

Bonni: [00:00:00] Today on Teaching in Higher Ed's 100th episode. Dave and I celebrate this milestone by talking about failure.

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Bonni: [00:00:19] Welcome to this one 100th episode of Teaching in Higher Ed. This is Bonni Stachowiak and this is the space where we explore the art and science of being more effective at facilitating learning. We also share ways to increase our personal productivity approaches so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

Bonni: [00:00:47] He graduated with honors from Oxford. He has two Ph.D.s one in economics from the University of Zurich and another in neurobiology from Harvard. His seven page CV documents ample publishing and presenting successes. Why has Johannes Haushofer been generating such a massive amount of tweets and an article in The Harvard Business Review? It actually isn't for any of that stuff it's for his CV of failures. And in this CV he lists the degree programs he didn't get into the academic positions and fellowships he didn't get the paper rejections from academic journals and I'll be posting a link to the article about his CV of failures at [Teachinginhighered.com/failure](https://teachinginhighered.com/failure), sorry slash 100 speaking of failures.

Bonni: [00:01:43] And today on this show we're not going to be talking about success. It's all about failure today. But the kind of failure we can celebrate because we're still being shaped into being more effective teachers because of what we've learned from the experience and I can think of no better person to celebrate 100 episodes of teaching in higher ed and what are failures in teaching can mold us into being. Today as educators then my best friend, my husband, my partner in teaching often, Dave Stachowiak. Dave welcome back to the show.

Dave: [00:02:16] I was so wondering how you were going to phrase that. I'm glad to welcome today's expert in failure.

Bonni: [00:02:23] There really is no one better. This guy with do Ph.D. He's got nothing on ya.

Dave: [00:02:28] But it is interesting to think about this episode in recorded say how much I do. As uncomfortable as it is how much I realize failure both in business and higher education is so valuable for learning so I'm really excited for the conversation today and in fact today's episode was parts inspired by a failure you had in a past episode which was rather amusing to me.

Bonni: [00:02:53] You know Dave how much I have admired Ken Bain. It was actually his book What the Best College Teachers Do that was the very first book that I read about teaching in higher ed and just the thought that he accepted the invitation to come beyond the show made me both exhilarated and terrified all at the same time and we did the interview and it went well. We got done and he actually was full of regret that he had not mentioned something on the show.

Bonni: [00:03:25] And I explained to him you know it's not a problem at all I can just press record and we can capture anything you'd like to add to the episode. And he was excited about that and began speaking about things that at the time I didn't know anything about he's talking about the Minerva prize it's a half a million dollar prize that was awarded to Dr. Eric Mazur and I'm typing as fast as I can go and excited that he's going to get to share this thing that he really wanted to share about on the episode.

Bonni: [00:03:55] And so I went back and pressed record and said Tell me about the manure award and auto correct had changed the Minerva prize over to the manure prize. And ever since. Ever since recording that episode it's been it just makes me smile because I'm so embarrassed that I would have done something like that with such a magnificent expert on the show. But also it's also made me think we should have a maneuver award. There should be an award for things that happened like that.

Bonni: [00:04:31] And so we decided to put together a manure award and ask people to share their failures and especially failures that are still shaping them as educators today.

Dave: [00:04:42] Am I remembering right that that episode did air with you talking about the manure award with Ken Bain?

Bonni: [00:04:47] Yes it's on there.

Dave: [00:04:47] That that's it's awesome but it's archived the way. Fabulous. Well you know it's funny because this all comes full circle for me too because I went I did my undergraduate at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana (or at Urbana-Champaign - rather shame on me forget the name of school). And it's a great agriculture school in my freshman year I was in the dorms that were right next to the south farms. And so I correlate waking up for a higher education experience with smelly manure multiple times a year. And so there's just something that seems so right to me about good quality higher education and manure.

Bonni: [00:05:24] Well that's wonderful. And I know you know this about me already but it always reminds me of some of my favorite experiences growing up and getting to go to horse camp. And so I smell manure even today and I'll just be reminded of great times and my childhood so I actually I'm one of the few people that rather enjoys the good smell of manure.

