

All right. Welcome everybody. I'm Noura Shahbi.

I am the founder of EBLI, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction, which is a system of teacher training and student instruction to help anyone of any age and ability level reach their highest potential in reading, writing, and spelling.

So our mission is to teach the world to read, and I appreciate all of you being here tonight.

And we're going to be talking about a topic that's really critical and really difficult to talk about.

And I've had a lot of angst myself with coming into this, but there's been such a need, especially since the podcast, "Sold a Story," as well as "The Truth About Reading" and a lot of screenings of that going out, and just so much more awareness and a lot of people feeling much more courageous to come forward and say, "This reading and struggling with reading is really a problem for me. It's a problem for me as a teacher.

It's a problem for my students. It's a struggle for my child."

So there is an enormous amount of trauma and anxiety and angst around this from every angle, and

we're very fortunate tonight. In just a little bit, I'm going to introduce you to

Anne, who, if any of you have seen "The Truth About Reading," she is in there sharing some of her story, and she also wrote an article for Distinct Magazine, and we have both of those links that Lucindra will share in the chat for you if you haven't--

We have a whole webpage we actually made about the documentary, so you can learn about that, and also the Distinct Magazine, that you can get that issue for free. So we're going to be doing that too.

So I come to you tonight with a lump in my throat and a pit in my stomach, so I ask for grace from all of you because while my angst and anxiety, I'm sure, is very minimal compared to that of those who actually experience subliteracy and extreme subliteracy, it still is very much there and has been bubbling and pouring out really for the last few months, really since "The Truth About Reading" and the "Sold a Story," podcast too. So it's a tough topic, but I really hope that you all will share your comments.

If you have resources, or suggestions, or things that you have found that have worked, share those in the comments, and together we are going to learn, hopefully.

I want you to know I am not an expert in this.

I have worked with thousands, if not tens of thousands, of

children and adults who

have suffered from trauma and anxiety around reading, and that's what tonight's

topic is about. There's trauma about a lot of things, but this is particularly

around experiencing subliteracy and the inability

of whatever degree that reading, writing, and

spelling is difficult. Okay? So know that we're

coming to try to share solutions, and help, and benefit

for all of us, and we're all in this together.

Okay, so having said all of that,

I'm going to share my screen, and we're going to get going.

And do share also, if you would, where you're here from, what your interest is in

this.

If you're watching this on a recording, thank

you, and we're glad that you're here also, and you can go to the EBLI Community

Facebook page and share your feedback.

And if you have questions and things to share, you can share that there.

So welcome, everybody. Okay, here we

go.

Okay. Let's see.

Come on, slideshow. Okay.

All right. Here we go. Okay. So our

topic tonight is trauma and anxiety, specifically

about surrounding reading. And again, in your chat, tell us where you're from.

I always like to have my little Where's Waldo around the world of all of you

literacy missionaries, and that's fun, and what inspired you to

join us tonight. So do share, and also please share your questions because we will

be answering those at the end.

I just put this in here because

I want us to all be very mindful, and

careful, and graceful to each other, especially on this webinar.

Always, of course, but specifically on this webinar,

and tremendously much so around Anne.

Anne has displayed so much courage to

come on here and share her experiences and her story with us.

So

many of the things that we talk about may be triggering, and we don't even know why

within our own selves, and that's understandable and really to

be expected, I think. But just remember to be

kind-hearted and

have this be a safe space with trust, and know that all of us

are doing our best in this very moment and always too.

And

just really have a lot of grace, and love,

and kindness in all of that. And aren't these pretty colorful pictures too?

Which makes me

feel good, really, just looking at them.

So just asking that, and if you feel at all

compelled that you want to share some of the angst you're feeling in any

kind of way that may be not feeling in this

trust and kindness type of thing in the comments, I would ask that you don't.

All right? And our team is on here tonight.

We have Lucindra, and Shannon, and Hannah, and

if by chance you're like, "Uh-oh, I just said something maybe that was a little

unkind," or

my frustration's showing or whatever, we will help and remind you of

that too. So

Just a little bit of,

I don't know, probably easing my own angst here too, and hopefully

also Anne's.

I took this picture today. This lion is in our

conference room, and I

look at this saying at the bottom a lot.

The lion's beautiful, but really it's the saying that helps me

in all kinds of situations surrounding this literacy

mission that we're on, is that, "Courage is not the absence of fear; it

is the strength to do what is right in the face of it." So

I'm terrified right now, and I don't know if you can tell or not, and it doesn't

really matter, but I really am like, "Ugh."

But I'm doing this anyway because it's so important to our children, and it's really so important also to us, whether you're a parent of a child who's experiencing subliteracy like I was, or someone who teaches these kids.

There's a lot of fear a lot of times in a lot of ways.

But courage is not not having fear. All right?

We can have that fear and then just move forward because it's the right thing to do, and having the strength to do that, too.

So I love our lion, and I go in there every so often and read this,

which I have it memorized pretty much, but

I just feel like this lion, he looks pretty serene, and like, "You got this." Okay?

So I just wanted to share our lion with you, too.

This is what we're going to be doing in this webinar tonight.

You're going to meet Anne in just a minute, a marketing executive who experienced subliteracy for many decades of her life.

Talking about the traumatic effects of subliteracy, specifically, obviously, around reading and writing and spelling.

Symptoms in general, and also

as far as the reading stuff and what that can show up like.

Some strategies that you can do and things that you can do to help decrease the anxiety so that kids and adults are in that place where

they're able to learn. And then talking also about secondary trauma.

I want to touch on that, too. And I also want

for you to,

just as a reminder, to be sure that you do put your questions, your comments, your suggestions, your resources,

share those with us. I'm going to share some things at the end, two different books and then an assessment on anxiety that have been

shared with me from you guys. So, I'm sharing

them with all of you, too. So first, here's our sweet Anne.

I'm going to stop sharing my screen for a second, and I'm going to talk

about Anne and how I met her, and then she's going to introduce

herself

also. So

I did not know Anne this time last year.

Anne

will have to probably tell you this, but she had

found Molly Woodworth, who was in "The Truth About Reading," and then

she found David Choc somehow and had no idea that there were

other adults who were professionals that experienced

this subliteracy issue. And so she and

David had been interacting quite a lot, and David and I were going to New

Orleans to present at a conference called Plain Talk,

and Anne lives in Florida and wanted to meet David, so she came to this

conference. And she unknowingly, bless her heart, walked into where we were doing filming, and Nick was interviewing people for "The Truth About Reading," and David was doing a follow-up interview that day, and Anne came into the room with him.

She'd talked to less than a handful of people about her literacy struggles ever in her life, and Nick, in his amazing way, the director, convinced her to have a seat and talk about her literacy struggles. So talk about courage. Our lion is nothing compared to Anne.

So that was the day I first met Anne, and then a few weeks later, she ended up here in Michigan, and allowed me to teach her some Ebley. She stayed at my house and we did that.

We stayed up talking until about 3:00 a.m. every night.

I usually go to bed at 10:00, so you can tell it was very enriched and wonderful conversation, for sure.

And she has helped me and our team here with her brilliance in marketing, helping us get our website written, and know I don't want to be a website writer.

I learned that through that experience, but she guided me the whole entire way.

She's brilliant. And so she has-- I consider her a friend also. And when she told her

story, when she was interviewed for the documentary, she

wasn't sure if she was going to allow it to be in the documentary and thought,

"Okay, I did that. I don't want to talk about it anymore." But she,

with her courage,

is continuing to talk about it to help others learn from

her experiences. And so Anne, go ahead.

You want to introduce yourself and tell a little bit what you'd like to share?

Yeah. Thank you so much, Nora, for that very kind introduction.

I really

appreciate it. And

it's been an interesting journey.

I still carry a lot of personal shame

around my struggles that I've had with literacy.

As you mentioned, it's probably one of the secrets that I kept

closest to my heart for many

years.

And sitting down in front of that camera filming for "The Truth About Reading" is

probably one of the most vulnerable things I've ever done in my life.

But I decided to say yes to the documentary because

learning the skill set of reading and becoming a fluent reader and a

proficient reader really changed my life, and I feel

like with that, we need to get the message out, and we

need to help as many kids and people that are struggling with literacy as we

can.

So

in a nutshell, for today, since none of you probably know me, I'm going to lead with the parts of my life that I have kept the most secret, and I'm going to talk very high level about my literacy journey and just so you have context for the rest of today. So

I want to highlight I'm not speaking for everyone who suffers from subliteracy. This is my experience, and there's not a lot of voices that speak on this topic. So please remember that as you hear what I'm saying, is that it's not encompassing of everyone's experiences. And then I also would love for you to keep in mind that there aren't any villains in my stories.

My journey, I think I came from a really good school district, and my teachers did the best that they could with the tools that they had.

And I think that's just important for me to note before we dive into some of what my story looks like.

So, I think I'd start with second grade.

Second grade was a very defining year for me.

It was the year that it was identified that I had a struggle with reading. It was also the year that I would last receive any type of intervention with reading that I didn't self-initiate.

