

MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE EDUCATORS

PODCAST TRANSCRIPTION OF

Debbie Millon

with host

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Ba Luvmour: Welcome to *Meetings with Remarkable Educators*. Each podcast is a dialogue between me, Ba Luvmour, and an educator who sees the greatness in their students and touches the whole of their being. These educators defy generalizations. Here's a bit about what they've done and how I came to know them.

Holistic educators' commitment is, well, holistic. Their constituencies include student, family, community, and society. They understand that every moment is a learning moment, and that caring for all constituencies brings success to each of them. It's particularly important for administrators and heads of school to embody this approach. They decide how to allocate resources, how to engage the greater community, and how to provide parent support.

Debbie Millon, never waivers in her holistic commitment. We've known of one another for years, but we'd never met. We shared the good will of many colleagues. It was joyful anticipation that I came to our podcast appointment. I was struck immediately by her thoughtful calm gaze and the smile that seemed ready to welcome me. I realized at once that we had much to share. As it turned out, we could've dialogued all day long about holistic education.

Over the past 20 years, Debbie has held a variety of roles, both within the education world and beyond. The common thread through all of her experiences is a deep commitment to community building and engagement, authentic learning and living, and systems thinking and design. She's excited to continue weaving that thread as Wingra's head of school. Before joining Wingra in 2016, Debbie was head of school for nine years at the Bellwether School, a holistic elementary school in Vermont that is closely aligned with Wingra's educational philosophy. She also taught at Bellwether and worked as the operations manager prior to leaving the school. In the late 1990s, she served as director of the Play Care Center, a play based preschool that's celebrated children's sense of wonder and curiosity. While working at the Mathematical Association of America in Washington DC, Debbie collaborated with university professors to define novel teaching methods to strengthen mathematics achievement in minority high school students.

Besides her work in education, Debbie and her husband, Aaron, a chef, opened and led a restaurant and bakery market in Vermont. Both businesses were committed to local artisan foods and farmers, and educating consumers about the importance of supporting sustainable agricultural practices. She also worked in the field of biomechanics designing prosthetics for children and studying Tai Chi Gate in young and elderly adults.

Meetings with Remarkable Educators

Debbie is committed to very simple human technologies, like listening, speaking from the heart, slowing down, breathing, and connecting to nature, in order to support authentic relationships, a deeper sense of self, and a central shift in consciousness, and aligned living practices. She enjoys exploring new ways to empower and inspire students and adults to gain awareness of themselves, others, and the world around them. Her guiding question, how do we create the condition for everyone in our community to know that they belong, they matter, they are seen, and their perspectives and gifts valued? When not in school, Debbie might be found out in nature reading, traveling, hiking, practicing yoga and meditation, or sometimes just being, and of course, soaking in precious time with Aaron.

We were chatting at lunch, and everything you said was blowing my mind. First, there are how many students in the school?

Debbie Millon: The school I'm currently at, it has 130 students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Ba Luvmour: 130. Is it privately funded?

Debbie Millon: It is tuition driven, so it is a private independent school. Yes.

Ba Luvmour: Other than the other well-known brands, like Waldorf and Montessori, that is the most students I know in a tuition driven holistic school. However did you do that?

Debbie Millon: Well, lucky for me, I arrived there with a school that had a very strong foundation in these approaches. It was founded in the early 70s by five women who-

Ba Luvmour: I was remembering Madison in the late 60s and early 70s. I do go back that far.

Debbie Millon: Yes, Madison is a very forward thinking town. Education is woven into many conversations throughout the town. Whether you're actually in education or not, the university has a tremendous presence. These five women, in the early 70s, wanted something different. They wanted a school where learning was joyful and experiential, where the soul of the teacher was nourished and taken care of alongside the children's, where we weren't driven by absolute benchmarks and core curricular ideas, but rather by the will, and the interests, and passions of the community members, the children, the teachers, the parents, whatever's happening in the community.