Dave: [00:05:42] Well there you go. See that's a great setup for our conversation today.

Bonni: [00:05:45] Your dad told me a story actually about you helping a neighbor carry bags of manure into his backyard. And that you actually were you've been paid in manure in the past areas in the past and you received one of the bags for yourself.

Dave: [00:05:59] That's not the word that was used around our household. When the story was told. But yes I got paid in manure. And boy I have a I've I've learned the importance of higher education because you get more and more opportunities to use my cognitive skills. I think that's why manure is the perfect theme for today's show.

Bonni: [00:06:19] Yes absolutely. And I'm going to be sharing some of the stories and Dave's going to be sharing some of the stories some of them called in and left a message for us and then some of them sent in some written words and we'll be reading those words on their behalf and we're going to start out with you.

Dave: [00:06:36] So is there be a award at the end here is this a competition for. That's the part I'm not.

Bonni: [00:06:41] This this is a competition. Yes.

Dave: [00:06:43] OK. So there will be an award given at the end of the these so be listening.

Bonni: [00:06:48] Dave's parents are in town and they had all sorts of ideas about what we could see. And the recipient of the menorah award but we need to find a good agricultural professor's got access to some some cattle this first message is from Dr. Katie Linder and if you haven't heard me talk about it already on the show she is the host of the recently launched Research in Action podcast and I've listened to every episode that she has released it's such a nice parallel to this podcast because we don't talk about research here and that's all she talks about over there and is just wonderfully produced. And I would highly suggest that people listen it's the Research in Action podcast. And here is Katie's message:

Katie: [00:07:36] Hi Bonni. This is Katie and I'm calling in response to your request for sharing a story of a cheating failure for the teaching and higher ed podcast and the one that still sticks with me is when I was a graduate student in women and gender studies I hadn't yet learned the benefit of allowing discomfort in the classroom to create more of a teaching moment. And I remember a specific situation in which a student comment kind of riled everybody up in the classroom and I decided to just very quickly move on and try to try to move aside to kind of the next content piece. And I I know now that I've moved on too quickly and it was really a space where a lot of learning could have occurred and I was just too nervous to let it happen. I didn't have enough teaching experience to really revel in that moment. So it's something I think about a lot and especially when I'm in situations where I'm working with students or faculty and we have a moment of discomfort. Now I know that we can really use those for important teaching and learning moments. So thanks so much for your podcast love listening and looking forward to future episodes. Bye.

Bonni: [00:08:45] Katie I loved your story because I've done that so many times. I didn't share about those failures because I was afraid I could just start and then that would be the episode. It would just be me talking about times when I rushed instead of slowing down and I think even in the times when I didn't slow down in the moment those times when I didn't realize that we all still have the right to go back and bring things up and say you know when we got together

last time in class this came up and I'd like to go back and talk about that a little bit and not really taking advantage of the opportunity to do that right after I had rushed through something because of a discomfort with it so thank you for sharing that story with the whole community. One of the things that people who were writing in their stories were sharing about was just how vulnerable it is to share these these failures so thanks for kicking us off, Katie. And Dave I know you have a story to share from Jeff.

Dave: [00:09:40] I do. Jeff Hittenberger is a past guest on this show wrote in. And Jeff writes: "Congratulations Bonni on the 100th episode. You've created a fantastic resources resource for professors and other educators. I just listened to your interview with Stephen Brookfield on episode 98. Stephen shared about the ways we can be our own worst critics. They're strongly identified with that strain of perfectionism that insists that unless every student in every class feels like every moment was a rich and profound learning experience that I have failed often at the end of the semester I found myself sitting in the classroom after the last student has left on the final day of class feeling a vague sense of emptiness and asking myself is that it. There was so much more I hoped would happen. We barely got started.

Dave: [00:10:25] Over time I've come to recognize that these end of semester feelings are for me at least normal. I'm saying goodbye to students. I've come to care deeply about. We've engaged together in learning. We've shared the journey for a little while and now our paths diverge. I hate saying goodbye. Mostly I'm just exhausted and they need to take a deep breath and get some rest. One last related thought Bonni drawing on your episode 98 interview Stephen rightly says that we should always engage with our students as adults. In addition to that I liked your suggestion that maybe we should engage each other as children. Children play their hearts out exhaust themselves and then go take a nap. Lots of wisdom there I think. Thanks again for the wonderful podcast Bonni. Here's to the next 100 episodes".