And it was the year that I decided by myself that

this was a secret that I needed to keep because the risk of sharing it and exposing it became too high of a threat for me.

So from second grade on,

I moved through past second grade, and I graduated high school.

I would guess my reading level when I graduated high school was at around a second-grade level. I had very high coping skills that allowed me to graduate from high school with a Diploma of Merit.

And when I entered into college, I really wanted to earn my college degree myself, and it was something that was really important to me, just internally, that I change some of my behaviors, and I earn this degree.

So that meant that I needed to learn how to read, and I knew I needed to learn how to read. And I went to the university office.

I asked for their reading programs.

I was politely told that everyone in college had the competency of reading and that they didn't offer that assistance.

And I decided to try to teach myself.

And so what I did was memorize an immense amount of words. And by the time I graduated college, I would say I was reading fluently at an eighth-grade level solely from memorization,

and I was comprehending at a really high level as

well. So I could read fluently and comprehend.

I graduated from college within a standard four years.

I was able to be on the Dean's List my senior year,

and then I entered into the world of work.

And I didn't want my literacy struggle to consume my

life, so I promised myself I would only ask for help once or twice a year.

I graduated college in 2006, and in 2020 is

when I came across a reading tutor that

was teaching the print to speech

methodology,

and she was the first tutor that I had found throughout that whole time

that was able to actually help me. I worked with her for a little

over a year, and I went into the assessment reading at

an eighth-grade level from memorization, writing at probably

a second-grade level from a spelling level.

And then I came out of that assessment reading and writing at

an eighth-grade level, all phonetically, which drastically

changed my life. And then when I worked with Nora, I came in at

an eighth-grade reading level, and I was able to exit her

program with--

Did I roughly work with you, Nora, for about four hours maybe? Four or five?

Yeah.

Leaving reading and writing at a college level.

And each step within my literacy journey,
my life has significantly had less anxiety, less
stress, and has just in general become lighter.

It's really been transformative.

So that is my literacy journey,
and so as we talk today, you'll see most of
the trauma and the highest level of trauma that I experienced would be in those
first 18 years when I was at that second-grade reading level.

So we'll spend a lot of time probably talking about those
emotions and

really the symptoms there, but
we'll go all the way through. So,
yeah, that's me in a nutshell.

Thank you, dear.

Yeah.

Appreciate that. Okay.

All right. So here's sweet Anne again.

So how does experiencing subliteracy feel?

Those of us who have not experienced it,
we wouldn't know that, of course, but there's a lot of
people who have.

Many are very articulate at sharing that.

There's two books that I recommend, and I'm going to have Lucinda share those links

in the

chat, too. One is "The Truth About..." No, that's the movie. That's not the book.

"The Teacher Who Couldn't Read," by John Corcoran, who he taught high school for 17 years, learned to read at 48 years old.

He's very honest in his book

and tells you some of his story.

And the other one is called "The Most Unlikely to Succeed,"

Nelson Lauver,

syndicated radio broadcaster that learned to read when he was 29.

I had the pleasure of teaching him when he was 50.

Maybe we could find that-- Hannah, could you find that video of him?

Maybe we can share that, too. I hadn't thought about that.

But anyway, both of them talk

very openly about their experiences,

especially through school. So reading John's book, "The Teacher

Who Couldn't Read," was the first time, and I'd been teaching people for over a

decade at that point, but it was the first time that I really got an

idea and an insight into what this

feels like for those who are experiencing it.

And I

was very thankful for that, even though they're not easy reads, just FYI.

But I like this from, I don't know this person, Kristen DeBeer,

but talking about how people who experience subliteracy often

feel stupid or, we hear that a lot. They feel alone.

They feel frustrated and angry and all of those things.

But this quote is so interesting of like- That is really

bad, but even worse are the negative messages we receive from

ourselves, because a lot of self-talk that is very negative, but also

others can be even more detrimental than

the

experiences that we have. So there's a lot of

moving targets and landmines, really,

that people experiencing this

have to navigate.

Steve Dykstra, we're going to share a lot of his resources in the chat and also

in the recording,

resources in the recording. But he, if you've never listened to him,

he's got some great videos and we'll share some of those too.

And he's a psychologist that does a lot of work around trauma

and has realized about the effects of trauma with not

being taught how to read, not having literacy.

So talking about how when kids are going to school, this is a

continuous trauma,

seven hours a day, five days a week, all those weeks, 40 weeks out of

the year for 12 years, okay, when you're not able to read or

read well. So it's this trauma that just keeps on traumatizing,

and that's really important to understand that that's a mindset, that's the feeling that many, many kids, probably most if not all, actually, experience coming to school and thinking of it as a war zone like, "Oh my gosh, I have to protect myself here because there's a lot of potential problems that I'm going to have to deal with." And so that's just that repetitive trauma that keeps pounding.

And this too from, I don't know

this, this actually came from this doctor, but

Steve Dykstra quotes him in one of his articles too.

But talking about other trauma, obviously there's a lot of other things that are traumatizing to kids and adults and all of that, but talking about these other traumatic effects, your house burns down, you

lose a

parent, you've got

some sort of physical or

mental abuse. But all of these terrible things, if we teach

them to read, it can help overcome that so much

more. But if we don't, that continuous banging of trauma every day,

when school becomes another trauma,

that any kinds of therapy around the other

stuff isn't going to work so well if we don't teach these kids to read.

So the whole point is that it is

critical, and sometimes it's

the matter of life and death, literally, for some of these kids and adults,

to ensure that we teach them how to read.

And

it's really just critical. So I wanted to have Anne, I'm going to stop sharing

again, and Anne, if you could share from your

perspective what this experience of the traumatic effects of

subliteracy are, especially from you as a

child and a younger student.

Yeah.

I think, Nora, of all the points that we're going to speak on today, this one is

definitely the hardest for me. I'm definitely

struggling to find the words to really encompass

how traumatic the struggle with

literacy is.

One of the things that I think is the biggest misconception that I hear

from educators and people is that

literacy is excluded to schools or

classrooms, and that there's a stressor when you're going there of reading a

book that you can walk away from. And I think one of the

things that makes this so traumatic and so hard to deal with

is that we live in a society where literacy

is expected, and so there is

no walk away.

Just taking a lunchroom example,

because we're talking about the school system of you think maybe the kids have been in a learning environment, we're asking them to read, that lunch could be a break for someone who struggles with subliteracy.

But as someone who's been in that scenario, when you walk into the lunchroom, you're immediately faced with the struggle of reading right out of the gates. You're looking at different signs that are maybe describing what food, which line to stand in, what direction should you go to be from point A to point B.

And

those challenges sometimes are challenges or threats to you because they're limiting your life.

So as simple as going into a restaurant and ordering from a menu can be challenging. And then, as you mentioned, it can also become very life-threatening. So when you're sitting in the hospital and you're completing a form, and you're not 100% sure

if you're writing the correct word or you're looking something up, then you know that that could potentially be a life-threatening case as well as many other examples all the way through.

And from a diagnostic perspective, I think one of the things that was a challenge for me as when I was in therapy

and seeking help around the struggles that I had had with reading and the anxiety that I had faced on a day-to-day basis between not only the threats that come with me not being able to read, but then the social stigma that comes along with that, that immediately I'm categorized as someone who's less intelligent or that I'm not smart.

The amount of humiliation that comes from laughing, teasing, being picked on. And unfortunately, that ridicule doesn't stop when you leave school.

It continues on into the workplace, into boardrooms, into meetings.

That

in and of itself is a layer of trauma.

And then the one that I think has been the hardest for me, even where I'm at with my literacy journey today, and is the feeling of worthlessness.

So as a young child, when I was surrounded by adults and people that were supposed to, and I say supposed to because I don't know the other term, supposed to help me learn to read.

When they fell short, and then the way that I was treated

when they fell short, is there was a consistent blaming

of me,

whether it was an intentional or not intentional, as a young child,

it was too big of a weight for me to look at the

system of reading wars or understand the different

components of literacy instruction.

I didn't have the comprehension to grasp that.

So my own self

decided at seven years old that there was something

inherently wrong with me, and that was my protective mechanism to

say, if I could protect myself, and all of these other

people are safe, and they have my best interest in mind,

then that explains the behaviors that I'm receiving from my

teachers, from my peers, from the people that are in my

society and wheelhouse. And when I

learned how to read,

the recognition that there wasn't something wrong with me, that there was

something wrong with the instruction that I had been receiving,

that was one of the most liberating moments, as

well as one of the most devastating.

Because I had to face the grief of what had

happened in my life and the grief of what could have

been. And those two elements of grief are both really heavy

and things that I struggle with today.

Thank you, dear.

Yeah.

And be sure that if you have questions, to ask them in the chat, and both Anne and I will answer them after.

Okay.

All right. So what are some symptoms that kids exhibit in school and at home that are often telling you that they have tons of anxiety around reading?

Avoidance and withdrawal are two big ones.

Sicknesses, like they end up in the office with the nurse a lot.

The stomach aches and headaches are probably the two most common things.

