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

I'm Betsy Kindle.

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

I'm Nicole Fairchild.

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

And I'm Stacey Moore.

Betsy Kindall ([00:12](#)):

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

Nicole Fairchild ([00:21](#)):

Hey everybody, welcome to the Arkansas Aware podcast. Today, it's Betsy and I in the studio. Our friend Stacy is out hitting the roads, taking care of kids, making things happen out there.

Betsy Kindall ([00:35](#)):

Yeah.

Nicole Fairchild ([00:35](#)):

So we'll have to check in with her later. But a few episodes ago, we promised that we would start to look at the Atlas of the Heart by Brené Brown.

Betsy Kindall ([00:44](#)):

Well, first, the book is just beautiful.

Nicole Fairchild ([00:47](#)):

It is a gorgeous book.

Betsy Kindall ([00:48](#)):

I'm thinking, this would make a really great gift because it's just so, so pretty.

Nicole Fairchild ([00:54](#)):

Yes.

Betsy Kindall ([00:54](#)):

To be honest.

Nicole Fairchild ([00:55](#)):

They didn't stop at content. They made it beautiful.

Betsy Kindall ([00:59](#)):

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Yeah, they did.

Nicole Fairchild ([00:59](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. When we opened up the box, we were like, "Ooh. Aah."

Betsy Kindall ([01:08](#)):

We genuinely did. Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Nicole Fairchild ([01:12](#)):

It's kind of fun just to flip through and get a feel for, but even right at the very beginning, we're still in Roman numerals here, Betsy.

Betsy Kindall ([01:21](#)):

Well, I just have to say, it excited me to read the table of contents because I like things that are super duper organized where I can flip right to them. And I love the table of contents in this book. I know that sounds really silly, but number one, Places We Go When Things Are Uncertain Or Too Much. Number two, Places We Go When We Compare. And it goes on and on and on to the very last one, which is, Places We Go To Self-Assess. But I just like the layout of this book.

Nicole Fairchild ([01:52](#)):

So she's looking at 87 different emotions that have come up in her research, and she does have them kind of categorized into these different places we go, because remember, this is an Atlas of the Heart. So she's looking at this from that perspective. I was already thinking we need to talk about a couple of things right up there in the introduction before we even jump in.

Nicole Fairchild ([02:16](#)):

So in the How's It Going section, how is it going? She has a little bit of content there where she's talking about things she believed to be true about people when she was a kid. And when I read those, Betsy, she's talking about how most people are really going to do their very best and protect themselves from pain. And they're going to try to protect themselves from being held accountable, even in some ways that possibly cause harm to other people. But then also that if we don't have a clear understanding of how our emotions and thoughts and behaviors connect to one another, we're just lost.

Betsy Kindall ([02:58](#)):

We are, and I don't know about you, but recently in trainings that, not trainings, not plural, really, in a training or two that I was in, I guess I was blown away a little bit, with the fact of, I guess I take for granted that I work with a group of people who we are pretty in tune with ourselves and know ourselves and understand how we work, understand why we work that way, also understand our emotions.

Betsy Kindall ([03:24](#)):

And then when you get into a group, or I was in a training, for example, and I realized, "Wow, a huge portion of this group, they're really not very self-aware." It was kind of an eye opening, shocking experience. And so what I've also realized through this work is that when we do training, you're like,

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"Here, you are saying the same thing over again 20 years later." And I guess that it's a reminder that we still have to keep doing the good work over and over and over again because just because we have grown and gotten to a place where we've learned so many things about ourselves and as a team and how we work together, that is simply not true for everyone. And no, I still keep doing the enneagram training here and there. I was doing it the other day and I ended up just saying this out loud. I guess, because it just, whatever is in your heart bubbles up.

Betsy Kindall ([04:21](#)):

And I said, I just want to give you all the gift of 50% more insight. 50% more insight, everybody. Let's all join in.

Nicole Fairchild ([04:29](#)):

Yeah. Whatever's in the heart bubbles up. That's an nice way of saying, "We don't hold back. It's going to come out. No filter."

Betsy Kindall ([04:38](#)):

But I do think mean, I've said that a lot as a therapist, insight's half the battle. If you can at least have some sort of insight as to why you're doing what you're doing or how it connects.

