

BCL ep362 The Countercultural Rhythm of Great Teaching with Carrie Eben

What is a good teacher? Most of us can look back to individual teachers who made lasting impacts on our lives. For me, Mr. Dietz, my seventh grade science teacher, was one of those amazing individuals. He was a good teacher not just because of what he taught, but because he knew how to awaken curiosity and shape understanding.

He ultimately instilled in me a confidence and a desire to pursue knowledge. In classical education, we care deeply about the right curriculum and the great books, but it is the teachers who enable true formation well beyond the simple mere transfer of information. Join us for this episode as we explore the best practices of good teachers.

Most of those practices also make for better ways to engage one another in our homes. Mountains, we all face them as we seek to influence the next generation. Get equipped to conquer the challenges, summit the peak, and shape exceptionally thoughtful, compassionate, and flourishing human beings.

We call it ancient future education for raising the next generation. Welcome to Basecamp Live. Now your host, Davies Owens.

Welcome to another episode of Basecamp Live. Davies Owens, your host here with you. A big Merry Christmas to you if you're listening as this episode is dropping.

Of course, the fact that most Basecamp Live episodes are evergreen, meaning you can listen to them whenever I suspect some of you are listening years from now on a beach somewhere. Either way, we're grateful that you're listening at this moment. If you do have some time over the break, always remember, you can go to basecamlive.com, search up there in the search bar, and there's many topics and many different guests that may interest you if you have some extra time to listen.

As we head into the 2026 year, I am excited. I'm going to be on the road quite a bit speaking at different schools to parents and school leaders. I look forward to being on many of your campuses.

As we are out this year, we continue as well to evolve the Zipcast platform that I know is being used by many of your schools. So excited to be partnering with you, both schools and organizations. In the midst of all of that, I'm always grateful to connect with you.

Send me your questions and your thoughts, info at basecamlive.com. Our guest today, Keri Eben, has spent more than 25 years championing classical education in both private schools and the homeschool setting. She is a founding board member at Sager Classical Academy in Siloam Springs, Arkansas. She serves as a head mentor for the Searcy Institute's Master Teacher Apprenticeship in the Ozark Mountain region.

Keri also consults with schools and teachers and parents building customized workshops and mentorships that help classical education take root in real life. She's also the co-author, along with Dr. Chris Perrin, of *The Good Teacher, 10 Pedagogical Principles That Will Transform Your Teacher*, which we're talking about on this episode. As always, before we jump in, I want to say a special thank you to those who are partnering with us to support this episode.

In particular, our friends at Wilson Hill Academy, as well as Life Architects Coaching, The Champion Group, our friends at the Herzog Foundation, Wise Phone, and of course, our own Zipcast family. Thank you all for your support. You can read more about their great resources on our partners page.

Without further ado, here's my conversation with Keri Eben. Keri Eben, welcome to Base Camp Live. Hello.

Thank you so much for having me. It's a joy to have you on. I am so excited about this conversation.

You and I have been doing this classical Christian thing for a couple decades now, but I'd love for folks to hear specifically, how did you get into classical Christian? I assume you didn't grow up in this world. Yes, I totally didn't grow up in this world, and I'll give you the shorter version here. Sure.

So I've been in classical education for 25 years, and I've been teaching for 25 years. But it hasn't been this linear path in the same kind of role for 25 years. But I've been a classical teacher in Tulsa, Oklahoma, when it was first ... I felt like the movement was brand new there.

It was the first classical school, I believe, in Tulsa, and stumbled upon classical education. I'd been at a Christian school before that, teaching fifth grade. I found this school, and they invited me to apply.

I showed them my portfolio, and they said, you're the kind of teacher we want. You do a lot of hands-on and embodied education. I did a lot of dressing up, and medieval feasting, and role play with history.

I felt like I was a classical teacher. I hate to even use that word. I felt like I was a fairly good teacher before then.

I had a child not too long after I started that job, and I was very convinced that I was going to have my own children participate in this kind of education. It was the education I had always wanted. I got my degree in curriculum and instruction.

I got an undergraduate degree in education at John Brown, and then I went on to get my master's degree in curriculum. But I did some of my master's degree research in classical education. No one knew what that was 25 years ago.