Frequently having to go to the bathroom, and that's a great escape route many kids use and many talk about, too. Like, "Uh-oh, they're doing reading stuff, and my turn could come up in the next five minutes or so.

It's definitely I have an emergency bathroom thing here."

And little kids, even in kindergarten, first grade, start using

that as a way to escape, too. Not answering questions, like you ask them a question, they just don't reply, or not interacting with students with if you're having a buddy kind of thing.

Really just being quiet, because not saying anything is better than saying something for a lot of times for these kids.

Crying about going to school. If you're a parent and you have a child who is or has experienced this, you know about this one.

It's just like, "Oh my gosh. This is so horrific to have your child so upset and sad about the prospect of going to school." So that's another thing that you often see.

They're losing their homework or just not doing their homework or saying they lost their homework or avoiding that homework because they can't do it,

and it's another source of shame, that type of thing.

And then especially when you get up into middle school and all, skipping school, skipping class,

those types of things. Frustration and anger are another way. These are things that we see a lot with kids who are suffering from subliteracy.

They lash out. They lash out at the teacher. They lash out at their classmates.

Nelson Laurel actually talks about doing this and how it would get the teachers to be afraid of him. Even in third grade, he threw a book at his teacher's head in third grade, actually, who had written his name across the board how he wrote it, misspelled, actually, of course.

And she would do that every day for the class to say, and showed them,

"Look at how Nelson writes his name." And I think it was on the third or fourth day, he took a big, thick textbook and threw it at her head.

And he said, "It got me out of the room, so that was good, and I got to go to the principal's office, but the teacher never did it again." So that lashing out is sometimes a way to think, "Okay, I'm a bully to you, teacher, and you better leave me alone." And teachers oftentimes are like, "I'm going to leave you alone," right? Also lashing out at classmates, too.

Getting into fights, of course. Diverting, being the class clown, being a jokester. There's so many ways.

These kids, all kids are just so brilliant, and they learn really quickly ways to divert attention from themselves and ways to hide their struggles and challenges with literacy.

Being bullied is really huge. But also then being the bully to try to divert and the same idea, really, with lashing out at the teachers, but going more for their classmates for sure.

Distrusting those in authority, thinking, "You haven't shown me that I'm safe here, and that this is an okay kind of place." So a lot of lack of trust is really very common. And they're not going to listen when you're given directions or do certain things, for whatever reason, but a lot of times it's like just

Leave me alone. Let me not be seen or heard or anything so that I won't

be in danger of
having to be humiliated or
deal with this. So it's all this survival and at a state of
that heightened fight or flight that these kids are
experiencing, and they get more adept at it as they get older and
fine-tuning these things. And once they become adults, they're just really, really
good. All of you have more than half of the people in your world, wherever your
world is, that are struggling from these same things,
and they're just very good at hiding it.

Oopsie. Okay. So Anne, I'm going to go back to you, my dear,
and talk about these things as far
as your experiences in hiding and that type of thing.

Yeah. So

I want to go back to second grade, if you don't mind, for just a
second, and talk briefly before I hid my
reading struggles, which for me was a very small
window of my life.

But every day,
there was a repetitive cycle that would happen
in second grade for me, and it was identified that I was
behind in school. And so that
identification resulted in me
getting more homework sent home with me to do at home.

And just due to some unfortunate circumstances, I wasn't able to complete that homework at home.

So every day I would come back in as a second grader, knowing I was walking into class unable to complete the assignment.

I didn't know how to read myself. I couldn't do it independently.

I wanted to do it independently, but I didn't have that support to do it at home.

So I knew coming into class every single day that the first thing that would happen would be that I would get in trouble for not doing the homework that I had been done, and there were so many questions and discussions around what was preventing me from doing that homework.

And

I

wanted to share that because it was a never-ending, it felt like a never-ending loop. I would be assigned more. I would take it home.

I would disappoint everyone. I would come back to class, and the loop resulted in me getting in so much trouble.

I needed to come up with a different way for me to survive in this environment. And so when I was hiding my literacy struggles, I was hiding it not only from my teachers, I'm hiding it from my peers, I'm hiding it from everyone.

And the two areas that I received the most

criticism or feedback around from my teachers would be around talking in class, as well as disrespecting authority. Those were the two things that were consistently spoken to me about. And I want to give a little bit of some insight around why I would talk in class and what would happen.

So one factor that I think really got overlooked when my behavior was being focused on from my teachers, my parents, and principals, administrative staff, when they were looking at my behavior, is there was a big focus and highlight on my behavior, and there was a lacking of focus on my teachers' behaviors.

And it was a dynamic, and it was a relationship, and it was a yin and yang.

If a teacher set up and organized their classroom, maybe not intentionally in a way, but from the first day I walked into class,

I was watching how that teacher would ask for class participation. And my level of anxiety and how I behaved in that class would immediately change based on the predictability that I could see that that teacher used.

So if the teacher, for example, took out the roll and they went down

alphabetically, I knew exactly where my name would fall.

I would know when I was going to be called on, so I could excuse myself to go to the bathroom. I might even skip class that day when I became in high school.

Every single class, I knew how the teacher would operate.

If the teacher was more at random, and they would randomly pick from the class to solicit feedback or get engagement, those are the teachers where I had the most disruptive behaviors because I would be put on the spot more likely.

So that's when it would be said that I was disrespecting authority.

So something as simple as I need to go to the bathroom, or I need to go see the nurse, I forgot something in my locker, I've got to run, I'll be right back. If the teacher met me with resistance, in my opinion, at that point, I was leaving regardless because if I stayed, I couldn't read out loud or give the feedback that they were asking for.

I didn't have the skill set to do it confidently. And then I would not only be put in a position of vulnerability, I would also be laughed at and made fun of by my peers, and in some cases, my teachers would mirror that behavior as well. And so differently than students, but it was definitely made okay, and

society-wise, it's still okay. It isn't uncommon if you're in a group of people and you see a misspelled word somewhere on a sign that a group of people start laughing, and it's acceptable in society today. I don't think it should be, but it is, and if you're that person and it's something that you're scared that people may find out, it's a very vulnerable position to have a room of, at max I've had a room of 250 people laughing at me because I misspelled a word.

That's a very vulnerable position to be in, especially when you're trying to do your best.

So

When I was in the classroom, and if that teacher would let me go to my locker or let me go to the bathroom or let me do something, then I wouldn't have been disrespectful to authority at all. If the teacher met me with resistance and put something in my way, and their tone of voice and their--

I would often try to stay as calm as I could, but as anyone knows, especially when you're a child and someone's coming from a position of power or authority, if they're raising their voice or if they're getting frustrated or if they're getting heated, it's really, really hard to not match or mirror that exact same energy.

And I say that,

I guess, in defense of myself a little bit, but also to try to

hopefully bring awareness, because I know we have a lot of teachers on this call,

that if you are focusing a lot on these children's behaviors, I

hope the next time you're putting a lot of focus on their behavior, you can also

take just a moment to pause and maybe look at how you

showed up in that interaction as well.

What was your behavior like?

Because you don't have to go to a parent-teacher conference where they're going to

sit and talk about your behavior, but that child does.

And then the second piece was me talking in class.

And the main time I talked in class, after

reflection, was after any time they would have

us read in the classroom and take a moment to read a paragraph or read a

passage. First and foremost, I would like to start a conversation with

one of my peers because I wanted to get the knowledge of whatever they had.

I wanted to learn, and I knew that I didn't have the ability

to get that knowledge myself. So

I would want to talk to one of my peers, A, for my own

knowledge, to see what they read. And you have to remember this was a secret, so I

couldn't just be like, "Hey, what'd you read?" Because they'd be like, "Why don't

you just read it yourself?" Right?

So I had to be a little clever and creative on how I would start those questions,

but I genuinely wanted to know what information they were gaining.

And then the second piece was if I was in a classroom where a teacher would randomly call on us for feedback or input, I also knew that I needed to have something to say, and I didn't have anything based off of my own skill set or ability to say back.

So, those are just a couple of examples, Nora, of my interactions in the classroom.

I don't know if I met-- I probably have a thousand, but I don't know if I met yours.

No, those are very--

I think that's very helpful.

Okay.

For sure. Thank you, my dear.

Okay.

So things that you can do to alleviate anxiety.

When Ann and I talked about this, she's going to give you some good feedback, of course, when I'm done here. But some of the things that we can do in general, and then some things we can do specifically when we're dealing with something that has to do with reading, writing, or spelling.

So in general, trust is the number one thing.

Trust in a safe environment. Not allowing bullying, not allowing laughing, not allowing any of those things to happen when you are in that room especially, and hopefully setting a precedent so that

kids don't do it elsewhere. I know that that's easier said than done, but in that room, where you're in charge of that room, and I've been in many of hundreds, thousands of classrooms where I've never seen the kids before that day that I walked in, and they will not disrespect another child.

It's just not okay, and I let it be known right out of the gate that this is the expectations, and that's not okay.

