

# **MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE EDUCATORS**

## **PODCAST TRANSCRIPTION OF**

**Marni Binder, EdD**

with host

Ba Luvmour

A Production of  
Luvmour Consulting II, LLC  
Portland, OR 97221

Copyright © Ba & Josette Luvmour, 2017

**Meetings with Remarkable Educators**

Copyright © Ba & Josette Luvmour, 2017 • [ba@luvmourconsulting.com](mailto:ba@luvmourconsulting.com)

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, so here's a bit about what they've done, and how I came to know them. I cannot imagine anyone meeting Marni Binder and not being enveloped by her warmth and intelligence. I knew most of the work with art, children, and spirituality, but was delightfully surprised and engaged by her presence, a loving energy that radiated in each moment of our time together. I felt joy just meeting her. Marni reinforced a belief I have long held that teaching with holistic awareness awakens our own ever deepening spirituality.

Marni Binder is an associate professor in the school of Early Childhood Studies Faculty of Community Services at Ryerson University in Toronto Canada. Before coming to Ryerson in 2007, she worked in both the pre-service and graduate programs at the Faculty of Education, York University. Marni also taught in the inner city schools of Toronto for 23 years. Her teaching, research, artistic presence, and publications in the Arts, literacy, multimodalities, and spirituality in the lives of young children are rooted in art-based education research approaches and holistic philosophy.

Marni is the 2017 recipient of the Provost's Innovative Teaching Award at Ryerson. She's been enjoying an ongoing, ekphrastic, collaborative auto-ethnography project with a colleague from Acadia University in Nova Scotia. They are using poetry and the visual arts to explore personal and professional identities, past and present, and they are currently exploring what it means to be truly present in collaborative research. Some of Marni's recent publications include: Drawing as language: Celebrating the work of Bob Steele, and co-edited with Sylvia Kind, I want to tell you a story: Exploring the multimodal storytelling voices of children's lived experiences, Spirituality and the arts: Interwoven landscapes of identities and meaning.

Marni can be reached at [mbinder@ryerson.ca](mailto:mbinder@ryerson.ca). And further information is on her website, [www.ryerson.ca/ecs/faculty/marnibinder](http://www.ryerson.ca/ecs/faculty/marnibinder).

Tell me about your passion. Tell me about what makes you do this? It can't be tremendous financial reward. It certainly can't be a lot of social great feedback. I mean most of us don't get a whole lot of really good feedback from the world.

Marni B.: Well, I think I have to go back in time a little bit because I have two careers. I'm in my second career. So the first career was teaching in the inner city schools of Toronto for over 23 years, and then I made the shift into the Academy. When I was teaching in the inner city of Toronto during that time I did a master's and I did my doctorate. It was during the time

### **Meetings with Remarkable Educators**

that I did my master's work that I started to kind of question my practice more and I had been teaching for over ... I hadn't been back to university for 26 years. I'd been teaching for a fair bit of time, and it was when I went back to University of Toronto and I took Jack Miller's holistic education course I went, "This is the missing piece."

I'd been very immersed in anti-racist education, I had done facilitator training. Working in the inner city there was a lot of social justice work, which is still a huge part of what I do, but the holistic piece was missing. And it also blended really well with my passion for the Arts, which has been there since I was a little kid.

Ba Luvmour: Wait a second. What do you mean it was missing? For so many progressive educators, social justice is the all and everything, and to be able to teach in that field is often spoken of as self-satisfying. And yet, you're saying there was a piece missing. What was missing?

Marni B.: Well, it was the holistic piece. It was looking at ... because I mean especially in early childhood or in the primary grades everyone banter the word "this is holistic, this is the whole child." They use the w, which is nice. And I'm shifting back to putting my w back in. I remember being in a meeting with my primary teachers and our Ministry of Education in Ontario in Canada had put in we have to teach the whole child. I really had sort of going, "Wait a minute." When I asked people if they could tell me, what they thought that meant? Really what they were talking about was integrating. They were talking about some of the domains, but the spirit of the child was missing. And so that to me, that piece of identity and soul, and who that child is, which is so wrapped up in the spirituality of that child, that was the missing piece.