That was kind of fun. Well, 25 years ago, you literally were gen one. I mean, nobody really knew what it was 25 years ago.

Right. Honestly, I knew nothing. I mean, so I say 25 years, but come on.

I mean, I really feel like I've learned so much, really, in the last five to 10 years. My son, I was a classical parent then, and then I was a classical teacher at another school in Dallas. Then I decided to homeschool my children.

I feel like that was one of the best experiences and one of the best educations I could have had as a classical educator because I taught everything kind of in real time from beginning to end. I learned and taught logic, formal logic. I learned and taught Latin.

I read the classics with my kids. I taught writing. There was a very rigorous program in grammar, English grammar.

I thought I knew English grammar before that. I just had a blast. I educated parents.

Of course, just kind of like anything I do, I don't do anything halfway. I kind of jump in, I'm kind of a crazy woman that way where I just jump in with my whole heart and then figure it out as I'm going. When you really had to, I mean, in those early days, again, it was truly pioneering.

Something like how do you teach classically or what's a classical teacher, I don't have anything out there. Even today, that's still, we talk about often on the podcast that classical does a pretty good job about pointing to what books we should read and the great books in our curriculum. This whole idea of how do you actually teach it is still a huge need and a big question mark for a lot of folks who didn't have that experience.

Where do classical teachers come from from your experience? Where do they come from? I think the best teachers like that. We started a classical school here in Asylum Springs, Arkansas, where I'm located now. A lot of the teachers that we found early on had been homeschool moms because there's kind of something about this kind of organic about their teaching and them understanding everything that they're doing and learning alongside their children.

It felt very natural to classical education. That's kind of how those are my go-tos. I kind of lean on not even classical homeschool moms, just homeschool moms.

It's such an interesting observation. Often, parents rightly will say, well, where do your teachers come from in the classical school? As you and I both know, as one who's hired many teachers over the years, if they show up with the application, they've got their master's from XYZ in education. Honestly, I'm like, well, okay, sorry.

You're not going to work because you've literally been indoctrinated into a teaching methodology that's counter to everything that I'm trying to teach here. You kind of have to make teachers. Is that your sense as well? Yes, absolutely.

In my experience, sometimes it's harder to reteach a teacher who has been from a traditional education background unless they are of the type that they're searching. I also find the ones who are from a traditional education background and they know it doesn't work. It's not working and they want something different.

They come to a classical school like the one I helped found and they're like, please show me something different. Then they kind of jump in with both feet and try to figure it out. It's really on the job training.

That's your point. It seems like even now, with some frequency, I'm at schools and do some teacher training. I often will say, really, when you go help somebody try to figure out how to teach classically, most folks just point to Gregory's Seven Laws.

It's like, well, how does that really work? This idea of pedagogy, which is a very fancy word, is really... I'll let you define it because it's part of the title of the book that you and Dr. Chris Perrin said. There is a need to help people figure out the art of teaching classically. The Good Teacher, Subtitle 10, Pedagogical Principles That Will Transform Your Teaching.

You saw this need, obviously. People love classical Christian, but how do you teach? Define pedagogical and why is that a word that we need to be aware of? Pedagogical, I believe, has something to do with a children guy. Now, I'm thinking, now you put me on the spot.

I'm like, pediatrician. Pediatrician. Right.

It's the ped. Yeah. We can hack our way through the Latin prefix.

Yeah. But the point is, yeah, it has to do... Go ahead. It has to do with... Yeah.

How do you engage children? How do you train up a child? Yeah. I would say that pedagogy is really... It's how do you cultivate in a child. I'm thinking of the word educare.

How do you lead out a child and what are the practices? What are the best practices in order to do that? Yeah. That's how I see pedagogy. No, it's helpful because I think the core problem we want to just align around, because I think a lot of times people, parents in particular, look at classical Christian schools and assume teaching in and of itself, it's just generic.

Everybody teaches. It's just, what are you teaching? But your whole point is, boy, you got that. You're misunderstanding the heart and soul of the classroom is actually the way that one teaches.