Dave: [00:11:05] I don't know if I have anything to add to that. Thank you Jeff for the wonderful wisdom.

Bonni: [00:11:09] The next story is from Angela Jenks who Dave you mentioned just a moment ago she is a recent guest and I met her at the Lilly Conference and it's neat because we're right we live very close together and it's just fun to meet someone else with such a passion for teaching in higher ed.

Dave: [00:11:25] And I haven't gotten to do yet but I was so inspired by that conversation I wanted to go check out what she did with her syllabus on line and the visually appealing nature of it I can't wait to go check those out.

Bonni: [00:11:34] The story that she is going to share from us really resonates with me because it's all about context.

Angela: [00:11:42] Hello and congratulations Bonni on 100 episodes of Teaching in Higher Education. One of the failures that I've experienced happened in one of my first classes it was my first class as a professor. It was the first day of class and I was going over the syllabus with students. So of course we talked about the assignments where they could do the readings what they were going to have to turn in all of their exams all of the various course policies. After my whole spiel about the syllabus I stopped and asked Were there any questions and there was only one question that multiple students had. It was the only question asked that day and it was how much does the textbook cost.

Angela: [00:12:20] And I am ashamed to admit that I didn't know I didn't know the answer to that. It hadn't been something that I had really thought about when I had chosen chosen the books. And it is odd because I actually was a student in college who had trouble with textbook costs. That was a major major expense that I would have to plan for but I hadn't hadn't looked up. I hadn't considered what the books cost to cost when I was choosing textbooks. And that's something that I have definitely corrected in future classes. In fact in that that course in future forms of the syllabus I would put the cost on the syllabus of what the textbook cost at the bookstore what it cost on Amazon what it cost through Chegg. And then that it was available free at the library.

Angela: [00:13:02] And it's been one of the things that I've certainly considered when choosing textbooks now and it turns out to be sometimes difficult to find out from publishers what this book will cost for students. But I always make sure to ask before I choose a textbook. And it's also is just affected the way that I I try to understand the situations that my students are living in the challenges that they have and to think about how my course can can fit into to their lives and to consider who my students are in all of the activities that I'm doing.

Bonni: [00:13:33] This is such an important story. It's important for a few reasons. First on its very basic level it's important that we recognize the substantial cost that textbooks represent to our students. And I know for me I recognize the privilege that I had going to college and back then you would actually go to the bookstore and you'd find your list of classes and you'd go pile them all up.

And my parents have always been really big readers too so there would never be any thought that you wouldn't read every word that was assigned to you I mean in the sense I didn't read every word by the way that this kind to me and my undergraduate experience but my mom would come up and we'd get the books and she'd swept the credit card in there. It was all done.

Bonni: [00:14:14] And to recognize that that is not the experience that many of my students have. It's just so important. But then also on the broader level just how important it is in terms of recognizing that our students are living in a different context than we often did. I could talk about this a long time but I know I was just having more stories.

Dave: [00:14:30] Yeah yeah I was just thinking about this. I remember you telling me at one point you were considering books for a class and and one you had eliminated a book for a number of reasons but one of them was the cost of the book. And I remember thinking when you were telling me that like I said I probably would have never had that consideration until you talked about that as far as planning books for a course and I could very easily have been her. And having that question come up in a classroom and not know the because I like you that was my college experience I had parents who were you know well often could pay for textbooks and so I didn't have that journey that a lot of students do today.

Bonni: [00:15:05] Our next story comes from Josh Eyler who's been on the podcast a few times now and thanks Josh to not not calling in not writing in but actually tweeting in your story and for people who don't know this you can actually collect a series of tweets that you would like to into a story the Web site's called Storify like story but with ify in the middle of it. Yeah I did that for Josh's story and then I'll be in the show notes at teachinginhighered.com/100.