When did Jack's course, I all of a sudden realized that yes I was doing anti-racist work. Yes, I was looking at social justice because in the inner city if you're committed to work in the inner city it's just a given that that's what you do, you're an advocate. But, there was that missing component, which is the whole, the spirit of the child. The spirituality of the child. How does that inform how we understand the child and the families that we work with?

That started the ball rolling, and I was very lucky to have a principal who had taught in some alternative schools. She knew I was interested in holistic education and teaching through the Arts, which is what I did. Her words to me were, "You can teach the way you wish. You just have to be accountable." And that was before things got kind of dicey in Ontario when we got an extremely conservative premier, and the standardization became very difficult. I still managed to teach because I felt ... And I still tell my students today that I work the curriculum, it doesn't work me. [crosstalk 00:06:45].

### **Meetings with Remarkable Educators**

Ba Luvmour: What you're saying then is this particular administrator was able to just create a little bit of space then trusted you and had the experience of you such that you could go ahead and bring this forward?

Marni B.: Absolutely. I mean part of that was we had met each other when I was at another school teaching children with behavioral issues, and some of them quite aggressive, and I had been teaching through the Arts. So I would have scissors in the classroom possibly not very good on one occasion. But generally, I just felt that, "Well, why wouldn't I allow these children to do art? Why wouldn't they have scissors?" People were horrified. But as she watched what I did, she had a Grade 2-3, I think at the time, and she would let some of my kids come into her regular classroom, which some people had a lot of trouble with. They really felt these children should be separated. And so, she saw what with the potential of what I was looking at, and she really understood it. I guess I was very gifted. I mean it was a gift to me, and blessed that she was able to see that when she became a principal and she ended up coming to the next school that I was at. It wasn't that big of leap for her because-

Ba Luvmour: But, she's answering to people up from her.

Marni B.: Yeah. Well, when we started off it was more board specific, the curriculum, and then it became extremely provincial dominated. And when that sort of very ultra-conservative streak came in I still did it and I also figured out ways to be accountable. I mean, the parents saw the children learning. I was able to sit down with them and say, "Here's what's happening with the word. This is what they're doing." I didn't say, "I'm being holistic. I'm looking at the spirituality of your child." I mean it was just the philosophy of how I approached teaching and learning.

Ba Luvmour: And so, the medium was art?

Marni B.: The medium was art for me. It always has been.

Ba Luvmour: Could you tell us, give us a little window into what the day would look like?

Marni B.: Everything I did sort of had a very creative thread to it. I always focused on ... Children drew every day, and they wrote their stories, but instead of the very traditional "You write your story, write your story, and then if there's room in the bottom of the page, you draw your little picture, which is about teenie-weenie," they drew first. The kids would spend hours drawing to the point where sometimes they didn't get to the text until the next day. What I found teaching through the Arts did or using arts-based approaches was it allowed to slow down getting to the product, but it allowed for the process to unfold. Kids started to understand why art was important. They understood what imagination was. And so, I gave them

### **Meetings with Remarkable Educators**

ownership, and voice, and agency, which I think was important. I think for them it was really important.

These were children that came from a lot of different cultures I had parents who had had very strict schooling, but they started to see things unfold. I did poetry, a poem a day. I mean, so I taught my reading program very often through poetry. Kids that couldn't read started to read through poetry. We always had something creative. I had a paint center open all the time. If there was tables were full, and they were doing math or whatever they were doing, two kids could always go to the paint center so that was always open, which even in a Grade 2 level now you just wouldn't see it. It would be a choice at the end of a day or frill on a Friday basically.

Ba Luvmour: As this agency unfolds in the children and they take ownership, this is who they are that's coming forward.

Marni B.: Absolutely.

Ba Luvmour: What kinds of things are you seeing in their sense of self and their ways of interacting with one another?

Marni B.: I think it helped build community because I did a lot of cooperative work with them, collaborative work. The one, twos, you come in and you wouldn't be able to say, "Oh, those are the Grade 2s, those are the Grade 1s." I even taught multi-age groupings. I did a kindergarten, one-two-one for a couple of years. You just saw ... Actually, one of my student teachers asked me after a day in my classroom one time with kindergarten because he said, "Could you explain this organized chaos to me?" Which I thought was one of the best compliments I think I've ever had from my teaching. For me, it was the fact that it was organized. I knew what every child was doing. I could see what was happening, and some of them are very challenging.

