the minute we get in the school, it's an unwritten code that teachers are supposed to drop everything about them personally and put that Mr. Or Mrs in exchange for their first name and become something almost robotic. Right. And it is a challenge when especially I've been reading a little bit about this and listening to a few other podcasts about this. And when it comes to the wellness idea where our our society is so in, so the emphasis is so heavy on work ethic, there's a valor behind being tired and grinding and working for that extra overtime money or yeah, I'm tired because I'm working so hard. And we put a valor behind that. And the opposite occurs if you prioritize the opposite if you prioritize rest. Right? Even to the point where in our school board, the end of the year, every student of the month or whatever you call it, character Trade Award, the last one is resilience, right?

Matthew ([18:42](#))

Because it's June and I'll give it behind the fourth wall here, teacher talk. You usually give it to those kids that they're not really winning any other award. It's like a lineup of all the kids, yeah, you've been resilient, kid. Like, you made it through the year. Right. But again, we've kind of lost the translation of what resilience is supposed to mean. Resilience doesn't necessarily mean persevering through everything and not stopping. The true art of resilience is learning when you need to rest. Right? That is true resilience. Understanding when you are at that tipping point, when you are at that burnout point to rest. And for me, I've learned, especially this year, to prioritize myself, right? I love my job, I love teaching. It's my passion. I wouldn't pick any other career. If I had a choice and a million, \$5 million in the bank and could spend my days doing whatever I want, I'd be in schools in some capacity working with youth. But that doesn't negate from the fact that I know if something happened to me, god forbid they take my name off the door and put someone else's on there in less than a day, right?

Matthew ([20:06](#))

So understanding my place in a system that values educators, but in certain times, the major mechanism of the school board doesn't really show how much it values teachers, even down to particular buildings, even down to projects and initiatives that certain school boards start. And then halfway through the year, it's scrapped because of who knows what reason, right? It's tough to put all of your energy and passion into something and not receive that same amount of energy back. So for me, one of the things moving forward that I'm really adamant about is protecting my energy and truly prioritizing my mental wellness for whatever that means. Right. And for me, it takes a lot of different forms. It means trying to consistently reflect. It means understanding when I don't have the energy to even reflect that, that's a trigger for something else that's going on. It means knowing that when I don't have energy to care or I'm apathetic to things that are happening in my classroom, in my school, that I might need a day off, I might need a rest, I need to check myself, something's going on. When I lose that, when I become apathetic and I feel like I'm not the only one that's experienced that over the last couple of years, where there's times and stretches where you're going through the motions and you sit back and you're like, I used to care about this and that, and now I don't even care.

Matthew ([21:46](#))

I let whatever it is pass. So for me, the burnout isn't only just I think it started around when everything changed and we had to learn how to do this job called teaching in a different way. And it's extended from that point, right? And yeah, it's tough, it's challenging. And conversations like this are for me, they're invigorating, right? And these are the things that I think school boards should prioritize, right? Not necessarily hopping on a podcast with an amazing colleague, but setting up spaces for teachers to have conversations where they can discuss, examine, negotiate their experiences with other people, right? Like, we know I'm going a little bit in a tangent here, but it's going to connect when we do the job of teaching as homeroom teachers or whatever, if you're a subject teacher, what tends to happen is that we teach in Silos, right? We close our door, we teach. We might have a staff meeting once in a while, we talk about school needs or we try to get on the same track with what math strand we're teaching, et cetera, et cetera. And then we go back to our classrooms and we close our door again and we do our thing for another stretch, right?

Matthew ([23:11](#))

Which obviously I don't think it's the best and most beneficial way to going about teaching, but that bleeds into also how we experience teaching as adults, as professionals, right? We box in our feelings and on a Friday we may go out with our colleagues and talk about it a little bit, or we might have a group chat where we talk about things a little bit. But it's rare that we have spaces where we can genuinely intellectually reflect on the state of our day to day teaching experiences and the state of our district or our school board, or the things that are happening with where teaching is moving.