Bonni: [00:15:38] And I also did it for I just participated while I was waiting for you to get home. I just participated in my first canvass chat. Because our university is switching over to canvass in the fall so I am getting my hands on everything I can about canvas and I could just the the guy who led it had six questions that he asked that could drag his questions over to Storify And then as people were tweeting in their responses I could just click and drag them and easily reorder them.

Bonni: [00:16:06] And what a nice environment it is. As far as ordering things just how you want it. And one of the guys who I'm connected with on Twitter he had embedded a video and the video is even turned out really great on Storify too

it's a little bit of a tangent but since I haven't mentioned Storify before on the show I think it's a great resource if you want to curate tweets and this is Josh's story about his teaching failure.

Dave: [00:16:29] Over a series of tweets. And so he writes in and says "Bonni's doing an episode on her podcast on failure she asked me if I could contribute a teaching failure.

Dave: [00:16:36] Here goes: "My most productive failure as a teacher involved giving quizzes as a mechanism to ensure students have read for the class as a student. I take tons of reading quizzes nearly every instructor I knew gave quizzes that seemed like the thing to do. I taught my first lit survey medieval English literature when I was finishing grad school and of course I included reading quizzes. One day I was teaching the poem Pearl in translation. I gave a reading quiz on the basics of the poem i.e. a father's grief. No one did well and I know that many of them read the material what purpose to these quizzes actually serve. I wonder from that moment on nearly 12 years ago I've never given another quiz instead. At that time I shifted to a one page reading responses that engaged with the text in some way. This has since evolved to using discussion forum and in elements to ask questions for which students provide a response before class. It's one question per class requirement. Answers must be at least 200 words and deal analytically with the text. Students are not graded on content just that they complete the required number. This has turned out to be more engaging for them and less grading for me. I read them but use the LMS analytics to see the numbers. I learned from the reading quiz failure that I didn't want students to know trivia. Instead I wanted them to engage."

Dave: [00:17:55] Great lesson.

Bonni: [00:17:56] Absolutely those lessons that we can learn when we ask ourselves the question why are we asking our students to do this. The next story is from Michelle Miller also a past guest and author of minds online and she wrote a story and she told me in advance that I could bleep out the curse words in the story or otherwise do whatever I would like with it. And while I am not afraid of colorful language I did watch all the seasons of The Wire and there is quite a bit of language in that wonderfully produced show. However I also really enjoy listening to podcasts when my kids are in the car and one of my favorite podcasts I can never listen to now because our children are our daughters old enough to be a parrot.

Bonni: [00:18:49] When she heard hears words that sound interesting and our son is even older than her and can really recognize I think sometimes when things may not be appropriate and when he could get some attention for how we were actually somehow somehow miraculously not many words like this but so I'm going to be replacing a colorful four letter word that begins with the letter F with the word banana.

Dave: [00:19:14] There you go.

Bonni: [00:19:14] Yes.

Bonni: [00:19:16] "I was teaching in a meeting of the undergraduate research methods course in the summer session. These accelerated sessions mean that the class meets four days a week for around two hours a day which is a long time for anyone to stay focused on topics like Survey construction and error variance. Fatigue was surely setting in already as I concentrated on answering one student's involved question about study design. As I got further and further into my explanation I was dimly aware of a bit of chatter coming from the other side of the room. It didn't seem all that distracting though so I just raised my voice a bit and kept on going. After a minute the unmistakable sound of arguing voices managed to penetrate my consciousness. A moment later the dialogue became crystal clear shut the banana up. No you shut the banana up. No you shut the banana up. Two women sitting next to each other.

Bonni: [00:20:23] Do you like the banana?

Dave: [00:20:24] I thought it was quite a good artistic rendition of this dialogue.

Bonni: [00:20:30] Because we don't have a beep so that's the best we could do.

Dave: [00:20:32] I was so wondering if you're going to mess up and say the actual word.