But what started to happen is, there started to be, I keep thinking of Josette's comments in the workshop earlier the issue of trust building and relationships, you have been talking about natural learning relationships for years. And I think that that's what it did, so by allowing creativity by allowing someone who didn't feel good about their drawing, they had choice not to. I mean not every child is going to want to, but they were always creative, and I think I did it through more problem solving.

When we did a science lesson for example, I wanted them to think of a machine that would help them get something in their ordinary lives done. And so, we spent almost an entire week, very project-based approach, with piles of paper toilet rolls and boxes and all sorts of stuff, and they worked in pairs. We did it every day, and they said, "You mean, we're not doing

### **Meetings with Remarkable Educators**

math? We're not doing science?" I said, "Think about what we're doing here. We're covering absolutely everything."

They came up with machines everything from marshmallow toasters to homework machines to robots, and they spent a week creating these things, but what they had to do first was they had to discuss, what they were going to make? How they were going to make it? What the machine did? Then, they built it. The only thing I did was I had an X-ACTO knife because there were times where they needed holes punched in cardboard. And one group I needed to work with a little bit more intensely. But they painted it, they wrote poetry about it, but the important part was at the end I had them reflect on, what was really valuable about working with somebody else? And so, here we were doing science, but they building sculptures and robots, and they talked about how they worked, and the sounds they made. It was an awful lot of very creative stuff, so on just arts-based, but incredible creativity being applied.

Ba Luvmour: And interpersonal knowledge, interpersonal understanding.

Marni B.: Absolutely. I played a lot of music when the kids were working, very often. I had one child, who I can still remember him, he really had trouble sitting down and working. He was much better standing up. And so, you let him stand up. Where he was really good is if Bob Marley was on, and his little bottom would just sort of swing like a metronome. It's a great image I know. And I can still picture it. It was a long time ago. Those things I hold very, very dear to my heart because they worked. These were inner city kids, a lot of challenges. The classroom that I did my doctoral work on, actually out of 21 kids, I had 11 different languages, and five different religions.

Ba Luvmour: I'm stunned. I mean, I'm stunned, and just so happy to hear this, so genuinely happy. And that diversity, the work, the art, the opportunity, the projects, all of that was a big enough medium for all that diversity to find itself.

Marni B.: Absolutely.

Ba Luvmour: And then, you found that the kids also we're able to interact [crosstalk 00:14:15].

Marni B.: And I allowed them deconstruct like I would do visualization once a week with them. We called it "imagining." But it was more sort of meditation pieces that I did. I had stories from different people that I had found that had done work with children. And so, very often we would do, they would draw their pictures or what they saw in their imaginations. Those sorts of things really worked too. And they were doing in essence a daily draw as

### **Meetings with Remarkable Educators**

well because they drew first. It opened up their creativity. I can remember one time asking them, "Why is art important?" They said, "Well, if we didn't have art there would be no color in the world."

Ba Luvmour: Oh, my gosh.

Marni B.: You draw first to think what you write. I'm just trying to remember some of these comments; some of it was in my thesis. Oh, yeah. It just went on from there. They really internalized it. They understood it. What they also proved to me that we really underestimate children. I think they need to learn concretely, but they have an incredible capacity for abstract thinking.

Ba Luvmour: Abstract thinking, nonlinear knowledge.

Marni B.: Absolutely. And their spirits would shine.

Ba Luvmour: What's happening for you while you're exploring this? I mean, you've spent 23 years maybe not totally traditional, but in a mostly traditional environment, now you've seen something, you've allowed that to take over your practice, and now in your practice you're watching this unfold. What's going on for you internally and in your own life as a reflection on this?

Marni B.: I think if I look back it's something actually that I think, and I mentioned this in a session this afternoon, and I said, "The thing that I think is really happening is we're allowing children to do all this, but what are we learning?" Your question really raises that, and Josette actually said, "Well, this is not talked about." Here are all these holistic educators; we're talking about our practice, what's happening? How do we handle it through holistic education? What are we actually learning from children? That's informed us-

Ba Luvmour: What changes in us?