The pedagogy is so... So, in general, just for people that are listening, most of us were trained in classrooms that were not taught by classical teachers and they were modern. So, what would be some elements of modern teaching, like sit and get and jam and cram and all those things that we grew up with? Is that a way to describe most progressive modern teaching in contrast to classical? Well, it's interesting because over 25 years ago when I was teaching at a private

Christian school, I had a lot of freedom to implement the things that I wanted to. The good and the bad was that I wasn't really... No one was really watching me in those early years of teaching, but the good news is no one was really watching me in those early years of teaching.

And so, I really was the curriculum. The teacher was... I was the curriculum. I feel like today... I was just talking to a friend of mine whose husband is a grammar... Well, he's an elementary school teacher in a public school, I think in second grade.

And it's testing, testing, testing, assessing all the time. And it's really treating children like scientific data points. Yeah.

And the teachers, from what I understand now in a lot of public schools, is that they really don't have any freedom in the curriculum. They aren't the curriculum. There is a curriculum laid out before them.

They have to follow it and have their students track and check these different boxes. And honestly, I've seen that too with some classical schools. And it's like, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.

We want the teacher to be the curriculum. And sometimes I think we have lost trust in our teachers as being the leader, the lead learner, and being the authority in that venture of leading students. And so, that's why I think it's really important to discuss these principles and the good teacher.

What is... It was on purpose. We didn't call it the classical teacher. What are just some universal things that help teachers be good, be good humans, and help other humans be good? Because that's really the aim and the goal of classical education as we know it today.

Yeah. And you think about often at open houses and other places you hear when people are talking about the differentiation between a traditional progressive modern school and a classical school is that this idea of it's, we're more about formation than information. And that sounds great.

But it begs this big question of, well, how do you form versus inform? And you were just saying people certainly can understand in most government schools, it's very much they're coming down the conveyor belt. You stamp the, here's the five factoids they need, shove them in, test them, get paid for good assessment scores. And this idea of formation doesn't even really exist, although there is a whole formation that's very much happening, although- You know, that's a whole other conversation for another day.

But the point is that how do you train a teacher to form the things that are true, good, and beautiful and that are lovely in students? So that's, I mean, that's really what you're after. The good teacher is one who knows how to form, not just inform, it sounds like. Yes.

And the good teacher is, is on that road, you know, herself. I was, I'm thinking about, you know, the PhD program that I'm in, shout out to Faulkner University. And, you know, I started the

program.

I really have no big goals to become a tenured teacher, you know, tenured professor in humanities at a college. That is really not my goal. I signed up for the program because I wanted to experience the great books and to know, to be for, I wanted to be formed by the great books.

And I will tell you that in the last five years during my time in this program, I have grown so much. So, you know, part of becoming a good teacher is taking that time to grow your, to grow yourself, taking time to learn and to be invested. It's not about just doing your job at your, in the grammar school or in, or in an upper school situation.

It is about what are you becoming? What am I doing? You know, and even my husband talks about, he's grown through me, you know, just through my education in the last five years. And then just even in my knowledge of classical Christian education, the things that I share with him, he's been formed by those and has been inspired to learn and read and kind of to dive deep of, you know, what is it about the humanities and the great books and in this big conversation as a whole that makes us better people? That's right. Well, that whole idea of, you know, the student will be like the teacher.

I mean, really it's a mentoring, you're apprenticing under your mentor. I mean, historically, that's what it always was. And so you never want the teacher to be, well, I've got the 10 facts down.

Let me give them to you. I mean, you want somebody who's an active lover and learner, and that's really at the heart of what you're doing. Well, let's take a break and come back.

Cause I'd love to get into some of the, we won't get through all 10 of the principles, but I'd love to get through a couple of them because they're so key to helping teachers and even parents understand really the art of teaching at its core. And so let's take a break. We'll be right back and continue the conversation.

During this short break, I have a special invitation to all school leaders, administrators, and teachers. I want you to imagine for a moment, stepping away from your everyday routine at school and diving deep into the rich foundations of Christian education, surrounded by world-class scholars, seasoned classroom teachers, and administrative experts with years of experience running schools with a lot of wisdom to share. That's exactly what the Herzog Foundation's Institute is offering.