Bonni: [00:20:35] "Two women sitting next to each other we're now fully engaged in a screaming match. I used my most commanding tone to send the rest of the class on break and ordered the two screamers to follow me to my office now. Good thing it was a long walk as it gave me time to ponder the fact that I had absolutely no idea what I was going to do once I got them there. I closed the door behind us and having no other ideas. Simply said you both know the right way to act in class and that was not it. So what are we going to do now. They looked at each other and immediately broke down in a rush of apologies. I said

firmly I apologize for not keeping order in the class as I should have done. Let's forget about it and move on. We left. I reconvened the class and I went on like nothing had happened. The morals of this story are this Boyce is right about nipping classroom disruptions and Abed. You don't necessarily have to do this with a heavy hand but you have to do it. Remember the issue is not your ego or comfort but your students comfort. I do believe that the students I had to confront wanted to do the right thing but reacted badly. In a moment of strain the quote discipline I handed out may not have seemed strong but under the circumstances I felt that the students did not need to be punished or have a detailed explanation of classroom decorum. Rather they needed a way to cool off apologize and save face."

Dave: [00:22:06] I think the wise words of wisdom here of many of the things that she mentions is the importance of confronting something when something is not working and some things distract in the classroom because those are things I've learned a few times. Not so much even in higher ed but in corporate training I've had a couple of times where someone's been distracted to the distracting to the class for whatever reason and it was a minor distraction but it was an annoyance that it kept on going and I didn't address it. And then days or weeks later as the class went on the training course went on it became way more of an issue so I have learned to lean into uncomfortable situations proactively.

Bonni: [00:22:45] When I shared the manure story I shared about getting to speak with Ken Bain and this next person James Lang is also someone who I just absolutely admire and I was joking when he was on the show recently to share about his new book called Small Teaching that one of the reviewers on iTunes had said that I don't gush too much and I said I might gush too much in that episode. He was kind enough to call in and share about one of his failures in teaching and that's actually a recent one.

James: [00:23:15] Hi Bonni this is Jim lang. I'm calling to share a story with you for a podcast on what we can learn from our teaching failures and I'll tell a very recent one in part to show that these teaching failures still happen after 16 years of full time teaching and lots of writing about teaching and learning of higher education. I left some points on my syllabus in my literature survey class this semester for students to help decide what assignment they wanted to do and so what we decided. About halfway through the semester was that we were going to have the students create three minute videos designed to focus on the historical context for the literature we were reading and it seemed like a great idea and they were excited about it and I was to and put them to work and they had the tech folks come in and give them a little tutorial on making these

three minute videos with movie and explain the students that these would potentially be ones that we could you know make available to the public for other teachers to use in their survey classes. And I did not think about all the possible things that could go wrong with the making of these videos or what their products might actually end up looking like without me having ever made one myself. So they got in the first video and showed in class and it was just so far from what I had been expecting in a variety of ways.

James: [00:24:36] And I just kind of stood there not knowing what to say knowing that there were eight other groups that were making videos and this was the first video that they saw and it was just completely different from what I wanted all of the groups to be doing. So I don't really know what to do. I kind of fumbled my way through it and in the end over the course of several weeks I managed to slowly kind of help shape the assignment and into something that was closer to what I was hoping that they would achieve. But it really was a very sharp reminder to me that when I asked students to do something I need to be very aware of all the criteria. Be very clear to them about what kinds of things I'm expecting to see in an assignment. And if I don't do that I may get anything. So I did learn from that and it was a good reminder for me that the importance of creating at least a rubric for the students or a very clear set of criteria for both myself and them as I go forward with especially with new assignments ones that I'm trying for the first time so I will learn from that in the future. Thanks for doing this podcast and for helping to celebrate our teaching failures and how we can turn them into successes. Thanks.

Bonni: [00:25:45] I loved hearing this story and it reminded me that this can go both ways. We can assign something new and we've never tried it before and we can have students not at all produce that kind of work that we were anticipating in a less than appealing way and not really live up to the expectations of the assignment or the real objective of doing it in the first place.

Bonni: [00:26:10] But I recently had an experience as a sign something for the first time and had the opposite where the students said we weren't really sure what you wanted and we were going to actually send you an email with pictures and make sure that it was what you wanted. And I said I'm so glad that you didn't. Because they completely blew me away and I'll be sharing about this either in a blog post or an upcoming episode it was a poster session assignment that I gave them in my consumer behavior class that completely just flabbergasted me in terms of the quality.