Marni B.: What changes in us? What I'm looking at, I'm looking back at my teaching, but I'm looking back at some of the research I did when I went into Ryerson, which is very arts-based, a lot of it working with children. Also the fact that I've, sort of, returned to doing some more of my own work. I'm not a trained artist, but I'm doing my own work, and working with a colleague in Nova Scotia who does poetry, and we're doing this incredible sort of, I would almost call it collaborative auto-ethnography, ekphrastic kind of work together exploring our coming into the Academy as a second career, what influence does this young kids? And sort of now, how are we taking that and working with each other collaboratively? And, why is it important to work collaboratively in the Academy?

### **Meetings with Remarkable Educators**

Because generally speaking you're seeing it, but I think things are quite silenced still. That's the other beauty of the group, the holistic work. So I mean, I look back on that and to me, I mean, I can remember the stories as if it was yesterday. I can still see the kids sitting in the classroom. It was a gift. It was a gift that helped me grow and understand the mystery, the awe and wonder, learning that mistakes were okay. Taking risks with my own teaching because they allowed me to.

Ba Luvmour: And in taking risks with your own teaching, one of the ... I think I heard earlier that more and more, you turned it over to them, and you were more sort of the rudder in the ship rather than the wind in the sails.

Marni B.: Yes. I mean, I had responsibilities and when the new curriculum came in I had to sort of ... There were things I had no option to do, and I had to, but I always tried to return back to that sort of authenticity or that truth I guess is the only way I can put it. And I think I've brought that to my teaching of the students at Ryerson, or I try very hard to bring those principles in. I find it's almost even harder at the university level because they're so mark-driven, they're so competitive. If I don't do well I can't get into The Faculty of Educations or I can't pursue this career. Some of them are not going to be "A" students in their undergrad, which I relate to because I wasn't.

It wasn't until grad school going through to the end of my master's where all of a sudden "A"s appeared. And then, I went through the doctoral studies I found where I needed to be. But, it was 26 years later from the undergrad, so I think that allowing for process for children to work in the schools I had to sort of look at my own process. And, was I pushing myself too fast, too soon, too quick?

Ba Luvmour: 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, and I have to tell you each time I tell one I learn much more myself.

Where the wise fool lived there was a custom. Each year the king had a parade, and if you caught the king's eye he had to grant you a boon. Well, one year the parade was ongoing, and the king was going along in his chariot when the wise fool jumped out of the crowd, jumped onto the king's chariot, and looked him right in the eye. Sighing and sort of expecting such behavior from the wise fool the king said, "Okay. What do you want?" "Majesty," said the wise fool, "I want 500 gold pieces."

### **Meetings with Remarkable Educators**

"500 gold pieces," said the king, "That's quite a lot. You're a religious man. Ask God." "Well," said the wise fool, "I did ask God, and he said to ask you." Can you find meanings in this story about education?

If so, send your insights to Ba, that's [luvmourconsulting.com](http://luvmourconsulting.com). A three person panel will select the most relevant stories and they will be read at the end of a subsequent podcast. Again, that's [ba@luvmourconsulting.com](mailto:ba@luvmourconsulting.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. But that's not the reason I offer this book. Check out her many accolades and the book reviews on our website [luvmourconsulting.com](http://luvmourconsulting.com).

I have to ask you a question. I can't remember the exact date, but an early International Holistic Conference was in Guadalajara. It was a wonderful conference.

Marni B.: Yes, with...

Ba Luvmour: Ramon.

Marni B.: Yes, ya.

Ba Luvmour: I talked to the whole assembly there. The point of my comments was that from the point of a spiritual not enlightenment, but awakening or deepening, that holistic education for the teacher had all that we needed, and that really if we did it all the way through that that itself is practice.

Marni B.: Yes. Yeah.

Ba Luvmour: Well, it was widely accepted there, but there was a lot of opposition to it. That we had to go outside the classroom to develop our sense of relationship, for example, before we could bring it into the classroom. That we had to go outside to develop a spiritual practice of some competency before we could just bring the kinds of reflective things that you just brought in quite naturally to the process.