I've had the joy of serving as a training coach for the last few years, leading their two and a half day training on spiritual formation and another one on parent engagement. They offer close to 50 unique training events ranging from board governance to marketing to classroom best practices. They even offer a training on how to teach the great books and the best part of all, well, thanks to the generosity of the Herzog Foundation, these training events, including

lodging, are completely free for Christian educators.

Institutes are located around the country in beautiful locations, including at the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C. and the Reagan Library in Santa Barbara. Don't miss this incredible opportunity. Check out the details at theherzogfoundation.com. If you're seeking an education that helps your child thrive academically and spiritually, Wilson Hill Academy has spent years developing a model that I want you to know about.

In their free guide, you'll see how their thoughtfully sequenced curriculum prepares students for college and how a biblical worldview helps them understand the world around them with clarity and how their discussion-based classes teach them to think critically, not just what to think. You'll also discover how their teachers equip students to live purposefully for Christ. With accredited live online classes, your child can learn from master teachers anywhere with an internet connection, all within a community that has transformed families like yours.

Download their free guide today at [wilsonhillacademy.com slash guide](http://wilsonhillacademy.com/slash/guide) or in the link in our show notes. Kerry, I wish we had time to go through all 10 principles, but for those listening that are teachers, even parents, as you looked at this need of communicating well, what it means to teach the good teacher, what are a couple of just core principles that you believe are places we should get started? Well, the first two that really the first two that are in the book are *festina lente*, which is a fancy way to say making hay slowly. It's highlighting a paradox, making hay slowly, which is the principle of, you know, mastering each step rather than rushing through content.

The quickest way forward really is to just be careful along the way. Think about, you know, the hare and the tortoise, which we mentioned in the book. Everybody knows that fable.

And then much, not many, which are *multum non multa*, which is much, not many. So really going, going deep with a little than trying to cover a ton. And, you know, and in today's society, and so these, and I want to say really quickly to these are principles.

These are not techniques, principles, you know, *Principia* first thing. These are things that have been true forever, universally, you know, the Roman army, I hate to bring up a, you know, a military tactic thing. But you know, the Roman army was successful because they made hay slowly.

They did things in a succession. They did it well. They were careful.

They mastered each step along the way. We think about, you know, mastering anything like music, any kind of skill takes time. So it's a paradox in attention, but it's important.

So that's the cool thing about, you know, all the things that we talk about in the book, they're principles. And so they actually can encompass anything. So make hay slowly and much, not many are not just for teachers.

They're for dads, and they're for moms at home, and they're for business owners, and they're for students. They're for everybody. These, these principles transcend everything.

So, and especially in today's society. Oh, totally. So let's unpack a little bit.

I mean, it's a fascinating phrase. It seems contrary to remaking haste, which seems like go fast, slowly. It's kind of what it, I mean, how do you double speak? What are you talking about? Like, what is, so what does that mean? Give me an example of like a, you know, make, make haste quickly, which is the modern classroom, I guess.

What does that look like as opposed to, and I know the second one really gets into like the volume of books and things. And we'll talk about that in a minute, but make haste slowly. What does that look like when it's not done well and when it is done well? So in today's modern classroom, and I, I'll even include many classical classrooms, there are, there are so many things, you know, happening and this is where, so make haste slowly and much not many are like two sides of the same coin.

So they, you know, it's even hard to distinguish because, you know, when you have too many things happening that you're supposed to be doing, it's hard to make haste slowly. You, you can't, you know, the teacher can't slow down and actually have time to address the things that are important in, in the progression of, of skills. They, their student, the students can't master them.

And so what we have today, especially in modern classrooms, just our modern society in general, we rush, you know, we rush through things because we feel so pressed for time. We feel pressed for time. And so we don't make haste slowly and we don't, you know, what happens in a classroom often is, you know, I, I did this myself, you know, you're like, okay, come on, let's, let's hurry up, get those facts done quickly because we have to go to music now.

Hurry up, hurry up and learn, you know, hurry up and learn. And just learning doesn't happen like that. You know, it, it, nature takes its time.

Something I learned from John Amos Comenius, he was a great, he was a great pedagogue or teacher from the 17th century. He basically says, you know, nature makes no leaps, but proceeds step-by-step. You can't hurry what can't be hurried.