Bonni: [00:26:40] Again I'll be sharing about that. But Jim you are so right. Just the importance of articulating why we're doing an assignment and then at least some minimal framework for what a quality job on the assignment is going to look for. And thanks so much for sharing your story.

Bonni: [00:26:56] The next story comes from Cameron Hunt-McNabb. She's also been on the show you can see a theme here. I did send out and it's time for us to get somebody in them to share and she shares:

Bonni: [00:27:08] "When I was a grad student just starting teaching in the composition classroom I had a student ask me a question in class that I didn't know the answer to at that time I felt like I had to know everything in order to be a good teacher. So instead of admitting that I didn't know the answer to the student's question I dismissed it by saying something like We can talk about that later it shuts down the class discussion and probably made other students hesitant to ask more questions later though in grad school. When I first began teaching as an assistant professor I reflected on how it might be useful for students to see that sometimes the professor doesn't know everything and instead model curiosity inquiry and research. I think this approach also pushes against the banking model and shows how learning can be co-operative too. So when students ask questions that I didn't know the answer to or weren't 100 percent sure of the answer. I began to say that's a great question. I'm going to see if I can find that out. Why don't you look to and let's see what we can come up with for the next class one students specifically commented on this approach in his her course evaluation noting that it made him her feel able to find out things and learn on his or her own".

Dave: [00:28:24] I was thinking in context of all of these stories Bonni that I've said before I even feel like you know I'm in the midst of greatness every time you have me on the show here because there's so many talented thoughtful just well educated leaders at higher education that are on the show now. And yet how many have a continued experience failure and have struggled through that and have made mistakes.

Dave: [00:28:50] And I think that that's just a really it's a good reminder for all of us even when you're at the top of your game and a lot of ways you're probably dealing with failure as much as anyone else. And I think back to it and Annisa Ramirez said on the show a while back that scientists have a different word for failure. They call it data. And I thought about that a lot and I've used that quote a number of times with clients even in thinking it just reframing our perception of how we view failure and if we if we take that as data and start thinking about

how then we use that data to make the experience better for ourselves and our students I think that's that's huge.

Bonni: [00:29:29] The next story comes from Maha Bali and I first became aware of who she is on Twitter and what a wonderful resource Twitter can be for us to connect and share about our failures and successes in our teaching and Maha teaches in Egypt and has such a unique perspective in terms of some of the things we have in common culturally. And then some of the differences that we have and particularly she she's going to share a story about really just the high pressure testing environment there and an experience that she had with one of her students.

Maha: [00:30:03] I totally deserve them in your award. A lot of my students suffering well almost. I used to be a teacher educator so this happened in a class of students who were in service teachers and the student teacher was quite a bit older than myself. One of my students was talking about how one of her exams. That's the high stakes final school exams in Egypt was so difficult. She cried during the exam. I was like why would you cry about that. I am such a brat. I didn't grow up in Egypt. I've always had westernized private schooling. I was fortunate that my parents never put me under pressure of exams and such and that I generally do well enough in school. I never had to feel that way. I was totally an empathetic and I didn't even realize that at the time. And then I'm not entirely sure why none of my students called me out on it. How could I deny someone the right to feel pressure in an environment that is really you know high pressure in this country where are these exams are so high stakes. Your future depends on how well you do on them and you can feel your career choices slipping through your hands when you see an exam you feel you can succeed in. How could I totally dismiss all that context and make my student feel bad for breaking down and crying. Wasn't it bad enough that she actually went through that. Not only was I an empathetic I also silenced her and demonstrated to others that voicing vulnerability or weakness in my class would receive a harsh response. Total teaching fail.

Maha: [00:31:25] Thankfully I somehow woke up at 3 a.m. realizing I made a mistake. I sent all my students a long email apologizing for my behavior. I had heard one of them but I apologize to all of them because I recognize the repercussions of what had done and I promised to give her time in our next class session tell her story in full uninterrupted and then I would listen with an open heart. That was actually one of my best teaching moments. One of my students teachers responded thanking me for how my email inspired her to be a better teacher by admitting mistakes and trying to rectify them. And that's how I turn

manure into gold. Well not really. I can't promise I stopped making stupid responses in class. I am too spontaneous to ever be that good but I definitely learned that making mistakes and admitting them can be better than never making mistakes at all.