Marni B.: You hit on something. I think also what I learned was it helped me develop my own spirituality. It helped me place it and situate it, figure out where it really belonged, so being quite a lapsed Jew, really lapsed. Anyway, I mean, and I sort of relate to other types of practices. I think that working with the kids I realized that there was ... I could work with spirituality in a way that transcended religion, although for many of my children religion

### **Meetings with Remarkable Educators**

was their spirituality. So, I also had to allow that. I keep thinking back to the very early work of Linda Lantieri and people like that. I remember when she was at the holistic conference; she talked a lot about that. And those things resonated, but I think it took me being in the classroom with the kids to start really looking at myself. And, where was my spirituality?

I mean, yes it was this x, y, and z when I was growing up, and going to synagogue, and this stuff, and then I broke away for reasons. But then, how did I return, or regain, or rediscover a different kind of spirituality that I find is more relational with people around me? And so, I think you're absolutely right. I think that yes, but I think it can come both ways. I think that you can discover it with the children, and then you can take it away, and you question, and you can work on developing that, and then you bring it back. What you have is you have this wonderful give and take.

Ba Luvmour: I'm kind of emotional right now, and there's even a tear in my eye because I've held this over and over again, and it's so important. I see it in families too. Children are a cost center, so we have to go out and get rejuvenation, and we're going to come over, and back into the family, and we're going to find the problem, and deal with it. We're going to spend what we ... And it so sad because of what ... It puts us all in a box of objectifying one another rather than-

Marni B.: Yes.

Ba Luvmour: Here's this arising right in front of us.

Marni B.: Be in the moment. I think also it taught me the importance of presence and to really look at that. I mean, I can remember reading some of Rachael Kessler's work and she talks about that with ... We had a long conversation about six months before she died when she was at our conference, about early childhood, and we talked about the fact that we really ... Everyone talks about more the older child or the middle child, middle-aged child, we don't talk about the young ones as much.

Ba Luvmour: Excuse me. We really don't about seven to twelves, seven to elevens.

Marni B.: No.

Ba Luvmour: We don't. I mean-

Marni B.: But the zero the seven, we talk about in a different way because well, young kids can only do so much developmentally and I kind of take developmentally out. I'd like to kind of push it aside for a bit because I think that locks us into a certain perception. So yeah, Going to Ryerson and working with the students that I do, I mean, I talk to my grad students

### **Meetings with Remarkable Educators**

about spirituality. I have brought it up with the undergrads. I've done a session for second years for a colleague who does social emotional development course. Slowly, I was able to find my way in with it, but I was very careful because you say the word spirituality, I had students that just went up in arms in a master's course. Well, if people feel uncomfortable with the word, then don't use it. Find another word. I went, "That's not an option." And they were livid. They went into grad lounge and trashed me. That was fine.

Ba Luvmour: Are you okay with that? Because sometimes I'm okay with it and sometimes [inaudible 00:26:38] trashed?

Marni B.: I wasn't really okay with it at the time. They were very, quite toxic actually it was not a good year for them. But, it silenced so many other people that they couldn't get their ideas out. What it was, was it was an article on spiritual literacy that I had written based on some stuff I had done for my thesis, and I was basing my spiritual literacy definition, and what I believed on the Broussard's definition of spiritual literacy, which was just basically understanding the text of our own experiences. And I loved it. It was so simple, and so clear, and so to me so true. And so, what I did was I talked ... To me it was about understanding the child, and being true to the child, and being true to yourself. And at the time, I was also using a part of the Parker J. Palmer, not his boundaries, the hospitality and the non-judgmental, sort of concepts of developing the classroom. That worked really well.

And so for me, it wasn't that you sit there and you tell the parents, "Well, today I'm going to do spiritual literacy in the classroom." It's not about that. It's your philosophy. It's a way of being. It's how you embody what teaching and learning is really ultimately about. I navigate it a little differently sometimes with my students at the university level, especially the real young ones, but more and more I'm finding they're actually craving it, and I find that because I do breath work at the beginning of my classes.

Ba Luvmour: Really? From the Stan Groff stuff?