Meetings with Remarkable Educators

Ba Luvmour: Well, you know that in my history I've had learning centers and schools. It was always tuition driven. I've always found the parents being the most difficult. When we started the last one, I said, "Okay, we're going to do *Natural Learning Relationships* and offer all kinds of things for the parents." I thought they would be lining up for that kind of information so they would understand everything going on, and it was very, very, difficult. How do you keep the parents involved, up to date, and in touch with what you do?

Debbie Millon: That's a great question. I think it's an ongoing practice, because once we think we have a group of parents that understand it, they get it, that it resonates with their way of being, the years roll on and we find that we are constantly needing to either revisit concepts that we shared and theories with parents. Being a progressive school, so a school that is evolving growing as an organism, some of the things we do shift. We find that in our natural way of growing and shaping that, with that, comes this important education piece.

Simultaneously, I just want to mention that there is a trust component that is necessary between the parents and the organization. It's no different, in some ways, than if I have an issue I need a lawyer for or a doctor for. I don't need to understand every single piece of the law to my core in order to trust. I have to build something there in that relationship. We're asking parents to trust in the offerings in the building, the teachers' knowledge and expertise, and their passion to teach in this holistic way. If they have any questions, if they have concerns, or any doubts that creep up with this approach, that the doorway is always open.

Ba Luvmour: Many parents come with fear. This is especially in the last 25 years, or whatever, fear has become much more prevalent in our world. Their fears are: Will my child fit in? Will they succeed in various schools? That sort of thing. Do they address that with you? Do you address that fear with them? How does that work?

Debbie Millon: That's a great point. Society is...so many things are tossed at us and creating an environment where we are just reacting constantly. What we're trying to do at Wingra School is get ahead of some of these things. Just as we would with children, is a proactive opportunity. We want to let families know what they're experience might be like at the school, that in kindergarten and first grade, or in our youngest classrooms, this is what the parent experience may look and feel like. As you go through the years, mention some of these things that could come up that we've noticed as trends in enrollment. Some families, they start to second guess. They start to wonder, is this working? They notice their neighbor's children coming home with homework, or even their child themselves

Meetings with Remarkable Educators

expressing, "Oh, but I want to ride on a bus," or, "I want to do x, y, z," that's happening in a more traditional setting, and how to navigate that, how to prepare them for that, just as I would hope someone would do for me with something that could be ... Not define it so much that we're inducing this fear either.

I think of holistic practice, obviously, as asking people to participate and engage with life, with being human, so the more we can emphasize that, not just with the children and the teachers, but with the parents. Get curious. What are you curious about? Don't be afraid of it. Ask those questions.

Ba Luvmour: You were also mentioning that now your sixth, seventh, and eighth class has a waiting list, whereas previously, kids would drop out. Is that a fair term, around fourth or fifth?

Debbie Millon: That was, I think, a trend that might've even been a little earlier. We were just looking at our enrollment and families who would begin in kindergarten, perhaps with the plan to stay all the way through eighth grade, but found themselves, around second or third grade, asking those questions and wondering if this was still working, or if it was, like you said, that fear, "Is my child going to be good enough? Are they going to be prepared for college life, career, all of that," and withdrawing from the school. Therefore, our middle years, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade, weren't as highly enrolled as the other classrooms and we are seeing a shift now. I think sometimes in a private school, we ride the wave or the shifts of what's happening in a public school. The middle school years are quite intense, as we know. Families are leaving those and coming to our school for sixth grade leading to this blessing of a wait list.

Ba Luvmour: When the political climate changes, does that affect your parents? Do they bring anything like that to the school? Are they concerned with how the teaching does or doesn't reinforce a particular political position? Some parents had a lot of trouble, for instance, when the president was elected. Does that get back into the school environment?