So if

a child in your classroom knows that you are creating a-- or if you're a parent or if you're doing private practice, any of that, if they know they're in a safe environment and you've created trust with them, that's your number one thing to do to help decrease that anxiety and increase that ability to be able to learn. Because if you're thinking in that fight or flight mode, your brain is not like, oh, let me figure out what sound this is or learn that kind of stuff. It's very hard to learn. So that's the number one thing.

And if you have something to say for a child that is struggling with reading, and hopefully there's a lot of things that you have and supportive things to say, but do it privately. Talk to a child privately. You wouldn't want to say, "Oh, Jimmy, I know that you have a hard time with reading stuff, so I'm going to give you something a little bit later" or something like that. Be very, very, very mindful about being respectful to these kids and speaking privately

in situations that you have to talk about anything that has to do with literacy,
for sure.

Being respectful and not blaming a child for their own struggles
and difficulties.

And I know that many of these things are
like, what does that look like? I'm going to give you some books, too.

But we have some things that we do for sure, and I'm going to talk about that in
specifics a little bit more. And let your kids know what are the expectations.

What's going to be happening? What am I expecting from you?

This is what you can expect from me.

And then help them reach that expectation that you have for them,
okay? And have those wins to celebrate,
for sure.

Create a plan with kids, especially kids who are experiencing
subliteracy. Create a plan together.

This is what I think. What about you? What do you need? Ask a child what they need.

That is so critical. What would be helpful for you in my
classroom or in this situation or when I'm working with you or when I'm helping you
with your homework? Whatever it may be.

What would be most helpful for you that I could do?

And then listen to them. And if you say you're going to do something, do it.

Okay? Whether it's I am going to have you do this for 10 minutes,
and then we're going to take a break to do whatever.

Set a timer. Do it for 10 minutes. And it goes the other way.

If this is a consequence for whatever it is, these expectations, then you've got to carry through with the consequence.

But keep your word so the kids know that they can trust you.

And acknowledge their feelings. At our reading center here, we have a reading center, too, and we see kids from all over and all ages and adults and all. You know what? I

can see that you're feeling angry, and I understand that.

If I were you, I'd be angry, too. I cannot tell you the number of times that I've said that, that we've all said that here.

I get that you would be feeling angry.

And they look at us like, what? Really? You're going to-- Hmm Interesting.

But to acknowledge that, "Would you like to talk about it or not?"

You don't want to, that's okay too."

So the no bullying. Check your own feelings and actions.

It is very challenging to be a person teaching a

child that's having a significant anxiety and trauma

response. That's hard. Admit it to yourself and even to your child. "You know what?

I was feeling a little bit impatient today, and I'm sorry.

I snapped at you and that was about me, and I apologize for that." And

know that we are going to have those feelings. I mean, we're humans, right?

An accountability plan for them and for you.

This is what I'm going to do, and this is how I'm going to be accountable.

This is what you're expected to do, and this is how you're going to be accountable.

So being clear with all of that is really, really helpful, to have

those boundaries and awarenesses for kids and all.

And again, ask what they need, which I said at the beginning, but that's really

important that we don't really think to ask a child what they think or what they

need, or really talk to them at all about any of this

kind of thing. So

that's pretty

critical.

Also, when you're in the actual context of doing reading instruction in

the class, in a small group, one-on-one, anywhere, all right,

some things that you can do when you've got print there that the kids are going

to be

expected to read or you're going to help them with or

whatever, show them small bits. Work in small bits with

them. You can

differentiate as far as the abilities of your kids to give as much

support or to pull back on the support.

But showing small bits of reading, asking them to write a sentence and not

a five paragraph essay, right? Starting

small and then supporting along the way is really, really critical.

We find at our center that when we're bringing out anything that has more than

one line of text on it, which we do a lot, we don't do a lot of things with

pictures in them and stuff, so there's a lot of words on the page, but we'll cover up everything but the line they need to read.

And kids will say, "Wait a minute, how much do I have to read?" My answer to that, how much do I have to read, is always, "This is what we're going to do.

We're going to read one word at a time.

If there's anything you don't know, I'm going to tell you the information you need, okay? And we'll see how far we get in 15 minutes, all right?" So they'll think, "Oh, well, is that going to be two sentences?

Is it going to be a paragraph?" And I say, "You know what?

I don't really know how far we'll get, but I know that it's going to be 15 minutes, and when that timer goes off, we'll see how far we get." And a lot of times they've read a whole page and a half of text and I'm like, "Look at that."

But it's just the thought that I have this whole page, especially if not being able to read well has been their experience before, and they're just in that new experience of learning to read proficiently, okay?

Timers, man.

Timers literally will have kids shaking like a leaf.

And this is not something in the first years I did this was ever a thing.

Kids liked a timer, and it was kind of fun to compete against themselves and that type of thing.

The onset of or the advent of, I would say, No Child Left Behind

and Reading First and when that started all of that weekly progress monitoring with a timer and the fluency kind of thing, which kids got stuck at the same place, same place, and every week was like, "Oh my god, here you are.

You're going to bring out this timer and have me read this thing I can't read again, and I'm going to still be in the red and be horrible."

Kids will say to us, "Put the timer away." If there's a timer sitting on a desk that's not even on the table we're working on, get rid of that timer.

So understand the terror, that timers, they're not the friend of kids who struggle to read.

So if you're doing a whole bunch of timing and your kids are not performing or are shutting down, the timer is a problem.

When we do time, which we do at the beginning when we do a fluency thing, we'll put the timer, use our phone actually, and not even really a real timer, and put it in our lap and try to put it on vibrate so that it's not making noise and that type of thing.

But don't underestimate the power that the terror of a timer can bring to a child who

really would rather not see that or experience those timed things. Avoid using the words "no"

and "wrong." I really

if not never, almost never use these words.

"No" immediately brings up a resistant response like, "Oh my gosh, I'm in trouble. I did that wrong.

What was that?" Making mistake, any of that.

So I use different words like, "Oh my gosh, that was a good try," or, "I see why you tried that. Try this instead." There's a lot of things that you can do, but it takes practice. But avoiding these words that have a negative connotation, even if you think like, "Well, that's not that bad of a..." Whatever.

To the child who is experiencing significant anxiety and trauma, it is just like a shutdown.

Explaining clearly what you'll be doing and what's expected of the student.

This is what I'm going to be doing. This is what you're going to be doing.

This is how long we're going to be doing it. That type of thing.

Speak positively.

And Anne has a lot to say about this too, but most kids who struggle with reading and writing and spelling are used to hearing everything that's wrong with them, everything they can't do, everything that isn't possible.

All of those things, every label, every this, every that, all of these things, this litany of like, look at you and all of the issues that you are the cause of, is what the message is that they're getting.

So talking about,

look at there, you read five more words a minute, or you got that, or you did this well. There's always something po-- Even with your child who's the greatest struggle ever, they're going to do something positive sooner or later.

And catch them doing stuff right. That's number one thing that can be really,

really helpful. And give praise. And I will say that, too.

I will look when I'm in a classroom, and it's pretty evident very

quickly who those are that

takes a while to find something that they're doing that's positive, but they are

going to do something positive, and I wait for it, and I watch for it.

And they do it, and I'll say, "Oh my gosh, you guys, everybody tell Jamie.

Thank you, Jamie." He just, whatever he did, and he's just got your

team three points, and they all say, "Thank you, Jamie," and Jamie picks up the

desk he just threw over and sets it up and he's all proud and now he's going

to be participating. Okay? Because you actually not only caught him

doing something right, but acknowledged him for it.

So more of catching them doing right and ignoring,

not always ignoring, that's too much to go into here, but

de-emphasizing

or not pointing out the things that we're thinking of that are wrong.

Don't ask kids to do things independently that they don't know how to do.

Anne touched on that with her homework.

Please don't ask them to go home and do things that you know that they're going to

be unsuccessful for, or they're going to have to cheat or

tell a story and say they did something that they didn't or whatever.

Don't do that to kids, okay? You can differentiate with homework and that type of

thing, but don't ask them to go off, even in the classroom on their own, to do some

reading or some writing or something that they don't know how to do yet.

Because that is very anxiety provoking, and also creates a lot of behavior disturbances for sure.

And understandably. All right. So Anne, if you will share with us

things that have

decreased your anxiety around reading and writing and spelling, and what adults can do, what we all can maybe do somewhat better.

Yeah. So I think

one of the things around anxiety that, just to give a little context,

when I became a professional, one of the biggest feedbacks that I would receive from my supervisors, bosses, and peers

was just an acknowledgement of how much anxiety that I had. And honestly, I would look

back at them and say, "I don't have anxiety.

I don't understand what you're talking about."

And I was really unaware

of the level of anxiety that I was living with on a daily basis, and had been living with since I was seven years old.

And the first time, I'll never forget it, I was on a walk and I was in my reading tutoring instruction as an adult in my mid-30s, and

I was just trying to phonetically read anything I could.

And I looked at a license plate, and I live in Florida, and I

phonetically saw Florida.

And I saw each individual sound. And

my entire body, I can't describe it, but my

entire body went from an anxiety level of, on a scale of one to 10, probably a

15 down to a two.