Chey ([23:58](#))

Matthew, that wonderful. As you were talking there, I was thinking about PD, how do we honor these conversations? And I think I think of as a podcaster, a longtime podcaster, it was a long time before the work was acknowledged and honored, and so you think, I have that one micro example, but then you think, how many teachers are doing the reflection, having these powerful conversations, but it's not being honored and validated anywhere. And so you just start to drift apart. You get into that where it's just my silo. I'm just repeating because when I try to create spaces to change, they're not available. And sometimes I think of PD, and it's not to gaslight an administrator. There are certain PDS you have to do, but then you supplement. I'm not going to do an authentic conversation PD because I have to make sure I show my teachers how to redo IEP page seven, 4.37. And yes, I do need that review because I don't remember how to do it, but it always gets prioritized. And all of a sudden we create this hierarchy of PD and rich, valuable, self driven, pedagogy conversations tends to just end up at the bottom.

Chey ([25:00](#))

And I think part of the burnout is teachers are tired. You talk about that energy draining. So how do you curate space? How do you make space for teachers to have these rich and vibrant conversations? That was one thing I pulled out. You talked about that emotional burden is that after a while, teachers, as you talk about they fall into those silence. I'm just going to repeat because I'm drained. I always feel that our government so underfunds our board and continue to play these little mind tricks, star wars reference in the public to think that they're funneling more money, but they're funneling less and less money because you talked about that trickle down. And as a coach this year, I get to see some of those insides. What's the trickle down? What resources am I sort of being gifted? And then how am I able to provide this to teachers? And then I realize the teachers aren't getting access to this. So you talk about that the system is so big and has these great goals, these things they want to do, but they don't necessarily or aren't able to create the infrastructure to get these resources to kids.

Chey ([25:56](#))

I think of one thing as a podcaster. I'm good with using We Video as a software, and our board pays for the premium account for every kid. But every classroom I walk into, teachers don't know how to use it, and teachers haven't been informed that it's even available. And so I go in there and I'll show all this stuff. And the conversation I have at the end is our board is absolutely invested. The money in something that's valuable. But we don't have enough resources within the board to make sure we can get this knowledge and this stuff into the hands of our students to be able to amplify their voice, because oh, wait. I love to talk. I can talk into we video. I can turn it into a Vlog, I can turn this into a creation, and I can amplify my

story. So there is that disconnect. So I love that you talked about that. I'll come back to what you started with teachers are human beings. We sort of silo. And now I'm a teacher and I negate the fact that I'm a human being at this moment. So teachers, I just love that you brought that up because teachers are human beings.

Chey ([26:48](#))

So how do we humanize the position? Or how do we realize when a part of the human part of me needs to just step back from the teaching part of me in order to heal myself. Use that word, finding your energy, keeping your energy, that really resonated with me. You can comment on any of that. And although you brought it all together to make a connection, I tend to ramble and then I hope the students can make the connections for me. So I felt like I was on point. You talked a little bit about and I'll talk about our board always talks about prioritizing joy. Joy is something we want to instill in our students. I always find I want to do this, but sometimes when I as a teacher and getting so beaten down by simplistic conversations out in the public, our government's sort of always gaslighting teachers. It's tough for me to find my own joy and then expect me to be able to instill joy in my students. Not because I don't want to like you, I love my job. But sometimes when you're just taking public shots over and over and over again, and then where do you find that energy to keep doing that work?

Chey ([27:50](#))

And so if you wanted to comment on any of those things, you can. But this conversation has been really rich. And this is also great that I'm not necessarily sticking to the script because you've given me so many diamonds, gold here that I'm just like circling everything. My sketch note for those that are watching, you can barely see it, but it's busy. It's busy. I'll have to try to make some linear path out of this at the end.

Matthew ([28:11](#))

No, I love it. And that's the thing, right? As you're talking and I'm listening and you're thinking of a way to make a linear path, I think there's beauty and there's such rich learning in just the organic development, right? So I'll give you a small example. Me and a colleague started a BSA at my school this year, black Student Alliance Club, right? A black affinity group. And we sat there and we started to think about what we're going to do. And I was like, you know what? I don't want to take any notes. I want to invite a bunch of kids. I want to sit there. I'm going to buy a couple of decks of cards. And we are going to come up with ideas as a group that just manifests themselves organically. I don't want to lead them. I want us to collaborate in an organic way where we get something out of it. And through the year, we had a lot of different ideas. The kids wanted to do like a hair braiding and a barber day where bring in a bunch of community people that know how to cut hair and know how to do hairstyles for people with longer hair.