Marni B.: No. I just do body scans. I have them do breath work. I have them do body scans. Mental health issues are skyrocketing, so it helps them center and focus. When I talk about it I say, "Look. Spirituality can mean many things to many people." It can be through the religion, and we have a very huge Muslim population, so I'm extremely aware, and also aware of what's going on with the Muslim communities in today's world, and the difficulties, so their spirituality is very much based on religion. And I also know very orthodox Jews and Christians, but I said, "When you talk about it in a sense that we have understand that not everyone's spirituality is religious. It becomes something more - and we're looking more at that

### **Meetings with Remarkable Educators**

inter-landscape." I call it children's cosmologies, which some people kind of go, "Well, she's really lost it now." But it is about children's cosmologies...

Ba Luvmour: Actually, thank you. That's a beautiful statement.

Marni B.: It is their stories, it is their cosmologies. I think if you look at Thomas Berry, and what Jack said about Thomas Berry and the ultimate sort of connection. Well, that's really what we're all trying to do is develop our own cosmologies within the bigger scheme of things. And so, art to me is a way of doing it, and trying not to make it so Eurocentric too. I mean, that's the other, but that's the whole other piece is to honor the different traditions. But with the Aboriginal populations that we have now and especially in Canada with our Truth and Reconciliation, and trying to learn more. I mean, I'm quite connected to some people, I find that I have to honor other traditions, and wisdoms, and ways of being, and teaching, and one of them is the oral traditions. You know? I've learned that, I mean, it's taken ... I mean, it's a growth for you.

Ba Luvmour: It's a growth for all of us. I mean, that's the gift.

Marni B.: But, I think we learn that from children. I really do. For me, I think it started learning from children. In the Regent Park (of Canada) it was one of the largest urban Aboriginal communities, and lot of difficulties, and a lot of the parents and the kids would not self-identify for very definite reasons, residential schools, a lot of issues around dysfunctional families based on residential, and gaps in families being able to actually raise their children, etc., etc., and understanding how. And it was learning about that that I think actually also turned me around, so there was a lot that I learned from the children. This is really good because now I think I can actually write about this. This is great. I need a copy of this.

Ba Luvmour: Of course, you'll get a copy of it. We're all going to get copies.

Marni B.: Soon. Well, I'm going to have to try and reflect on this, but I think this really what some of the core pieces were.

Ba Luvmour: And so, the other part of this of course is that there's a receptor in us that there's something in us yearning to come forward.

Marni B.: Yes.

Ba Luvmour: And that we found it here. We found it here. The idea is not to make that their religion, but to say, "Oh, it's findable." And then, we can celebrate all these different approaches.

### **Meetings with Remarkable Educators**

Marni B.: And not to be afraid of it. I think, I mean, we're all preaching to the choir here. But, I mean for me this is going to nourish me and probably keep me going for several months coming to this conference. But I think the other thing is I think that when I look at personal, professional practice, I think so often and it is a risk when you sort of remove the façade of professionalism like this is how I am as a teacher, and this is how I am as a person, and I can't blend the two, and I think that that is also not good because I don't think that you ... You're not being honest with yourself.

Ba Luvmour: Well, you've objectified yourself.

Marni B.: Exactly. But I think that's very common and you see it in academia. I see people who want to be called professor such and such. Well, even in the inner city, no one called me by my last name. I mean, I abhor it, and I won't allow it. There's certain cultures that until the students who after they've met me they'll call me by my first name and that's fine. But that's fine. It's cultural and they have trouble with it, I'll say, "What are you comfortable with?" "Dr. Marni, or Professor Marni." I said, "Okay, that's fine." They have to put the formality in. But I think that for me, someone said, "Well, it's an element of respect." And I thought, no, respect is earned. It doesn't come with my title.

Ba Luvmour: I don't use it either.

Marni B.: You know?

Ba Luvmour: Yes.

Marni B.: And so, for me that was the other thing. I mean, there were times where I felt like I was just one of ... I was a peer with the kids, which is kind of a scary thought in some ways. I was the teacher. I had power. I have power in the university. If I could I would change a few things so that they didn't feel that they were always working to the mark, but it's unfortunate that's the system. But while I have them there, maybe I can build their capacity in a different way.

Ba Luvmour: It just sounds in a very natural way what [Gregory] Bateson and [Martin] Buber were talking about. That relationship is about a space between, and yes we don't give up our parenting, our teacher-ship, or whatever, but that doesn't mean that we occupy the space between. And in an authoritarian way, it means that even more so we're creating that space. We're allowing that space between to come forward.