Debbie Millon: Yes. It does. The day after the election ... Well, actually, the night of, I found myself with my own personal response, and quickly afterwards realizing, wait a minute, what a gift it is to be able to go to this community tomorrow morning. How can we create conditions for people to feel safe, to feel included, and to feel like they have a role to be a change agent? It did trickle in. We can feel the stress of the current political climate in our classrooms. We see it in our families. We know that education, although by IRS

Meetings with Remarkable Educators

standards we cannot take a political stance, education itself is a political act to help children not only participate in the act of being human, but being in a democracy, and active participants in that, and not withdrawing from it. Following the election this year, or even local political things that happen in Madison, we do feel that. Our parent body is very open and brings whatever they're thinking about to us, through their students or through them.

Ba Luvmour: Now, I know that you were the first executive director, or principle, of Bellwether School in Vermont, and it was funded and started by our mutual friend, Ron Miller. What's the difference between starting a school like that in those years and coming into a more established culture, what is the difference for that for you as an administrator?

Debbie Millon: That's a great question. I'm still feeling that out. What I felt in Madison, because this school has been established, we are on our 45th year, many of the teachers, I'd say more than half, have been there more than 20 years, so really have a solid tenure there and belief in the school. What I've noticed, the differences between the two are the mere size, obviously, makes it a little bit harder to shift. As much as we try, and I believe in a holistic school that it is a living and breathing organism, and the life and soul of the students, the teachers, the administrators, the parents, needs to be honored, when it's that much larger, like the school in Wisconsin, it's a little bit more of a dance, I would say, for lack of a better word.

Bringing new ideas ... Both schools are very democratically led, so being a leader in that way is not hierarchical, thankfully not. It's this humility of, let's talk about this. What does this mean? What does this look like? How does this connect to our mission? Inviting more space for that at the school in Madison takes a little bit longer, takes a little bit more time. It can be a little bit more messy.

Ba Luvmour: In a democratic school, what's the curriculum and is there a set curriculum? Teachers who are there 20 years might have certain set curricular that might be current. For instance, the understanding of emergence and not overdoing lesson plans, and that sort of thing. I don't know if was there from many years ago, 45 years, but it's pretty much a current paradigm. How do you go about creating curriculum?

Debbie Millon: It's really a conversation. It's really an offering. There is no set curriculum. It emerges from the students' interests from conversations that they're having, from knowledge and information that teachers know as developmentally appropriate for a child of

Meetings with Remarkable Educators

that age. We know along the pathway, learning to read and write, and multiply, subtract, all of those components at higher degrees of complexity needs to be offered and put into place. There is this construct of a developing child and honoring some of those natural learning rhythms, when it's time to get out their way, when they might need a little more facilitation or guide, and creating curriculum with them. Like many holistic schools, it's a co-teaching model, collaborative teaching model, multi-age classrooms, so the relationship between the teacher and student is nourished over a number of years. Even though we're 130 students, it still has a very small school feel. Every student is known by every teacher, and vice versa, first name basis. Did I answer your question?

Ba Luvmour: You did. You did it very, very, well and I appreciate it.

It's teaching story time. Briefly, teaching stories invite us to see the world with a new perspective, often featuring a wise person, a wise fool, or a trickster, animal. They can be humorous and often have many shades of meaning shining throughout the story. I have told teaching stories for the past 40 years, and I love them. I have to tell you, each time I tell one, I learn much more myself. This teaching story is called, *How Little Can We Live On?*

The wise fool decided to do an experiment. He wanted to see how little amount of food his donkey could live on. Accordingly, each day he decreased the amount of food given to the donkey by a bit. Of course, over time, the donkey became thinner and thinner, but it still lived and it still did its functions. Then, one day, the wise fool went in and the donkey was lying on its side quite dead. "Drats!", said the wise fool, "I almost had it able to live on nothing at all."

Can you find meanings in this story about education? If so, send your insights to Ba@luvmourconsulting.com. A three person panel will select the most relevant stories and they will be read at the end of the subsequent podcast. Again, that's B-A-@L-U-V-M-O-U-R-C-O-N-S-U-L-T-I-N-G.com.