Matthew ([29:24](#))

And for me, I think the essence of what I'm trying to say with that story is that when we work in public school boards, our framework. Is we are taught that everything needs to have a formulated approach. Everything needs to be done beforehand, printed out. There needs to be a structure. When you teach, you should have a lesson plan and you should have your minds on. And here's some of your talking points that you want to bring up and make sure you facilitate these buds words. And then when you finish with the activity and action that

they're doing, make sure you consolidate the learning and pack your binder up and head on out and do the same thing the next day, right? But I am just a fan of hopping into a class sometimes and just being organic with the learning and talking about things that are on the students minds, prioritizing their experience, reading the temperature of the room, so to speak. If we need a break, if we need to go on a walk because we've been grinding, we've been working, there's no problem with that. I think what you talk about with your experience this year of being in a central position and seeing it from both sides in your history of being a teacher and then in this role of where you're more attuned and you're invited into the space of admin and how things happen from admin on up, that's where we get lost sometimes.

Matthew ([31:01](#))

Instead of inviting everyone to the table and having a candid and organic conversation about how to best arrive at these solutions, we have the top that sends it down to people that are also in upper management, for people, so to speak, that aren't necessarily teachers that are listening to this pod. And then they send it to people who are in central or upper central positions. And then when it hits the actual battlefield where you have teachers and students, you get an example where we have a bunch of tech that nobody that it's intended for knows how to use it, let alone even knows that it exists, right? Because everything is structured. Instead of being like, here's a box, let me deliver this to a school, let me pick a teacher or a bunch of teachers, or in the staff meeting, forget all the other PR this and that and the IEP update 7.6 that you need to know on page seven of the transition plan. Here's some tech. Our kids don't like using textbooks anymore. This isn't 1997. Let's learn how to use this. And if you don't do that, unfortunately, tying back to what we were talking about when you started the last time you spoke, that whole person piece, you cannot expect educators you cannot expect teachers to pick up every last little bit of technology on their own or our new strategy or new tool or new resource and take it on their own.

Matthew ([32:30](#))

Time to learn when they have to do lesson planning and communication with parents and report card writing and classroom management aside from maybe any other cocurricular things that they're doing within the school. Maybe they do have a passion. Their passion is art or photography club, and they're already doing that, and they're thinking of new ideas to bring to their students. Now, you give them a resource and you expect them to learn it on the weekend or on a Wednesday night. It's just not feasible, right? I'm not sure. I haven't had experience in many other jobs that aren't entry jobs that I had other than the fact when I was a teenager working at, like, a Walmart or something like that. But teaching is one of the professions where there is so much expected on the teacher outside of the actual work hours. When does government or upper management of a school board expect teachers to pick up to foster the capacity to know how to use a resource when they have maybe 40 to 50 minutes a day of quote unquote prep time, what's called prep time when on their own lunchtime, right? And it's the idea that teaching is an honor.

Matthew ([33:52](#))

It is an honor and a privilege. It's not just a job, right? It's a calling if you really love the role of educating and being an educator. But there also is a limit to how much of myself, how much of my insides I can I can give without me breaking. Right? Teachers are expected to bend, but these days it seems like the unwritten expectation is that we can also break and just remould ourselves and be okay. But that's just not the reality of how things go.