You know, think about the development of every child and really teaching is all about, you know, wherever the child is, is where they are and you can't help them grow up any faster than they were meant to. And, and we deal with so many, you know, students in a classroom, a teacher does, and even our own children, you know, even our own children, we cannot rush that process. It's kind of like let nature take its course.

So some of, I mean, what it looks like practically, I would think in, in the modern classroom where it's again, sit and get, here's your 20 random history facts, you're spelling words. You can kind of get the idea of like, you could jam those in maybe faster, but you can't create wonder

and curiosity and conversation in with speed. I mean, by design, you really have to kind of savor and reflect and converse.

I mean, is that what you're talking about? You really just slow it down so we can actually have time. Absolutely. Absolutely.

And that's where, you know, the first two principles, make haste slowly and much, not many, they set one up, they set up a rhythm for success for all the other principles, because you can't, you don't have time. If you're not making haste slowly, you don't have time to wonder and be curious. You don't have time to have scully or contemplate at rest anything.

And, or you, you don't make time for repetition or embody learning. So the first two principles really set up the success. And, and, and I've, I've, I've talked to heads of school about this because, you know, really that comes from top down, you know, what, what, what is your purpose of education? It, and it comes back to the virtue, the aim of being good and the aim being virtue.

And if that's, if it's about all the programs and all the bells and whistles that we associate with school, then I think people get into, you know, teachers and schools get into trouble because they're just trying to do too much. And we really have to kind of prune back what we're And I'm curious your, your thoughts on this, cause you and I've been at this classical thing for about two and a half decades each. And I'd, we often are often referenced the idea of sort of the first early generations of classical schools were kind of gen one schools were, you know, if you ask them what they were trying to accomplish, a lot of it was about rigor for rigor sake.

And, and I remember I still have somewhere a, screenshot of a, of a school's website, kind of mid late nineties, I guess. But it was a, probably a fourth grade little girl standing next to this stack of great books. I mean, all the bindings of the books.

And it was very impressive. They were as tall as she was. But if you look closely, her eyes were kind of bloodshot and you're thinking really, does she need to read all of those books to be classically trained? And we just, it's, we're good Americans.

We love speed. We love volume. And so I won't name the school, but a friend who runs a pretty sizable school, most of us have heard of when he first got there, the story goes, he took the, the teaching team, principals and curriculum writers, and they went off on a multi-day retreat and came back and they, they pretty much gutted, if you will, maybe a third, as much as a third of the curriculum.

Do we need to read 18 books in 10th grade? Could we maybe read 12 and go deeper and have, so again, that's kind of what I'm hearing is like, let's just stop with a, you know, go a hundred miles an hour thing and try to go deep, which is so contrary to the, my kids won't be ready for college if we don't go fast. You know, so it's a very counter cultural approach. Right.

So yeah, to make hay slowly, you really have to focus on the next, you know, the next principle,

which is much, not many you, you need to prune. And, you know, the symbol for this principle in the book is pruning shears. And, it is about, you know, less is more, less is more.

And, but we don't like, you're right. We don't like that in our society more, you know, we have, we have supersized everything and, you know, people believe that more is more and, and we do that with our schools, but that doesn't make sense because we can't, you know, there is a feast out there and, you know, if you look at classical education as a feast, you know, you can only take in and digest as, you know, a certain amount at a time, you know, otherwise you're just working against yourself. And now you're burning people out.

You're boiling them in their mother's milk or whatever the analogy you want to say. It seems like it's a, I'm a big fan of Charlotte Mason, the educator who, you know, she talks about that. Let's, let's be rather than being an inch deep and a mile wide, be, you know, a mile deep and inch wide.

I mean, it's just slow down, go deep. And that is obviously has huge ramifications for parents, you know, thinking about other choices you're making about how you program your child's day. Do you need five team sports every afternoon and all the, all of the insanity basically fueled out of FOMO.

We're afraid we're going to do something wrong or leave our kids behind. But, you know, the richest gift is what you're describing, which is teaching in a classroom where depth in substance is more important than anything. So I had the opportunity to go to Ambleside in the UK, in the UK with that, with where Charlotte Mason, you brought up Charlotte Mason.