I look forward to your insights and to learning from you. Those insights selected will receive a copy of the award-winning book so valuable for parents and educators, *Grow Together: Parenting as a Path to Well-Being, Wisdom, and Joy*, by Dr. Josette Luvmour. Yes, we have the same last name, and we are married, and we have been working together in holistic education for more than 30 years. That's not the reason I offer this book. Check out her many

Meetings with Remarkable Educators

accolades and the book reviews on our website,
luvmourconsulting.com.

Ba Luvmour: Are you part of the staff meetings when ... I'm sure if every teacher knows every student, then everybody must be talking and saying, "Oh, what does this child need?" and, "Here's what I say in my class," and that sort of thing. Is that accurate? Is that what happens?

Debbie Millon: That is what happens. I'm glad you brought up staff meetings, because it is an emerging design that's happening in my absence right now, which is, again, that trust component. The staff, last year, under my new leadership, one staff member was really leading staff meetings and doing a great job at it. *AND* ...The staff was ready to go back to more democratic leadership, so we created a staff meeting facilitation committee. We're now looking at, how do you lead staff meetings? What different models are there to facilitate conversations? Discuss, discuss and decide, all of these different pieces. What are the core components of a staff meeting that we need to move our mission forward?

Sometimes, there are administrative things, but in every staff meeting, we have something call ***ANINAPS***, which is any Announcements, Inspirations from the week; share a story of something you saw, Appreciations—so ***ANINAPS***. We also have kid talk, which is so important, that the adults holding space for the children are talking about. What could be going on for a child, and either new thing we've learned about him or her, or just a way to hold each child.

Ba Luvmour: In my experience, that takes a while. That's not just a one hour meeting once a week. Is that true for you too? How much time do you devote to it? For instance, after the winter break, we took an extra week than traditionally is taken so our staff could just have a week together with no interference. How much time do you devote to that?

Debbie Millon: Well, as a whole staff of 25 sitting in one big circle, it is about two hours a week, which is not nearly enough time. Right? We've had to come up with other ways to share that might not be face to face or through verbal language. It might need to be written language. We do build in times throughout the years for more specific level to level kid talk. One classroom might sit down and meet with the second, third, grade classroom and go through every child together,

Meetings with Remarkable Educators

and really talk about that child as a whole being, so that any information can be shared back and forth. Or, with the all school teachers, that is what we call our special-ed teachers, because everybody's special. How do they have that information when they're not with children as long a time? I wish we had more time for it. It's so important. You brought up the emergent system and it made me think of Fritjof Capra's piece on the life of leadership. I might not be saying it right. He emphasizes the balance between a design structure, and I talk about my engineering background and my design and structure...

Ba Luvmour: I'm going there.

Debbie Millon: Well, go there.

Ba Luvmour: I want to go there, yes.

Debbie Millon: The fact that, even as much as we want the school to be living, and breathing, and moving, we need some type of design structure to live within. *and...*It can't be so designed that we're not embracing emergence either. So, it's that balance. Nor can we be so open to just emergence and whatever comes that we lose sight of the design that's needed.

Ba Luvmour: I've often spoken about just making a circle and saying, that's a boundary. Let's talk about what outside the boundary, but inside it's fractal, we can do any number of creative activities, but we all know certain things are just outside the boundary. That gives us both the freedom of interacting and also knowing there is a boundary all of us agree we don't want to cross.

Debbie Millon: I love that analogy.

Ba Luvmour: Yeah, it's really simple too.

Debbie Millon: There's the freedom with structure. We can be free if we know that container is there that we'll bump up against.

Ba Luvmour: We all have the right to say that looks out of bounds, but we're all much more concerned with the creative feel than the middle.

Debbie Millon: I like that.

Ba Luvmour: I want to go back. Did I get that right, biomedical engineering? Did I hear the correct?

Meetings with Remarkable Educators

Debbie Millon: Yes.

Ba Luvmour: You blew my mind when you said that. Okay, tell us a little bit about that and also however does that translate in you to such a successful holistic education administrator?

Debbie Millon: It's a great question and one I've often looked back. 20/20's hindsight, like, "How do these dots all connect?" Oftentimes, in life, that's when we see the connection, not while they're happening. I went to an independent school for kindergarten through eighth grade that nurtured myself and my soul.