Nicole Fairchild ([04:48](#)):

Oh, absolutely. And it's so fascinating that you said that because I spoke to a class of pre-service teachers, like the class was Introduction to Education the other day, and it was at the University of Arkansas. And I spoke to them via Zoom. I do that every year. And we talk about aware and school mental health, and oh my gosh, this is what you're getting yourself into, be prepared.

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

But one of the questions was about teacher wellbeing. What's the key to teacher wellbeing? And for me, the answer was self-awareness. Step number one, you need to know when you've had too much. You need to know when you're reaching your breaking point. And you need to know yourself well enough to back away. But you also need to know yourself well enough to say, "This is what I need to take care of me right now. And be courageous enough to stand up for yourself and do that." So we do trainings on teacher wellbeing all the time, and there is an awareness component. But the bottom line is that is how you take care of yourself. That's the first step. And if you're not aware of when you have gone too much or the emotions that are spewing out of you because you're stressed at the max.

Betsy Kindall ([06:05](#)):

Yeah.

Nicole Fairchild ([06:05](#)):

It's hard to do anything about it if you're not even cognizant of it. And I think as we go through life, the further on we get, the more we see the results of living an unexamined life. And the further on we get, the more we regret living an unexamined life. There's really something to be said for having self-awareness and then having language to put around your emotions and your experiences. And that's

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part of what she's saying here at the beginning of this book is, we all have to go on this journey, do you want to be a blind traveler? Or would you like to have some sort of map for this deal?

Betsy Kindall ([06:44](#)):

And the truth is, there's some people out here there that absolutely choose to be a blind traveler, even as a younger person. We're strong personalities. I think it's safe to say that.

Nicole Fairchild ([06:56](#)):

You think so?

Betsy Kindall ([06:59](#)):

I do think so. We're pretty strong personalities. And pretty early on, I come to the realization that not everybody can hear the truth about some things, or they're ready to acknowledge the truth about some things. Or some folks aren't ready to acknowledge that they are even having a certain emotion. And so I think when you use the word examined live, that's what I think of, because not only do you have to be self-aware, but you have to be ready to reflect and have insight into, and there's a level of acceptance you have to have about yourself, I think. And I think that's a hard thing to do. Sure. And it is one of the core things of social emotional learning that we're talking about. It's one of the core things. And if we're ever going to be able to help young people do this, we have to model it and do it well.

Betsy Kindall ([07:48](#)):

And so when you think about so many of the issues that have to do with behavior in the classroom, how much of it really could be boiled down to big emotions that that child has no good words for or insight about?

Nicole Fairchild ([08:05](#)):

Yes.

Betsy Kindall ([08:05](#)):

Probably a lot of it.

Nicole Fairchild ([08:07](#)):

Oh, a lot.

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

And Brene, in her book, used that example of having a broken arm and going to the doctor. And all of us have been to a place, I think, think about a time in your life where you've been at a place where you've experienced pain to the point, whether it's physical pain or emotional pain, where it impedes on the functioning of your life. And in those times, there may be a time, for example, let's say it's a physical injury and you're at the doctor and you've been struggling and struggling, struggling. And the doctor says, "What can I do for you?"

Betsy Kindall ([08:44](#)):

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And you simply cannot find the words to encapsulate what you've experienced.

Nicole Fairchild ([08:51](#)):

Oh, sure.

Betsy Kindall ([08:52](#)):

And I think, I know I myself have never had that experience on a physical level, but definitely on emotional level because it's so, for me, something may be so big emotionally and affect me in such a huge way that I'm still processing. It's like those old GPS systems that says, "Recalculating?"

Nicole Fairchild ([09:13](#)):

Yeah.

Betsy Kindall ([09:13](#)):

I need one on my forehead that says, "Processing, processing, processing, recalculating." And it takes me some time to process before I can even find the language to conversate about it.

Nicole Fairchild ([09:25](#)):

And in the meantime, you're not getting the help you need.

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

No. In the meantime, I'm stuck in recalculating. That recalculating mode. Processing mode.

Nicole Fairchild ([09:34](#)):

Yeah.

Betsy Kindall ([09:34](#)):

And I noticed you guys, we just posted on our Arkansas where Facebook about regulation and about how long it takes to be come back to a regulated state.