And it was roughly two weeks

before I felt normal in my

own body,

because I had been living with such a high level of anxiety that

that was normal to me. And even though other people could

identify it, I couldn't self-identify it because I didn't have

any context of a lower level of state.

So,

I will defer to the experts, but Britt Frank

has a wonderful book, "The Science of Stuck," that's on anxiety.

And in her book, she references that anxiety is like a check

engine light on your car. So you can do a

bunch of work around the check engine light.

If you want to shut it off, you can, but it doesn't fix the problem that's with the

engine.

And for me, the challenge that was causing my anxiety was my

struggle with reading. And if someone had taught me how to read at

seven years old, then I would never have had the anxiety that

I had. So I think it's really important that
as I start talking about
some of the things that can alleviate my anxiety, the biggest thing that would've
helped me is reading instruction.

And that didn't have to just take place at seven.

I was in the education system from seven until 22,
and at any point along that journey, I would've loved to have
some intervention and support around reading, and the sooner I
could've gotten the skillset, the better my life would have been.

And so I think that that's just
really important to note.

Anxiety in general, when we're talking about
intervention and some of the things that are taking place,
I think one of the biggest things for me when I was a very small
child is around my struggles with reading,
everyone would talk around me, but not
about me, around me, but not to me.

And it was always in a tone of voice that I knew was concerning, I
knew that something was wrong. So paying attention to tone, how you're
addressing it. Are you treating it like it's a big deal, like the student is
behind? Those are the things that would happen to me, and
I

feel like it would have been really helpful at any point in that

journey if someone would have spoken to me
directly and talked to me about what was happening.

And honestly, if they had the skillset to help me
or not help me, if they could've been realistic about their own abilities
and not just focused on my inabilities or my struggle,
that would've been a really big help.

Coming into the intervention space,

Nora mentioned the feeling of safety.

I think that's a really big key is making sure that the
child knows that they're going to be safe.

And for me, I would've really, really appreciated,
and Nora said I could mention this because she didn't do it either,
but both of the times I had intervention, even as an adult,
I went in for my initial intake, and I had no idea or
awareness of what I was going to be doing.

And I had so much anxiety because I didn't know, when you're
a struggling reader, I didn't know, are you going to make me read
through this entire thing and I keep messing up?

And in both cases, there was an exit, right?

If I missed a certain number of words, they would've stopped that portion of the
assessment because they had the information they needed.

Things like that would've been immensely helpful at alleviating my
anxiety. Even as Nora's example of we're going to read this one

thing at a time. Okay, great, but if you get to a point where I feel like you're in over your head, we'll try a different book, or we'll shift to a different thing, or I know you're ready for this.

But there's an immense amount of vulnerability in sitting down with a tutor and showing them, for me, the parts of myself that I had hidden from the entire world, and if that isn't met with compassion, understanding, it's really scary. It's really, really raw and hard to keep showing up every single day.

Nora, was there any other examples you wanted me to reference from our conversation earlier?

No, I think that's it.

Okay.

Yeah. And it was so helpful for me, for Anne to say, "If you would've told me we're going to do this much, it's going to last this long." And I have, especially with people that I know or have known before, and with adults, and with bright adults, I skip things a lot of times. Which is, I've done it more than one time. So there's that whole make that mistake and let's try to improve on that. And that's such a great awareness for her to share that with me so that I can be better and not assume, because there's a lot of times that we assume a lot of

things. Like, I have a business coach right now.

She assumes I know something about business since I've had one for 23 years.

And I'm like, "Please don't assume that, because I don't.

So I understand that you would think that I do, but I don't." And kids are telling

that too, and even adults, and sometimes they think, "Oh, yeah, they're saying

that" or you're like, "Is that true?" But please

do that, and over-explaining, I think, is a better

plan than under-explaining. But knowing what's going to

happen and what's going to come, we all like that. We all want that.

So I really appreciated that, Anne, from you, and I think that that's really good

input, for sure. Okay. I'm going to pop on

back here,

and I just am going to touch quickly on secondary traumatic stress.

I looked this up in other terms, and it's called compassion fatigue or

vicarious trauma. So this is

those of us who are parents or teachers or caregivers

of those who are experiencing sub-literacy.

And I had a real awareness of this about a year and a half ago when

I was actually on a Zoom call with someone who changed their life path because of

their daughter's struggles,

and has stayed on it now for probably 15 years, and was

talking to me about being interviewed for "The Truth About Reading"

documentary. That's what our call was about, but within 30 seconds, she was

in tears, sobbing about her own child's
experiences over the
previous 15 years. And as we were talking, and I'm crying, and
she's crying, we're both crying, we're like, "Okay, it's nice to have known you for
one minute now." But it was just this heart-wrenching,
truth-speaking conversation,
and grieving about our own children.

And my daughter didn't struggle for long, less than a year I would say, once I
found out that, and I was very fortunate in that, I know.

But it still stays with me, all these 26 years later.

That still is
embedded deep into my soul. And her daughter was 21
and at a fourth-grade reading level.

And as I was talking to her, I realized something
I never really has consciously come into my brain, is the
trauma, those of us who are parents of children
experiencing this,

that we experience our own trauma. It just never really occurred to me.

And then I had a one-two punch in November,
where I watched "The Truth About Reading" for the second time.

The first three times I never saw it.

I couldn't even see the movie, I was so distraught.

The fourth time, I finally got it, which was good.

But I could absorb it, I would say. But this was the second time I watched it, and the next day "Sold a Story" came out, and I listened to the first two episodes of that, and I went into a tailspin of mourning and grieving and sobbing and what is going on with me? I just felt the weight of these tens of thousands of kids and adults that I have worked with and tried to hold up as they've worked through this horror that they've experienced, and the teachers, and the parents, and all of this, and not thinking about that either. I'm like, "What is going on here? Am I losing my mind?" And I think that a lot of times it's easy to set that part aside, and I've been really working over the last few months to be open to those feelings of desperation that are horrific. It's really a horrific journey, for sure.

But I feel guilty because what Anne experienced compared to what I have with helping people who have experienced this is nothing. So I have this guilty feeling about it too.

But we need to understand that this is a thing, and this is big, and this is traumatic also, and we really need to be open about it. And we need to be honest about it, and we need to care for ourselves so that we can help lift up and care for all of these other people who are experiencing

this horrific

sub-literacy life-encompassing

experience. So I just want to talk about that.

There's stuff out there. I didn't read about it as much, of course, as I was

preparing for this, but just to know that our batteries

can be really, really low, and it's really, really hard, if not

impossible, to lift others up when you are

feeling that you're completely

drained and out of gas. So just be mindful of that, and

taking care of ourselves, those of us who are trying to help others.

I think that's important.

The other thing, thank you Connie, who's on here tonight.

She told us on Monday I did a coaching call for our trained teachers, also on

trauma. I've been in a trauma marinating.

I'm like, "Oh, I'm going to be glad tonight,"

when I'm kind of a little bit through all of this.

But I did a blog and then I did a coaching call, and Connie told me about

this book and I bought it. And I started reading it yesterday, and I'm

like, "Oh my gosh, this book is phenomenal." So I pulled out a few quotes from it.

I actually took screenshots because I got it on my phone.

And it's up to us to find the courage to change our

mindset. Like Anne was saying, instead of asking the child

to be the one changing all of their behavior and doing all their things, what do we

need to do differently? Let's put that question number one.

Okay, there is some trauma going on here. There's anxiety.

This child needs help. What do I need to do differently?

I think that's so critical and so important.

And

this other one at the top over here, instead of asking children to make a better choice in their behavior, it's time that we ask ourselves to make a better choice in the creation of their environments.

And this book, I'm only maybe, I don't even know how big it is because it's on my phone, but maybe a quarter of the way through it, but I was just like, "Ugh," trying to breathe reading this book because I'm like, "Oh my gosh," the thinking of the children and thinking of what have I done to make this worse inadvertently that I didn't even know sometimes. So I'm very thankful for this book.

But I do want to say this thing in the bottom in orange is there for a purpose.

It's not a quote because I couldn't find the screenshot that I took of it.

It didn't appear to be in one of the ones that I took.

But this is not true as far as from talking to people who have experienced subliteracy for years and even into adulthood that learned to read. This is not true, okay, in the reading situation.

But this says you can take the child out of the trauma, so you can take them away from an abusive relationship or abusive situation, that type of thing, but it

doesn't take the trauma out of the child.

That trauma kind of rests in the child.

But what Anne said to me when we were talking, she said, "I know what got rid of my anxiety and my trauma around this, and my angst, is learning how to read." That's the fix. That's the number one fix.

So we can take the child out of the trauma by teaching them how to read, and it probably is a process of time, I don't know because it's not been my experience to experience it personally, but it also serves to take the trauma out of the child. So the answer and the key to all of this is we must teach these children to read. And if we don't know how to teach them how to read, it's up to us to learn what we need to do so that we can get it so that they can read. Because they can learn to read, and if they're not, the question is, what do we need to do differently?