Ba Luvmour: Which one?

Debbie Millon: It was in Western Pennsylvania, *called the Valley School Ligonier*. It was on 400 acres in the woods about 40 miles SE of Pittsburgh, so lots of time outdoors exploring. Following that, I went to a very traditional public high school with all that comes with that. I think I lost sight of my inner gifts and passions, and was told, because I am strong at math and science, "You should be an engineer. These are your gifts." I went to school to become an engineer and did not feel connected to it. Later on though, I started to see that passion again, and how things work, systems thinking, design, all of that, and decided to go back to school at the University of Vermont to get my masters in biomedical engineering.

Simultaneously, my husband and I owned a restaurant together. All of these experiences, the business side of running a restaurant, staffing, budgeting, inventory, the engineering piece, systems design, analytical thinking, all those pieces that come with engineering, math, and my passion for children and education, it just made sense. When I found Bellwether, I honestly ... I'm sure like you ... when I read Ron's words (I'm sure like you), I literally felt that ping in my heart of this is where it all comes together for me. A community that's practicing its philosophies is a thing to behold. Running the business of a school, like I said, the design structure needs to be there, like your circle, so that the teachers can have their creative freedom. They don't have to worry about the budget as best they can. Right?. Allow my strengths in engineering and budgeting to provide the structure behind you, as beautiful teachers, to do what you need to do, to do what you're meant to do.

Ba Luvmour: You know my daughter, Amber, don't you, or you've spoken with her?

Debbie Millon: Amber and I have spoken, yes.

Meetings with Remarkable Educators

- Ba Luvmour: Right, well, I don't know if you know, she was trained as a marine biologist.
- Debbie Millon: Oh, yes, see!
- Ba Luvmour: Yes, and her favorite course, one of her favorite course, was statistics, which, to me, is way far away from favorite. She had the dream job of the mid-90s of being on the ocean counting blue whales. In fact, I have to tell you a funny a story real quick. She's out there in the ocean, in a zodiac, and a blue whale comes up next to her, next to their boat, and blows its nose [*breaths out from the blowhole on top of its head*].
- Debbie Millon: Oh my goodness.
- Ba Luvmour: Can you imagine what a blue whale blowing its nose is like? They were rained on by whale snot...
- Debbie Millon: On the boat.
- Ba Luvmour: On the boat. Anyway, it's a funny story. She's up in the belly of a plane going over the ocean, and she hears the chatter of the other scientists and has been observing them. Right there, the whales are fine. The whales don't need us to be doing this. We need to be doing something else with one another. She turned her back on that career and came over to the holistic education world.
- Debbie Millon: Wow. So, that pivotal moment...
- Ba Luvmour: Right. Isn't that so interesting?
- Debbie Millon: That's so interesting... That moment with the blue whale. I think that is when we start to listen to ourselves. As I was saying earlier, that holistic education asks us to realign ourselves with the natural way of being and with our own inner journey, our thoughts, our feelings, all of those pieces. I think, like Amber, that was happening for me in the engineering lab. I was in there doing all these mechanics and calibrating machines. I thought, "What is going on? I miss people. I need that." It's not to say that the engineers who are doing that are missing something, but for me, I had to turn my back on that field and channel myself in a different direction in order of my inner light to keep shining.
- Ba Luvmour: Do you have a lot of day-to-day contact with the kids?
- Debbie Millon: I do. I do.