Betsy Kindall ([09:47](#)):

And in this conversation, it makes me think about that exact thing. When I'm processing, it takes me some time to get a handle on something that may be deep and painful, and I have to have a handle on it first before I can use words with it.

Nicole Fairchild ([10:03](#)):

Well, here's what it kind of reminded me of. Donny, I think most of our listeners are women, right? I'm just going to have another moment here. Donny's over here with his hands up like, "I don't know." Ladies, I'm talking to the ladies out here. I can remember when I had just had my first baby and I was still in the hospital and I'd had a C-section. And they come in and they ask you, "Where are you at on the pain scale? Zero to 10." Sorry.

Betsy Kindall ([10:32](#)):

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Okay. No, I mean really. You're like, "I'm freaking hurting, lady." So I'm trying to put language to all, not just pain, but also emotions. I mean, hormones in the whole, the things are wild in that moment. And I think I was still probably hopped up on some drugs and they said, "Where are you at in your pain scale?" And I said, "Two." And the lady was like, "Okay." So then they didn't give me more meds. And then seriously, within 45 minutes-

Nicole Fairchild ([11:05](#)):

You were like (knocking sound).

Betsy Kindall ([11:06](#)):

...I was a disaster. Because two-

Nicole Fairchild ([11:08](#)):

Can I renege on that too.

Betsy Kindall ([11:09](#)):

...Was not an accurate number. But when I was thinking of this scale of pain that I knew and what is possible and what could be expected, I didn't have a clear scale. It got outsized pretty daggum fast and then I was in a crisis. And so it makes me think of how that was a new experience for me. Second time around, I'm like, "Oh, I'm at a solid seven right now."

Betsy Kindall ([11:33](#)):

I have learned my lesson. Well, and not just that, but she expected you to respond immediately. And I would be like, I could just see, we've all been in that situation where if you've had any kind of emergency at the hospital or have had a baby or whatever, they ask you that likert scale. And what always gets me and I'm hold up my finger and I'm like, "Just a minute. Let me think about that."

Nicole Fairchild ([11:54](#)):

Yeah. Yeah.

Betsy Kindall ([11:54](#)):

Because I just can't respond immediately. I'm thinking in my mind, I'm picturing the scale.

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

I know, I'm thinking, "What if they chopped me? What if my guts spill out? What kind of pain does that cause?" I don't know. I don't know the scale.

Betsy Kindall ([12:07](#)):

Yeah.

Nicole Fairchild ([12:08](#)):

But I think when you think about young people, kids, and they're learning to manage big emotions, they're starting this emotional sort of, how do I travel-

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Betsy Kindall ([12:20](#)):

With no experience.

Nicole Fairchild ([12:21](#)):

How do I become a good traveler here? How do I do this well?" They don't have the language for it. They don't yet have the insight. I think that's where we are in so many of these situations with behavior.

Betsy Kindall ([12:36](#)):

Yeah. No, I totally agree. I think there are some indicators though, that can make a difference. Factors that can make a difference. Things like home life. Do you have those conversations at home? Do you use open communication about emotions at home?

Nicole Fairchild ([12:51](#)):

Yeah.

Betsy Kindall ([12:51](#)):

Because if you do, I think that, I have a whole posse of girls and they are not afraid to talk about their emotions, whether in any form or fashion, quite frankly. A little too fault to a fault. But we are pretty free and transparent in my house about how do you feel? And I'm sorry you feel that way.

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

And it doesn't matter if I think it's an appropriate feeling or not.

Nicole Fairchild ([13:17](#)):

Well, here's what I would guess, Betsy.

Betsy Kindall ([13:18](#)):

It's your perspective.

Nicole Fairchild ([13:19](#)):

Is that in the midst of those conversations, you're helping them know what the entire scale looks like.

Betsy Kindall ([13:25](#)):

Yes. And so that was kind of my point.

Nicole Fairchild ([13:28](#)):

Yes.

Betsy Kindall ([13:28](#)):

If you have those conversations at home, it's like they've had some experience already. So when they get to the classroom, even as a kindergartner, or honestly even as a preschooler when they're learning about emotions, if you start those things and you can't start them too early, I just don't think so. I think if you

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model and have some of those conversations, they come with some level of experience about that scale that we're talking about. Like, "Okay. I see what you're saying." I kind of understand happiness and I kind of understand sadness. And as they grow, there's a whole lot of other emotions that play a part in that.