So yeah, I got to go to Cumbria and where she had her, her school. And I actually got to hold in my hands, her actual lesson plans in my bare hands, her lesson plans for her grant for grammar. And also holding my hands, some of the students, you know, the teachers as some of her teachers that were her students, their, their nature journals.

It was incredible. And I had had a dream and I told a bunch of head of school, a bunch of heads of school at a retreat recently, that I had had a dream right, right before we were going to Ambleside, that I had woken up kind of in a panic. And the words that were kind of stamped in front of me were, I do everything.

I love nothing. Wow. I know.

Yeah. That was like, I woke up and I was, I told my friend, God just spoke to me. And, and to me that, that is much, not many, you know, I needed to pay attention.

Something was happening that I needed to slow down in my own life. Cause let me just tell you Davies, make haste slowly and much, not many do not come naturally for me at all. I, I'm a, I'm a fast mover and I, and I jump in and I want to do all the things.

And so I'm, I'm, you know, I'm preaching to myself, but that, that dream really kind of woke,

woke me up. And I kind of spent the time in the UK contemplating that. And, you know, as I was holding Charlotte Mason's lesson plans and how she really did draw, you know, draw students in to much rather than many, less, not more.

And, and, and the reason why we need that is because we just, if we're doing too much, we don't, we don't love anything and we need to draw our students affections to things that are lovely. And if we, if they don't have the time to spend with it, to know it well, they won't love it. They will, they will end up hating it.

And I think part of the problem in even just a lot of classical Christian schools right now is, you know, they, there is this sense that they want to do, they want to keep up, you know, with all the things that a public school does and have all the bells and whistles and offerings. And they also want to be academically better than everybody else. And just like you said, with the, the, you're telling about the, the pile of books, you know, we are comparing ourselves and, and that is not what education is.

That is, that is not what education is forming, forming the soul and aligning loves to what is, what is good, true and beautiful. Wow. That's very well said.

Let's take another break. We'll come back. I want to kind of here at the last part of the, of our conversation, just really get some more ideas that you've put together both for those who are teachers.

And again, so much of this is how we're to live our lives at home and conversations. And again, as parents, we teach too. We may not have the formal title, but that is a really natural part of what should be happening in the home.

Just how we have conversations and how we create the depth over just the, uh, the scattershot. So let's take a break. We'll come back and continue our conversation.

Today's episode of Basecamp Live is brought to you by my friend, Chris Casper, who you heard on a recent episode, his invention, the wise phone is a much needed third way, providing a solution from the dangers of a smartphone on the one hand, and the limited capacities of an old school flip phone on the other. His simple distraction-free phone design for families who want technology to serve their real lives and give us and our older children a way to do basic essentials like calling or texting or maps without the web browser and the social media and the endless apps that can pull them and us into the addictive time-wasting aspects of a smartphone. I personally have a wise phone and I can vouch that it is an excellent solution and an appropriate way to use technology that supports virtue and focus and healthy habits.

Check out the link in our show notes and on our Basecamp Live website partners page, where Chris is offering Basecamp Live listeners a discount. School leaders, if you've ever wondered how to make school fundraising truly effective while being meaningful and mission-driven, check out ADVANCE. It's an event being run by our good friends at The Champion Group.

The ADVANCE gathering is April 8th through the 10th, 2026 in Greensboro, North Carolina. And here's the best part. It is completely free to attend.

You just have to cover travel and lodging. ADVANCE is for heads of schools and boards and development directors, leaders who feel the pressure to raise big dollars without losing sight of their calling. At ADVANCE, you're going to find tools and training and encouragement while connecting with peers from around the country.

You're going to learn from top development experts and leave with real-world strategies that you can put into practice right away. Plus, every attendee receives a complimentary development evaluation and review. Spots are limited.

It's a great opportunity. Don't wait. Register today.

Check out the links in the show notes for more information, as well as on our Basecamp Live partners page. Kerry, the art of teaching is, for most teachers, it comes down to, what do I have to do to be successful? I mean, that's what everybody asks of themselves. And success, often in schools, equals you got through this body of material and your students performed decently well on some kind of a test.