Meetings with Remarkable Educators

- Ba Luvmour: I know, as an administrator, that can get away from us.
- Debbie Millon: That can get away from us, and I always wish that I could be in the classrooms more. I try to build it into my schedule ahead of time. I also try to make my area as inviting as possible. We just built some new administrative offices, so the walls were very white, and very bland, and sterile. I said, "Let's paint the walls. Let's add the plants." As you were saying, the aesthetic environment, the beauty just brings that in our being forth. Kids know, when they come in my office, there's going to be blocks to play with and all sorts of fun things, because I'm hoping they come to play, not just to be if they have a different choice to make.
- Ba Luvmour: A 10-year-old said to me, "Are you sure you're the principal? I've never met a principal like you before."
- Debbie Millon: Are you sure?
- Ba Luvmour: Are you sure that's your job? Let me double check here.
- Debbie Millon: Let me make sure.
- Ba Luvmour: You're the guy.
- Debbie Millon: At Bellwether, because our building was so small, we shared spaces and my offices ended up being in the little nook in the library.
- Ba Luvmour: I know. I saw it being built.
- Debbie Millon: Oh, you did.
- Ba Luvmour: Oh yeah.
- Debbie Millon: I was just tucked in with all the books, which I loved. The preschoolers, when they asked, "Oh, who's Debbie?" "Oh, she's the librarian." Its like, "Yes, I'm just the librarian."
- Ba Luvmour: That's it.
- Debbie Millon: I'm great. I'm just delighted. That connection is key. Don't you agree, as being...
- Ba Luvmour: Oh, it's really, really important. I had a really hard time with it and struggled endlessly to get back. I had fundraising responsibilities as well. That's a time eater. I found myself constantly pulled. My staff

Meetings with Remarkable Educators

was also not happy that the little amount of time that I could spend in the classroom.

Debbie Millon: I would say, if I were to hear feedback from them, they'd probably say, "I hope you get in the rooms more." It does inspire us to go raise the funds or whatever we need to do if we can find the time.

Ba Luvmour: Do you do fundraising?

Debbie Millon: I do a little. My board is a very active engaged board. Around me is a strong administrative staff, which I did not have at Bellwether. This is new for me as well. It was just at Bellwether that's another difference. It was the head of school, and a part-time other office person that helped, and then the teachers. I was balancing admissions, finances, marketing, all of those. I arrived at this other school at Maddison, Wingra, and...there was a business manager, and admissions, and marketing, and development. I had to relearn my own role in the school was, instead of micromanaging, how do you support those people to support what is? That's hard.

Ba Luvmour: That's hard to learn but incredible to have.

Debbie Millon: It's incredible to have. I think throughout my first year, I found myself, probably, too involved in each of those. "Oh, this is how I used to do it." Then, slowly started pulling away, so, realizing the gift and maximizing on it.

Ba Luvmour: At Wingra, do you have any neurologically challenged kids?

Debbie Millon: We do.

Ba Luvmour: What do you notice about that? How do you ... Well, just anything you can say about that.

Debbie Millon: That's a great question. The opportunity for all community members to learn from ... How did you word it? Neuro-atypical?

Ba Luvmour: Okay.

Debbie Millon: Neuro-atypical?

Ba Luvmour: Yeah.

Debbie Millon: Students. It's an incredible learning opportunity. And, we also need to realize, with our limited resources, that we can't provide the most ideal environment for many students. For some we can, but we have

Meetings with Remarkable Educators

to keep ourselves in balance. I found myself, in the first few times, at Wingra, whenever a student, it was either on the autism spectrum, or with executive function, whatever it may be, ADD, Oppositional Defiance, the teachers would be the first to feel that. Why is he or she not participating? This doesn't look and feel the same as the other students. I always go back to, well, be curious about that. What do you notice about that? Why is that not okay? Asking the teachers, themselves, to think about, "Well, why do I need Johnny to be in morning meeting every morning? Is it okay that he's not? What's the impact on community, if he's not." I think it's a conversation.

We don't have a counselor [on staff]...we don't have a student support specialist. We don't have all those other extra sets of hands on staff. We can provide what we can provide. But, if we are finding that we can't meet their needs, the biggest gift we can offer them is to advocate for that child and suggest a different school, or put as many supports in place that we can, train our teachers as best we can, and whatever it may be. If its sensory needs, are there materials we can buy? Is there learning we can do?