And then this book, for those to help the kids through it, this book, I just went and I'm like, man, this is like the book for trauma for like EBLI, where you actually have applicable stuff that you can do and that's helpful and beneficial. It was kind of soul-crushing and also kind of a sigh of relief. This is another one that I just learned about online.

I just ordered it, but today, I think it was today.

"Lost at School." I'm not familiar with it.

A few people had recommended it, so I wanted to share it with you, too. And if you have things to share, please share them in the chat.

This is a test that we will share the link to.

Jen Newman shared this with me, and I shared it on our coaching call on Monday, and here, too. It's a reading anxiety test, and she's done it with a few kids.

And I know that I'm over time, so I'm not going to have her pop on here about it.

But you can go on the link, get the free instructions, the test. There's one for adolescents, and check that out and look through that, too.

And then we are done with this part.

So we're going to do, I know that I'm over and I apologize for that, and I had a feeling it might happen. But that's okay.

We'll take some about 15 minutes of Q&A with

Shannon

sharing with us those questions. So Shannon, are you ready?

I'm ready.

And just let me know if it's a question for Anne or for me.

I will. And you both need to know that this chat has been like, talk about a safe place.

The level of compassion and love and support that is being extended to you both, and the gratitude is very... Yeah, I just want to acknowledge everyone.

Awesome. Thank you.

So the first question from Carol.

I'm not sure what she's referring to. We'll come back to this one, Carol.

Carol McKinley asked

Nora, "How did you do this?" So maybe if you can type in the chat what you were talking about. From Melanie, she says, "Anne, thank you for sharing. Were you ever diagnosed with dyslexia?"

I was not diagnosed with dyslexia, and the people that have worked with me,

neither of them have said that dyslexia is something that

I struggle with. So

I am a little unique in the reading... Well, maybe I'm not unique.

Nora tells me I'm not unique all the time.

So

I don't have a dyslexia diagnosis, no.

You are very unique, Anne, but your reading experience

Yes. From Sandra, "I think it is important to

remember that most teachers I've met didn't struggle with literacy growing

up. As a teacher who did struggle growing up, I always felt out of

place sharing my struggles." I didn't put any comments in except

for this one, because I thought it was kind of

interesting to acknowledge.

The question from Kelly, "Anne, my son is in high school and

has been the driver for me to get my certification in EBLI.

His desire is to go to medical school, but his reading level is very

low. Do you feel like there was a point in your life where you

decided you were going to change how you approach reading, and that you could and would push yourself to find a way to read?" So was there a point in your life?

Yeah. Absolutely. For me, the moment where I decided that I was going to change was when I entered into college, and I think what is really important, that's the question behind the question here for your son, is it's not just changing reading.

It's changing so many aspects of your life.

Because the coping mechanisms that come into place when you're a struggling reader really, really challenges you to the core of who you are. And certain behaviors that I would have identified as part of my personality

were coping mechanisms that I was using, and

And so I think that it's twofold.

One thing that I think, not for me when I was 18, because I thought that I was one of the only people that struggled with this that was entering into college, but one of the reasons why I decided to share my story in "The Truth About Reading" and sign off was because I was at a family barbecue, and I was trying to talk hypothetically

about reading, and I ended up sharing my story.

And through sharing my story, there was, I want to say, seven

children at that barbecue that all

had tear-filled eyes and said, "Me too."

And no one talks about it. Nobody

says, "Hey, I'm struggling with this," and there's a solution,

right?

We have a solution that's in place, whether...

I personally haven't been diagnosed with dyslexia, but David

Chalk, who those of you have seen the documentary, you know him, he

was. And if we can get the proper

instruction for these kids, and they know that they can learn,

it's amazing. And so for me, I think it's community

support and outreach, and I'm definitely willing

to share and help my story with as many struggling readers as possible,

because there's not a big community

of us that are willing to speak about it.

And so I think I haven't

met someone yet that

once given the confidence that they know there's a program that will work,

that they haven't wanted to try. And that's whether they are

70 or seven.

Everyone in between

has been, and I'm filling up Nora's wait list with my own network bigger than she can handle.

But

yes,

definitely.

Mm-hmm.

We do have clarification from Carol. Thank you.

It's, "How does Nora teach someone to read in such a short time?

She is so inspiring to educators, so is Anne."

Thank you.

We do it from a speech first

approach, and not

I don't know what to say, not dumbing down with moving far and

fast, which we can do from a speech first approach.

Teaching the skills and concepts and information that people need to have in

that foundation, and when you're in middle school or high school or older, you

have that developmental and cognitive foundation to

really fly. So,

it's taken some years and

trial and error and refinement of things.

But

four hours is not the--

We don't teach everybody in four hours, for sure.

But Anne was, like she said, at an eighth-grade level and had a lot of foundational stuff to work with. Her greatest thing when I worked with her, I would say, was she had learned a lot of rules that she worked really, really hard to learn. She had learned those rules, and she would stop me in almost every word. It probably would've taken two hours, don't you think, Anne, if we hadn't had-
Yeah.

"Wait a minute. These vowels are doing that or that." And I'm like, "Anne, I don't know what you're talking about. So here's the deal. We're going to set that aside, and we're going to go here." And really, it was probably in the first hour, and she's like, "Okay, I guess I better set that aside."

Well, and I think from a learner's perspective, the best way that I could describe it, so I didn't ever go through the whole word methodology, but I kind of self-taught myself that, right, memorizing whole words at the same time. And the amount of energy that it took for me to keep my memory bank really high, I had to read all the time, and it was a constant effort, and then writing was just impossible. Right? It just would take me forever to write something very simple. The amount of time it would take was just exhausting. And then when I got to the print to speech methodology,

it was definitely life-changing and a step above, but I literally
would have to look at each individual word and go through
all of the rules in my head of how this would sound out,
and it

really slowed my reading down, if I'm being honest.

It slowed me down, and I had so many things that

I was trying to memorize and process.

And the difference when I got to the speech to print

methodology was it would just organically

happen within me. And the best description that

I have with the two is that,

I don't know if you know how to drive a stick shift car, but when you're learning

how to drive a stick shift car, you're thinking, "Where's first, where's second?"

And you're trying to drive and do all these other things at the same time,

but you're thinking through the shifting.

Versus when you get in an automatic car, the engine itself is just

shifting, and you're not really thinking about it.

And for me, that was the difference of print to speech

versus speech to print. Speech to print was like, oh, I can just

jump in, and my mind will do this inherently on

its own, versus me having to understand each

organic rule.

As well as

in both cases, the forgiveness that there's multiple ways to spell a certain sound.

That was a huge relief. Like, oh, okay, there's multiple ways that this sound can be spelled or that.

So yeah, that's my perspective, Nora, but...

Will you do me a favor and explain, just take a minute or two to explain how you did that memorization, what that process looked like when you taught yourself, because I think this is

Yeah. So essentially what I did is I went into...

And it kind of answers the question of when I was like, I really want to earn my college degree, and the amount of hours, I wouldn't recommend this to anyone. It took an immensely long time.

But I opened up a textbook that was required reading, college level. I like to start really, really high level of reading.

Opened up a college textbook that I needed to read for my class.

I started, I read the words that I knew.

The words that I didn't know, I typed into Google, I pressed the sound icon, and

then I tried to imprint what that word was in my mind. I did not know, until I went to a reading tutor, that you read every individual word from left to right.

So I looked at each word holistically.

So I looked at the beginning and the end of the words together, and my mind could roughly hold between six to eight letters in memorization per word. So if you've seen The Truth About Reading, I go into a story about manager and manger, right? A six versus seven-letter word, how I can mix up the two because they have so many.

And when I'm helping readers now, because I did the methodology of not reading every word from left to right, I can immediately tell when a child switches from reading each word from left to right to looking at it holistically.

It's a very distinct difference.

And if you aren't me, some things that could help you is if they don't put things on the end, like if it's a plural word and they're just saying business instead of businesses, or they are switching words in place.

There's a lot of little tells that you can say and just to remind them, "Hey, let's read it all the way through."

So.

Thanks.

There are lots more.

From Kelly, "Wow, Anne. That is so eye-opening. What can we say to our learners, or how can we change our verbiage to help our learners feel safe and help them feel capable?"

Yeah. I think

for me, one of the things that would've helped a lot is
if we could try to remove the stigma around someone
who is struggling with reading.

I would pay a lot of attention to tone and how we're talking about it.

If you feel confident in your ability to get them help,
that would be amazing to have an advocate that's a parent or a
teacher, even if you don't have the skillset, knowing that you can get them the
help. And then

I'll

use Nora as an example, because sitting down with Nora,
she was very vulnerable with me about where she was at.

So it's matching that vulnerability of saying, "Hey, we all struggle.

You're not alone." I absolutely felt like I was the only
person that wasn't in jail that
struggled with this.

And so letting them know that they're not alone in
this, and that you're going to be with them until you figure it out, I
think would be really, really comforting.

Awesome. This could be to either.

From Tisha, "I have students who don't seem to respond to praise.