Nicole Fairchild ([14:03](#)):

And we need them to learn that these emotions peak and then they go back down.

Betsy Kindall ([14:08](#)):

Sure.

Nicole Fairchild ([14:08](#)):

So I won't stay this sad forever and I won't stay this happy forever and I won't...

Betsy Kindall ([14:11](#)):

That's right.

Nicole Fairchild ([14:12](#)):

You know what I mean? Just learning that, you're right, some kids have a leg up because of their home life.

Betsy Kindall ([14:18](#)):

Right. But unfortunately, there are a whole lot of kids that come to the school setting without those skills.

Nicole Fairchild ([14:27](#)):

That's right.

Betsy Kindall ([14:28](#)):

With no skills.

Nicole Fairchild ([14:29](#)):

So then they're like the kiddo with the broken arm, and you're trying to say, Where does it hurt? How much does it hurt? And they have no language for it.

Betsy Kindall ([14:37](#)):

None.

Nicole Fairchild ([14:37](#)):

No language for it. And she does have a quote in here. She says, "Language shows us that naming an experience doesn't give the experience more power. It gives us the power of understanding and meaning." And that's really what we want to help young people do.

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Nicole Fairchild ([14:53](#)):

We want to help them have understanding and meaning. When they're able to label it, describe it, talk about it, then they can put their hands on it and say, "This is what I mean. No, I'm really not at a two, I'm at a seven and I need some morphine right now." They've got to learn that scale and learn, this is what this means. There's a different word for this. There's a different scale or number for this, and that takes some time.

Betsy Kindall ([15:18](#)):

It does. And what research has told us, and in this book, on that very next page, she uses Harvard psychologist, Susan David. What research tells us is that learning to label emotions with a more nuanced vocabulary can be absolutely transformative, which means bottom line, we are talking about the epitome of integrating social emotional learning into the classroom. If they can have those conversations and they have a more nuanced vocabulary, it can absolutely, in the largest way possible, change how that classroom functions, change how that student is performing, change the relationship you can have with those kids. It simply affects everything that happens in that classroom.

Nicole Fairchild ([16:09](#)):

And when we think about all of the questions that we get asked and all of the issues that come up, whether it has to do with motivating students that are checked out or kids with big emotions that don't have language or whatever the case may be. We've said for a long time on this podcast that there may not necessarily be a magic wand. The magic really comes out in the relationship. I mean, that's the thing that we come back to again and again. And you build that relationship, I think, in many cases through these interactions where kids begin to learn, little by little, that their emotions and thoughts and behaviors are connected. And when you are teaching them that, whether it's directly or indirectly, whether it's a couple seconds or a longer lesson, those continual lessons being learned in an atmosphere of safety and love, that's, I think, where the magic is.

Betsy Kindall ([17:09](#)):

Oh, I absolutely agree. I absolutely do agree. And I think for any teacher out there that is thinking right now, "Okay, how do I go about doing that?" On the Guide for Life website, they just uploaded a ton of lesson plans based on the grade level as well as subject matter. So you can go in and say, "Okay, for first grade science, here are some things that you can do around social emotional learning." And it gives you a plethora of lesson plans to choose from. Utilize them. They are made available to you. They're aligned with the standards. Access them, because that's exactly putting to work what we're talking about here.

Nicole Fairchild ([17:48](#)):

Yeah. And I think when it comes to finding a good tour guide, I want somebody who's been there before they try to take me on a tour. And so just again, you'll hear this from us again and again and again. If you listen to us, you have to take the journey of learning about yourself, having the 50% more insight so that you can take these kids on that journey and bring them to places of social and emotional wellbeing and learning.

Betsy Kindall ([18:13](#)):

That's absolutely true.

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Nicole Fairchild ([18:14](#)):

We got to do it. We got to go first.

Betsy Kindall ([18:15](#)):

We got to do the work.

Nicole Fairchild ([18:16](#)):

Yeah, we've got to go first. All right, Betsy, we're going to keep looking at this giant beautiful book and talking about it a little bit more. Thanks for tuning in with us today, guys. We love you out there.

Betsy Kindall ([18:27](#)):

We do. We will see you guys next week.