Ba Luvmour: We have lots of success. The place where it broke down is if the atypical child disrupted the class. A lot of us have the squeaky wheel movement in us. We see a child who's struggling and we want to make sure they're okay, so we spend a lot more time with them. We might, "Oh, Mary's okay. She's got this one wired." We don't really pay attention to what that means to Mary. What does "wired" mean? It's some sort of preconception we have. Do you see that at all? There was no problem interpersonally with the neuro-atypical kids unless they disrupted other kids' learning. That became a tough place for us.

Debbie Millon: We see that too. I don't want to use the word "toll", but it does weigh on the eye of the staff member that is...

Ba Luvmour: On everyone.

Debbie Millon: On everybody. That can be hard. You can feel unsuccessful if you ... "Why aren't I reaching him?", or, "Why isn't his behavior changing?" So, I think that is an ongoing conversation right now. How do we best support that? Did I answer that?

Ba Luvmour: Yeah, you really did. I know, for me, while there's a ... I don't know how to say it. If I use the word "knowledge," I mean it in a *being* sense. There's knowledge of suffering all the time. In that situation, that's amplified, which is okay with me. It's actually the heat that

Meetings with Remarkable Educators

composts my separateness. It's strong in school. Yet, I've had experience with those neuro-atypical kids mainstreamed and it makes me what to fall over and die. It's terrible.

Debbie Millon: It's not okay.

Ba Luvmour: It's really not okay. I've actually had teachers from that world, incredibly wonderful, compassionate, teachers who want to come on and work at Summa, because we treat people so differently. I know we're out of time, but I'd like to ask you, there's so many people now with who have seen some of the confusions in the more mainstream education, and who also in themselves are starting to ask themselves different kinds of questions about what's really meaningful. How does education fit in? How do I do this with my kid? That kind of thing. What message do you have for them, whether they're going to be teachers, or parents, that would allow them to step into a wider perspective than simply mainstream education?

Debbie Millon: WOW... I would say that ... Let me think here. Holding the bigger vision of the hopes and dreams you have for your child, your future, your own life, while simultaneously zooming down to the moment by moment. So, how do we hold those in balance? How am I in this very moment right now, this present?

Ba Luvmour: An introspection or a personal awareness of our own meaning and our own desire will lead us to a better choice?

Debbie Millon: Yes. Exactly..and knowing that it's not a straight path. Growth and learning is not just from here to there. That's a belief system. Starting to ... the more we're opening up to these questions and ways of being, how are we unpacking these boxes of conditioning and belief systems? Showing that vulnerability, so that simultaneously ... It's hard to see all the way there, sometimes. It's, what can I do right here today? There was a quote that someone had told me. I think it was on a mug that said, "Save the world and don't forget to floss today." It's like holding both of those at the same time, this idea that, if I take these baby steps every day in the moment, while holding on to ... without holding on so much so that it is ... We need a little bit of both.

Ba Luvmour: How do you assess who's a good teacher? How do you hire? How does the whole teacher evaluation work for you?

Debbie Millon: Sooo, it's less to me about the resume. It's more about the person. In hiring, I'm looking for the whole being, their philosophy,

Meetings with Remarkable Educators

experiences, all of those pieces. In terms of evaluation and growth, it's not so much about going into the room and observing and taking antidotal notes. I'm noticing all the time, how are they interacting with peers, with students, with parents? What type of environment are they creating? *AND...*How are they on this interpersonal journey, with reflective practitioners, journaling, intuitive practices, all of those pieces. We talk a lot about that part of being human translated to how I am at the school as a teacher.

Ba Luvmour: Thank you.

Debbie Millon: Thank you so much.

Ba Luvmour: Thank you so much.

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Ba and Josette Luvmour would also like to thank Self Design Graduate Institute. We teach there. At Self Design, we nurture each learner's ability to explore inner and outer worlds, and discover his or her own deep understanding and vision. Go to the SDGI website and see for yourself. That's www.selfdesigninstitute.org.

This is Ba Luvmour reminding you that, holistic relationships with children leads to joy and self-knowledge with the adults in their lives. With respect for you and for children everywhere, see you next time.

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