Chey ([34:34](#))

Matthew, beautiful share. Beautiful share. I wrote down right from the beginning reading the temperature of the room, and then I wrote, beside that trust. Teachers know their space, they know their students because they curate great lessons, and yet they're so seldom at the table when we're making these critical decisions. And as I've been central for about six months, I'm excited to go back in the classroom because of all the great learning. But when I was there, I realized, yes, I was doing some teaching, but it was not being a teacher that grind. That burden was different. And so I have even more appreciation for what teachers were doing and maybe a little bit more aware of how much I was stretching myself as a teacher. But back to that final comment, I'm still excited to go back into that space. And I love that you talk about it is an honor. And I know my grandparents. I come from a military family, 35 years. And my grandfather, he never spoke about the war. He never spoke about his service. But when he found out I was a teacher, he said, that's an honorable profession. And I said, from my perspective, when a soldier tells me that I'm doing something that's honorable, I said, I was humbled to hear such a comment from my grandfather.

Chey ([35:40](#))

I was like, Where is this messaging in our today's society where we really see the value in teaching, because those type of comments are far between these days. Matthew, as we're wrapping up and this has been a wonderful conversation, I know the audience is thankful for all the powerful things that you have said that have opened our eyes, the things that are going on in the teaching profession. You can comment on anything I've said, and you've been doing a great job of tying it all together. So this is fantastic, my ramblings. But I also want to know in the audience wants to know what's on the horizon for you, because I know you've got a little something coming out, I believe, in January, but I'll let you sort of announce that. So if you want to comment on anything I have, you can. But if you don't, just tell us what's on the horizon for you, Matthew. And thank you for joining Teacher Talk and ETT Podcast.

Matthew ([36:28](#))

Thank you, Chey. Yeah. So I got my debut book is coming out. Black boys like me confrontations with race, identity and belonging. It's on presale now at anywhere you buy books at, including our independent bookstores across the city and across the province. And it's coming out. The release is January of 2024, so I'm really excited for that. Next year, I'm stepping away from the classroom for a little bit, and I'm going to work on a few initiatives in terms of equity and inclusion for a bunch of school boards. And I'm also working on a framework for helping black boys navigate school settings. So I'm looking forward to speaking with teachers, speaking with Admin and speaking with students, moving forward about how we can get to a more inclusive place, a place where we feel like we all belong in a place where we feel like the self preservation of our wholeness isn't the only thing that we are fighting for every day and the only priority. Hopefully it's something that we can put alongside academic excellence and expectations and we can get to a space where the talk of teacher burnout is only the result of teachers doing way too much and not just doing their expected jobs.

Matthew ([38:01](#))

Because these days it seems like it's an epidemic in terms of how teachers feel in relation to teacher burnout and energy and wholeness. So, yeah, that's what I'm doing in the future, still working on me, still learning and about to spend the near future. This weekend, writing report cards, a teacher's life.

Chey ([38:28](#))

Matthew, thank you for those beautiful final words and these amazing work you're doing. As you're talking, I'm thinking we're sort of flipping our roles a little bit. So when I'm back in the classroom next year, I can't wait to invite you into those spaces to talk about some of these wonderful projects you're building on, because I know I will benefit and I know the student population is going to benefit. So please keep doing the amazing work, keep inspiring. And I'll even say just as following you in the social media space, your impact is far and it's impactful. And maybe you don't always get the validations, the affirmations you should for the work you're doing, but I will. Share from my example, just being in that social media space. That your words. They always land. They always make me reflect and they always make me a better teacher. And I know your words here today are going to make a lot of other folks a better teacher as well. Thank you so much for joining us on Teacher Talk the ETT Podcast.

Matthew ([39:13](#))

Thank you brother.

Chey ([39:15](#))

And that's a wrap for today's episode of Teacher Talk, an ETT Podcast. We hope you've enjoyed this insightful discussion. We'd like to remind and encourage you to rate, review and subscribe to our podcast on your favorite listening platform. It's this feedback that helps us reach.

Chey ([39:34](#))

More educators like yourself.

Chey ([39:36](#))

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Chey ([40:07](#))

If you have any topics you'd like.

Chey ([40:08](#))

Us to cover or any questions you'd like us to address in future episodes, feel free to reach out to us on social media or email Teachertalk at ETT on CA because we love hearing from the educational community. Teachertalk is a chempath educational services production where we strive to bring you the best in professional development and educational production. You can connect with us@chempav.com for all your podcasting and professional

development needs. Until next time, keep inspiring, keep teaching, and keep making a difference in the lives of your students.