I still use it. For a child who's struggling with blending, reading a CVC word is
a big win, but they don't seem to respond.

I'm wondering if they think I'm being condescending.

My son would react negatively whenever I praised him."

Yeah. So one of the things that's really interesting about praise, and I've actually had a lot of therapy sessions around this,

so

I don't know everyone's experience, but I can definitely share mine.

The first time that someone ever told me I was smart was when I was 25 years old.

And kids are very, very intuitive of if you are just giving praise for the sake of giving praise.

If it's not genuine or authentic, or if it

isn't

real, I would recommend not saying it.

So if I'm not doing a good job and you're telling me I'm doing a good job, I'm very aware that you're being deceitful.

And

I know in some cases, kids are doing a good job.

In the case when I was 25 and the first time someone told me that I was smart, it was a genuine compliment. I had just saved him hundreds of thousands of dollars and made him millions. And I-

Tisha just wanted to let you know that she is being genuine.

Yes. Okay.

She's... Okay.

Yes. So, in the case of that compliment,
my boss was being very complimentary of, "Hey, I am genuine.
You were really smart." But there were so many
other voices from everyone else in my entire
life that I was like, "Well, if you knew this thing about me,
you probably wouldn't think that I was smart." Right?
If you knew this other piece. And that's where I think
as a child, you
self-protect because the world's too
big. So even if you have a parent in your corner, it doesn't mean that
the teacher's behavior is echoing that same.
And so for me, if your child, if they are genuinely
improving, and you are genuinely complimenting them because they are
genuinely improving, then what my recommendation would be would be to
help identify even if it is adults in their lives
that are bullying or are saying things that are
inappropriate because there's a lot of other voices that are
probably tuning yours out. And so if you can help
identify that, hey, maybe this individual that's in a power
position, or this individual that's a peer, let's talk about that.
That would be my recommendation,
not having been there. But it is something that positive,
even to this day, compliments are very, very hard for

me to accept and take because I

have

Received so much criticism and negativity from

teachers and people in my life

at such an early age.

She said she can see how this child would think that.

I want to add something to that, Shannon, too, as far as with the praise.

If you're going to praise something, make it measurable.

Like, "Oh my gosh, look at that blending.

We did that, and look at that, it was twice as fast as the first time." So it's

really something that's concrete and measurable that they can hook onto instead of

saying, "Oh, you're whatever." But making that praise

pointed and something that's measurable is helpful.

And even if they disagree. So like when I was sitting with Nora, she

would've said, "You couldn't have done this when you sat down with me." And I

would've

probably said, "I can't do it still." Right?

And it just takes a lot of practice and repetition.

For me, when I went through, I had 37 years

of the other. Right? So,

I think it's a lot of micro moments and maybe even pay

attention to the child when they're doing it out

while you're at a restaurant, or there's a sign or something like that where it's

not just sitting in this environment where you're really focused.

And you're, I'm sure, a great parent because you're sitting on this-

... course trying to help your child even more. So, yeah.

From Ingrid,

"Wondering if Anne's tutoring was one-on-one, and what effect group size has on students who are struggling significantly.

Thanks so much for this special hour."

My tutoring was, as an adult, the intervention that I did receive was one-on-one, in both cases, yes.

From Anna, "Anne, my question is, how would you suggest as a way to offer reading help to an adult who one suspects might have reading troubles?"

Yeah, I think it's a really hard conversation to navigate. Honestly, since I've been in the documentary and filmed for it and I'm speaking more openly about it, it's definitely a conversation that I personally have misstepped a few times.

So I'm still navigating that.

I know

for me,

it

would depend on your

relationship and with them, but I think there's opportunities

that as a struggling reader, you've got your defaults of if someone self says, "I have dyslexia," or if someone self says, "I'm a terrible speller," that's what I would've said every day of the week, that I was a terrible speller.

And if someone had come to me and said, "Hey, I know someone," or,

"XYZ, here's a story. Here's a YouTube video."

The adults that I know in my life, I've sent David's video that he did with Nora that's like, "Hey, I don't know if you've seen this. I just came across it.

I found it really interesting. You might enjoy it." So it's more of a softer approach than, "Hey,

I notice you misspell a lot of words." Right?

But even then,

if you do notice, there's different ways that you can handle it that's a lot more gentle than others. I don't know. Nora might have better examples because I'm sure she's spoken to a lot more people than me.

Yeah. Usually, I wait for them to approach me.

Okay.

That's just

how I have, I would say. I'm not really sure.

I wanted to go back to something from the question before, Anna, that I want to point out because you said something that is really important.

This is something that really consistently happens.

The older the child is from five or six, the longer it takes,

is that they become a proficient reader

long before their mind thinks they're a proficient reader.

So if you have video of a child and you're like, "Here you were here," and

you're like, "Oh, wow, really?" Because in their mind, especially if you're 30

or if you're 18 and you have struggled, and this has been such a struggle for

a long time, your perception is, "I am not a good reader,"

however they word that, right? "This is hard. This is good.

I'm not good at this."

And then they become a good reader.

It takes a while for the reality and

their mindset to catch up with each other.

So I think that's an important point to share.

From Jessica, "My kiddo has learned

hopelessness/helplessness.

How did you get out of that? How did you change your mindset?

Would you have any advice for parents?

I work with him every day, and I tell him he can do it, and I show him.

He knows he can, but it's like

he's stuck. He even

wrote on his paper that he has self-pity." This is a third

grader stating this.

Yeah. I think for me, I had

internalized at seven years old, right,
that there was inherently something wrong with me.

And that's why
all of these things were happening in my life.

And, so it's really real. And,

I think
that I look at...

I'm trying to answer this. I don't know that I have the answer.

I think it's really hard, and I think for me, the biggest
healing thing that I ever experienced in the whole
realm of everything was talking to David for the first
time and knowing that I wasn't alone in my
struggles.

And that conversation was probably the most healing.

So maybe if there's people that are in your network or a
community or someone that can talk to the child, that would be
my, that

whatever they're experiencing, that they're not the only ones

From Wendy, "Anne, did you think you were the only kid struggling to
learn to read? What do you think the underlying reason was to keep your
sub-literacy skills a secret?"

Yeah, I absolutely thought that I was the only one.

I had no idea how widespread this

is, and I honestly, every day am still just
in shock that the literacy rate in America is where it's
at.

It is
something that, as I've told my story, there's only been one time
that I ever have told my story where someone has not said, "Me too,"
or, "I know someone," or,
"My X, Y, Z." It's always followed with a story of someone who's
living with a mental struggle, or they themselves who's
struggling. And I think that that's why we just need
more voices talking about it and saying, "Hey,"
there's just so much shame
around this topic.

So yeah.

It's
a challenge, and I think it's a shift.
I don't know. I don't know why I was always searching.
But I was always trying to search. I knew it was
a challenge, right? And if I could get rid of it, I wanted to.

You know what-

And I, okay

... I want to just say something that Anne, as far as the searching, because she
chastised me quite significantly, and she's a marketing person.

Told me, "You really suck at marketing, Nora." And I'm like, "I know."

She's pretty direct and I like that about her.

But she's like, "I have been searching forever and ever and ever and ever, and never did Ebley come up.

Like, why is that?" And I'm like, "I don't know. I'm not a marketing person.

You are. Thank God that you came into my world." So yeah.

But that was interesting, I think, that she was searching.

You never stopped searching, right, Anne?

You've been-

Yeah

... even though I still read, you had been getting help from the print to speech person, you still were searching.

Yeah. I was still searching.

After I'd gone through the print to speech, I think I was searching more for a community of people that it couldn't just be me.

I couldn't be the only person that was navigating this struggle.

But there isn't a large, open community.

So hopefully, the documentary and the work you all are doing can change that.

Yeah. David and Judd Corcorran and Anne were all in the same room

after she did her little impromptu interview, and Anne's like, "I thought I was the only one." And David's like, "Well, I thought I was the only one." And Judd's like, "I thought I was the only one, too." So, there was that mindset, the three of them. It was a very interesting conversation to listen to, for sure.

Anne, you're getting a lot of positive and grateful feedback for your answers and appreciation. From Jean, "How did you experience book reports, homework, and research projects, Anne?"

Yeah. One of my coping skills that added to my level of shame is that I definitely did, up until I graduated high school, cheating was one of my coping skills.

And, that was one of the big mindset changes that I wanted to do the work myself. So going into college, it was something that I really, probably was one of the most proud things in my life was that I earned that college degree all on my own. It was a really, really big learning curve to go from not having done those things to doing it at a college level and passing my classes.

Another one. Okay. I would say yes, but your opinion. "Is this documentary appropriate for high school

or college students to watch?"

I

would say yes, but I'm not an authority, I guess I would say.

It showcases

more adults that are the adults that are featured in

it. The struggling people or people that have struggled with sub-literacy in the documentary are primarily adults, but there are some children in there, too.

And I would say it's appropriate for even...

I

don't know. I mean, Nora, I would say it's appropriate for all ages personally.

I think everyone should watch it, but that's someone-

I-

... who is in it, so

I'm sure I'm very biased.