Dave: [00:32:08] I like her a lot especially the fact that she started with I totally disagree with her. It's awesome.

Bonni: [00:32:15] Absolutely. And Dave I know you are going to be sharing our last failure story.

Dave: [00:32:21] Yes this is from our friend Doug McKee I believe right. And Doug who's been on the show I think twice now. Right. So Doug wrote in and said: "It was my first day teaching my first class ever in advanced undergraduate seminar on the economics of aging. I had just given my students a rough outline of the topics we were going to be covering that semester and I try and. And I was trying to communicate a big idea to be an economist requires an intuition about how humans make decisions as well as the mathematical skills to model such behavior. This combination is what I love about the field. I wanted them to exercise their own intuition and since they were all college age I ask them questions about how their grandparents made big decisions in old age. What did your grandparents do for a living. Have they retired. How do you think they decided when to retire.

Dave: [00:33:11] This was a total fail here. Half the class didn't know what their grandparents did. Three quarters didn't know if they were retired and the rest had no idea how they had made that decision that no experience or intuition at all. I think I understand way better now what kinds of issues my students think are important and what they actually have intuition about connecting what I'm talking about to these things makes a huge difference in how much they get out of the class later on in that first semester we had a class on elder care how do families decide who should take care of an older family member of the family when they can no longer live on their own.

Dave: [00:33:46] Almost everyone in the class had something to contribute as they had just returned from Thanksgiving break and that was an incredibly common topic of conversation amongst their families over Thanksgiving dinner. This turned out to be true every year I've taught the course and it's always the best class of the term".

Bonni: [00:34:04] What's so fun about using the skills of metacognition and our own teaching is that we can just keep getting better when we recognize that we've had a failure like that and then we can turn it around and just gradually over time in ebbs and flows just keep getting better at what we do. Thanks so much Doug for sharing the story it really reminds me of the conversation I had with Aaron Daniel AnnaS on the episode about calibrating our teaching and just how hard that first year is because you don't have that context you don't really know where the students are experiencing.

Bonni: [00:34:37] Coming into college or continuing on their college experience so thanks so much for that. I have to admit something Dave was. It's time to award a man new award. And you were driving home in traffic and didn't get to participate in this process I actually had a way of evaluating the story as it was going to be the strength of the failure as and how magnificently large was the failure. And then the strength of the continued learning over time and as I was going through evaluating the stories I just couldn't do it I couldn't pick a winner that way.

Bonni: [00:35:10] So I decided to pick it in a little bit of a different way because to me it could have given the award to any of these stories and I do appreciate so much people writing in. But the person who was on the show I think she's actually the only person on the show who's not been on the show before is Maha Bali. And when I was writing back and forth to her I did admit a bit candidly that the reason I've not invited her to be on the show is not because I don't know for sure what a great contribution she would make to this conversation but just my own fear and reluctance over having someone that is in such a different context than me and just being so terrified that I would just fumble of my words and ask something that is you know kind of like oh you live in Egypt you know this guy you know like could you say something that represents all Egyptians because you happen to be from. I just I just figured that I would do something really dumb like that.

Bonni: [00:36:08] But I thought well you did something really dumb like that with someone that you do have a lot in common with here in America henbane and you still somehow survived after that. And then the other thing that came to mind is I wouldn't even know maybe I shouldn't be admitting this but I wouldn't even know how to send her a gift for her manure award.

Bonni: [00:36:27] I was thinking if I wanted to like send Amazon thing is like I'd have to do that. Do I do the Egypt story or do I do. And so I thought well that would be great because you could give the manure award. I actually saw that

someone had sent something out tomahawked for I believe it was for her daughter a gift or something like that thought someone has figured out how to get something from the United States although I think this person might be from Canada but but nonetheless someone outside of Egypt knows how to have a gift arrive and that would be a good challenge for me and it could just be an excuse for me to invite her officially to be on the show and get over my own reluctance in creating more manure in future episodes and just overcome that fear and probably learn something about you know international gift giving I can learn more about her and something she might enjoy or maybe find out something about her daughter that her daughter may enjoy.