Marni B.: It's that liminality that I think is really important.

Ba Luvmour: Say what you mean by that.

### **Meetings with Remarkable Educators**

Marni B.: Liminality.

Ba Luvmour: Because Four Arrows this morning, he and I were talking and I'm a big guy in Rites of Passage. I've done lots of them. He talks about trance states as necessary for education to truly unfold.

Marni B.: Yeah. I know his work well.

Ba Luvmour: Sure. So when you say liminality, is that the field that we're in?

Marni B.: It can be, but you're talking about the spaces in between. I know when I talk about my art and spirituality, and I wrote a piece on spirituality in the Arts anyway for a book on spirituality across disciplines. It was a hard chapter to write because I couldn't use education. They wanted me to write about the Arts. And so it was a challenge, and I ended up bringing people that I know that do it in education through arts-based education like Celeste Snowber, and some other people that work with arts-based education research, or arts-based research.

But, one of the things that I talk about is that liminality, it's that space in between where you're allowed to just sit and be, and maybe it is what you're talking about, maybe it's very similar that space in between that [Martin] Buber talks about. I had never really explored it like that, but it could be. But it's that third space, it's that other space that sometimes we don't allow just to be there where you're sort of in between and you're sort of there for a bit, you're hanging before things progress or shift.

Ba Luvmour: So Marni, I could go on forever. You could too. And you could too, but Sam is waiting outside. Is there anything you'd like to leave? In other words, people are listening. What do you want to leave us with?

Marni B.: I think the thing that I'm thinking about a lot lately is there's so many of us around. I mean it's wonderful and we see each other at these conferences, but how do we start nurturing the next generation to sort of take this up and start moving forward with it? Because the reality for me is we're not all ... I mean, we're not dying off anytime soon, that's not what I mean, but the thing is we're not going to be coming to these conferences all the time anymore. There's going to come a point where we don't or we can't. Who's going to be ... How do we foster to keep things going or to keep the ideas of holistic education alive? And I'm seeing it from these educators that are around this area, but I can also see the challenges that they're having.

Ba Luvmour: And in the current climate, the challenges will become more intense.

Marni B.: I think there's something happening. I'm not sure what it is? But there is something happening, whether it's what Four Arrows was talking about is

### **Meetings with Remarkable Educators**

this importance of the worldview of indigeneity, returning to this sort of understanding of ancient wisdom. I think people get nervous about it. I also think people think it's a little new-agey sometimes too, which is the other problem we have in holistic at times. I think I just want people to understand that they can enter in at any point, that it's not something that's going to come immediate, that it's not something that has a recipe.

You read Jack's book, and you can become a holistic educator. It's something that you actually have to start really internalizing, and in order to do that I think you have to really question who you are? And it may be, who you are at 23, or who you are at 40, or 60, or whatever, you're going to just continue growing, and you're going to be redefining, and rethinking what these essentials actually mean to you, and how they ... And then, how does that impact? Or how do you enter into the space of teaching and learning with children? Or people at the university level? I think we just have to remember that authenticity, organic approaches, and truth are really important.

Ba Luvmour: Well, thank you for doing the podcast, but also thank you for your work and your care. It's very meaningful.

Marni B.: Thank you.

Ba Luvmour: *Meetings with Remarkable Educators* is a production of Luvmour Consulting II, LLC, copyright Ba and Josette Luvmour, 2018. Our sound engineer is Demetri Young, our webmaster is Nathan Young, and our all-important social media maven is Cleo Young. All podcasts are transcribed with show notes, and can be found at [www.LuvmourConsulting.com/podcasts](http://www.LuvmourConsulting.com/podcasts).

Please visit us on Patreon at [patreon.com/remarkableeducators](https://patreon.com/remarkableeducators) to help us reach more listeners and to invite more remarkable educators to engage us with their inspiring work and ideas in Holistic Education.

Ba and Josette Luvmour would also like to thank SelfDesign Graduate Institute. We teach there, and at SelfDesign, 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](http://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.

### **Meetings with Remarkable Educators**