So if that's the end, talk about, as I know you explore in the book, this importance of understanding assessment well, because you don't want to teach to the test if that's not the goal. Right. I love speaking about assessment, probably because I wasn't the best test taker when I was a student.

So I'm going to stick it to them. But I think if we are assessing well, we are keeping the assessment aligned with the purpose of education and the nature of the student and the nature of teaching. And modern assessment generally doesn't do that.

I mean, you're assessed with one moment, maybe a standardized test, which some students do well with, some don't. You're not necessarily seeing what they know. You're expecting them to know exactly what you want them to know, which there's nothing, of course, the teacher is directing what's important, but maybe they are not able to articulate it in the way that the test is showing.

So that's one reason why I love narrative assessment. Some schools have gone to narrative assessment, at least pre-K through sixth grade or maybe even eighth grade. For me, I kind of think there's no reason why a school could not do narrative assessment, at least for a grammar school or up to eighth grade.

High school, there's always a, oh, we got to put a grade on a transcript. But I will tell you, from my homeschool mom experience, our transcripts, it was a whole different thing. I didn't give my children tests, but I knew, like, in that same way, I mean, maybe a Saxon math test or maybe a science test, but mostly I was sitting beside them, assessing them in every moment.

So assessment, if you look at the word *assidere*, which is Latin, it means to sit beside. And that's really what assessment is, coming alongside, having a relationship with a student and knowing where they are and helping them get to the next place. And our classrooms are bigger.

It's not very efficient to do that in a classroom. So I don't have all the answers there, but I do think it's very important for teachers and schools, administration, to look at how they're assessing students. And because that's really how our teaching ends up aligning there.

And assessment should line up with our purpose of education. And if our purpose of education is towards virtue, then that's what it should reveal. So it's such a, it is hard when larger classroom environments, but you think back to the old Oxford model, it was a tutor sitting there having a conversation.

And you can tell pretty quickly, if the student understands the concept, and it's also, many schools now are asking, well, what do we do about AI? It's like, that's the way around it. You actually have a conversation or you give them a prompt and watch them write. You don't have to send them off to go assess something external.

So it's complicated from a time standpoint, but it is the way to do it well. I love pointing that out. I think there's so many other ways to do assessment well, especially I did a talk at Great Hearts last year about AI and assessment and virtue.

And yeah, basically the point I was trying to make is, if education is for virtue, that's what you're going for. And there are so many other ways like narration, oral assessments, having students participate in debates, mock trials. I love doing those types of things.

They're fun. They're fun. They are.

They are. Who knew assessment could be fun, but it can't be. You need a t-shirt that says that assessment can be fun.

Well, this is great. So in the last few minutes, we've covered a lot of ground. Your book has got so much more in it.

I know that's a great resource. Just take a moment and what words of encouragement would you give to teachers who are listening? Well, the good teacher is really about empowering teachers, a lot of teachers to keep doing what they're already doing. Many, many teachers who are good may not think, oh, I'm a good classical teacher, or they may not know if they're a good teacher or not.

And they may need the encouragement, I think, that comes from this book that kind of validates some of the things that maybe they're already doing and puts language to that and maybe helps them grow some of those principles to intentionally do them. So I would say that. These are nothing.

These principles are nothing new. I would say many good teachers are already doing these principles. So I hope that encourages those teachers.

For teachers who are frustrated in classrooms, I hope it gives them something to have conversations about with administration and with other teachers and say, hey, we need to maybe rethink some of these things. The good teacher does not have all the answers, but it hopefully will make a good conversation between teachers. I really think it speaks to the teacher.

There's a lot of real-life examples and discussion questions and things in the book. I think it's a good resource for teachers. I know it is.

And it's something that teachers want to have, to your point earlier, they're always on the path of learning. And so this is an opportunity to have that conversation for administration to ask the same question. Are there things that we maybe need to recalibrate so that we can continue to deliver excellence? Well, Kerry, thanks so much for your time.

There's a lot more we talk about on this topic, but I appreciate your insights and then look forward to having you back at some point to continue our conversation. Thank you again. Thank you for listening to this episode of Basecamp Live.

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