Dave: [00:37:18] It's just it's just another case for the importance of good dialogue and talking with others because it turns out you're married to someone who might know something about how to get a gift across international borders. Well there we go. There you go. See you don't have to go very fertile.

Bonni: [00:37:30] I didn't. And the last thing that we're going to talk about is recommendations although we're not going to each give a new recommendation what I did is I went back through. You were in traffic a long time this afternoon. I was doing everything.

Dave: [00:37:45] And you cannot underestimate the realities of living in Southern California. Never go away entirely.

Bonni: [00:37:52] I was doing everything I could to procrastinate doing the school side of the work that I should have been doing this afternoon and I was going through looking at all the recommendations that the various guests have given over the last almost two years.

Bonni: [00:38:06] And I will say first of all there are a lot of books recommended on this podcast and a lot of amazing books recommended on this podcast and also the guests that come on have frequently written their own books or maybe more than one book. And let me just say there are a lot of books that people have recommended that I haven't gotten to but one that I would just mention real quick Dear Committee Members a novel by Julie Schumacher. That was a great book I did end up reading that one.

Bonni: [00:38:34] And then Teaching Naked by José Bowen, had him actually on the show and was able to have him share with the community. And then Sean Michael Morris recommended a wonderful book called Savvy by Ingrid Law. And not only recommended it but have the author send it to me with the front

page inscribed by her so nice and now my mom's read it and I ended up buying the second and the third book in the series it's just a wonderful series that's kind of a little bit Harry Potter esque with just the savvy the magical powers that these family members possess it's just a wonderful wonderful book for reading.

Bonni: [00:39:12] And then Cameron Hunt McNabb had recommended from Tina Fey's memoir Bossy Pants just the idea that we should say yes to more stuff. There's been a lot of great books. Amy Collier recommended and the mom too said "These are the words I want to make gravestone that I was a helper and that I danced.

Bonni: [00:39:32] There's been a lot of tools that have been recommended. Doug McKee recommended Piazza which is a discussion board and I did use that by the way I'm mentioning books that I read or tools that I've used. And then Aaron Daniel Annas talked about the Amazon echo which has only gotten better since he talked about on the show he was on.

Bonni: [00:39:52] And then there were people who had just given inspiration for our teachings such as Rebecca Campbell said Be kind to your students. Don't make assumptions. Linda Nielsen said. Cultivate your courage by trying out things you're afraid of. This kind of the theme of today's episode for sure Lee Skallerup Bessette "Be hopeful be optimistic and give your students the benefit of the doubt right from the start.

Bonni: [00:40:19] And then I shared about those poster sessions which I plan on sharing more about because I really learned a lot from that experience. But that was all inspired by Doug McKee who had blogged about his poster sessions with his students and he and I went back and forth a little bit on how I might craft that into my teaching.

Bonni: [00:40:38] And then lastly Dave I know this is one that you and I recommend pretty regularly about getting connected with people on Twitter and that was from Peter Newbury who talked about just building a community and having a community of people that are like us and also people who are not like us. And I know I just get blown away by the power of that network. It's really incredible what we can learn by going up there.

Dave: [00:41:05] Well and my recommendation is to keep listening to the show and perhaps that's a little self-serving. But I I I just really am impressed with what you've created in starting the show and the community building around it and

the authenticity that you bring to the conversations. I mean there's so many things you've done with the show that I've been thinking about in my own show and bringing that together. And I'm really I'm so inspired to see so many people passionate about talking about good teaching in higher education for whatever reason that's not been a major focus of a lot of higher education institutions and I'm really excited to see that come together here so thanks for allowing me to be a small part of it.

Bonni: [00:41:44] And thanks for joining me on this episode about failure. And just for being such a good model I guess for me as a teacher that we can take these experiments and. See what happens.

Dave: [00:41:58] I am so grateful to be able to play along. It's been fun.

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