Anne mentioned, I don't recall if this got put in there.

Anne mentioned a book on anxiety, and I thought the title was something like The Science of Anxiety. Is that correct? And do you know the author?

Yeah. It is called The Science of Stuck, and it's by Britt Frank, and it is a phenomenal,

really tangible example of how to navigate anxiety that

I would highly, highly recommend.

For anyone who's a parent or a struggling reader that's dealing with a lot of anxiety, that's trying to get the reading help they need, it'll give you some

really great tools.

From Marissa, "Is the documentary Right to Read,"

and I think she meant The Truth About Reading, "available only to US audiences?"

I don't know that.

It is currently

only available at private screenings, though, I'm waiting.

I should find out in the next week or so.

It is being shopped around, it's called, for distribution, and they're going

to know where that's going to be and what that's going to look like within the next

week or two. And Nick says that it's probably this summer

going to be available for everyone.

So,

yes, stay tuned. We'll keep you posted on that.

From Rihanna, "My son holds his breath and he's struggling to read.

As he's struggling to read or recall information.

He's in sixth grade and just diagnosed with dyslexia.

I wonder if this is," she's asking, "is this a symptom of anxiety?"

I can't speak for people in general, but I know

for me, which Britt Frank highlights in her book, it's the first time I've ever

heard it.

Because I had been told to take so many deep breaths early on when

I was struggling with reading, actually taking a deep breath was

anxiety-provoking for me,

and still is to this day, a symptom of now what I have, PTSD. So,

I didn't hold my breath, but the opposite very much became a symptom for me long term.

From

Jamie. How do I share with my child's teachers that my child is struggling with literacy anxiety?

I'm going to look at Nora. I am not a parent or a teacher.

Any suggestions, Nora?

I would say share this webinar with them. How about that?

Sounds like a good plan.

That way it's not

confrontational or anything. Could you watch this?

And then I would ask to schedule a follow-up

appointment with them and get it on the calendar before you leave

with suggesting that they watch it, and share it with them, yeah.

There are a couple of Ebli specific related questions.

Is it okay if I ask those?

You can. We'll see.

Okay.

From Brett, I believe. Thank you.

How does this approach compare to OG Method?

That is what my daughter currently uses.

Lucinda, would you share the links to the

three things, Darius, the speech to print versus print to speech,

and the structured linguistic literacy in Ebli. Those three links.

There's three webinars that I would recommend.

If you watch those three, you will have a very good understanding.

I also highly recommend that you go to the Ebli

community page. There's a lot of people that are interacting back

and forth about Ebli. About half of them are trained in Ebli, and about half of

them are exploring Ebli.

And interestingly, we have had in the last

eight to 10 months, had a huge influx of people

getting trained who had been trained in Orton Gillingham, and

so they can give you a lot of

feedback from their experience. I

know a lot about traditional phonics and print to speech and Orton

Gillingham from studying it, but not from ever having taught it or used it.

So they can give you a lot more

insight on it from an experiential,

having taught both type of way.

And then

two more Ebli related ones, actually.

Would it be possible to start an Ebli graduate mentor program, not for

interventionists or teachers, but for kids and adults who've gotten to the

other side?

Oh, that's a great idea.

Yeah.

Maybe put it on the community page.

Yeah.

There is from Tisha. I'm a tutor currently
volunteering at a community organization.

I have a second grader who has clearly been traumatized by years of ineffective
reading instruction. She's also been labeled difficult, defiant, et cetera.

I've spent three weeks trying to build trust and relationship and I thought we were
there, but whenever I try to get her to blend a CVC word, all the
behaviors come out. I understand where they're coming from, but how do I
help her?

Can we ask Tisha what she's teaching?

Yeah, sure.

Well, like what method I'm teaching or-

Yeah

... okay, I'm using Reading Simplified, so very similar speech
to print.

Yep. Great.

And she is having success with

blending, which is great, but I write a

CVC word, she'll do the word chains just fine, and she's

super automatic with them, but any word, I'm like,

"Let's read this together. Let's blend it together."

And we actually had a talk. I was like, "Look, if you feel like something is too hard, you tell me. I will help you. We will do it together."

So I felt like-

I have two recommendations

Go ahead. Tell me

... real quick. Maybe three. First of all, you're her mom, and kids know.

I taught-

I'm not her mom

Oh, you're not her mom.

No.

You're her child. Okay, that's helpful because that's good.

Yeah.

Okay, so one thing is I would put a spelling on,

if it's CVC, she's starting with CVC, so put a letter on the board and say, "Tell me the sound." "C." Okay. Put the next sound. "A." Let's put those two together.

Ca. So you kind of sneak it in, the pill and the pudding, so you have her blending.

Say, "Look at there, you read that one." Doing that is one.

Mm-hmm.

The other thing is, is I have a webinar called, I don't know, it's probably called

Blending, something with blending in it.

If you go to our webinar page you'll find that.

And there's videos of me with kindergarten and first-- How old is this child?

She's a second grader. She's eight.

Okay. So you could move her. It's called whatever it is with blending,

but it shows me working with actual kids that struggle with

blending and how to go about that. I would also talk very little

about it,

and even the instruction, and also just this and this, and let's put it

together and just kind of start doing that and erase it, and then do it with the

word run or do it with the word whatever you're working with.

And then pretty soon she'll be like, "Oh, look at me doing this." And then she'll

be doing CVCC and CCVC. So that is what I would

recommend.

Yeah. And when a child-

She still freaks out when there's-- I'll try the one

letter at a time because she can-

Yeah, try that

... do the word chains, and we'll see if that works any better.

Well, and I don't think that it's because she can't do it.

I think that she's anxious about it, like you say.

Yeah.

So as much as you can decrease the less print, the less

scaffolding the instruction is critical

Thank you.

I would

say from my perspective as a learner, I would say if you can let her know we're going to do X amount of words and then it's going to be done, which I'm sure you're probably doing.

And then the other thing that has been really helpful for me through years of therapy is reframing some of my behaviors that I'm less proud of. So, something that may come across as defiant or whatever is like, well, maybe that's her being clever, or she's mastered the skill of XYZ.

And repositioning those as positive might help

deescalate

some of that, whatever those behaviors are of, if you can find a way that reframes it to not be negative, might help her bring her guard down a little, too.

Yeah, I'm not labeling her as defiant.

I actually think she's a critical thinker and she's independent, and this is where the, "Why should

I do this? I don't trust you because everybody else has failed me." That's really smart, right?

Yeah.

But I feel like she's also just reacting negatively

to life because she gets so much negative feedback from everybody in her

life. So, anyway.

Yeah. So what I was meaning is not like you were labeling her.

I don't know what behaviors she's doing, but

for me, it helped when

if I did something that

could have been seen as defiant, and numerous people in

my life had put that as defiant, when someone

said to me, "Oh, you weren't being defiant, you were being creative.

What a creative way to get out of that situation." Or,

"Wow, that was out of the box thinking," or,

"You've really mastered this skill." So when she's doing it,

that behavior, she's used to it being met with criticism.

If you meet it with something else, it might help her see

herself differently, which is what you're really trying to do, right?

Because you already see her as amazing. You need her to see it that way.

Thank you.

From Mike.

One more.

Okay.

15 minutes now, we're almost at 45, so sorry.

I know, sorry.

Okay.

"I cannot afford the Edli training right now.

Do you have any suggestions how I can access strategies to quickly help them before they leave us?" And Mike works with high school students.

You can look at our webinars. We have some stuff on there with comprehension stuff.

There's also,

Lou, will you put in the high level lesson, the ACT/SAT prep kind of lesson?

We have apps. I would say something that you could do today for

\$4.99 on an iPhone or an Android phone or a

tablet or iPad is Edli Sight Words by

Sound. That's something that kids can do on their own, and

that will get them at least some of the code into them, and some of them,

that's enough to really make a jump.

And they can do it on their own without having to have other peers around type of

thing. So yeah, those are some of the things.

Did we put on the links to the

mini workshops for spelling-

Oh, yeah. Spelling and comprehension

... and supported reading?

I was busy with links today.

Yeah.

It's going to be quite the email tomorrow.

Yeah, really. Your email's going to be four miles long. It'll be good.

Do you want the last one?

Okay, last one.

Anne. "Did you ever encounter a teacher that recognized what was going on and talked to you about it in a healthy, supportive way?"

The only teacher that ever addressed my struggle with reading was my second grade teacher.

So that was the first and the last time my struggle with literacy was addressed externally.

Okay. Anne, any last words that you would like to say?

No, I think for me, I know everyone, I hope, I'm sure I misspoke 1,000 times, and again, my journey is not every journey of those who struggle with literacy. I just have my own experience.

So if I gave suggestions, don't take them as they're gold.

I was speaking from my experience and what would work for me.

So,

if it doesn't work for the kids you're helping or you yourself, try something else. Don't give up on these kids because they're really worth...

And adults, too. I was an adult. Don't give up if you're in that space of knowing someone who's struggling.

Yeah, and I think with that, Anne, all of these books, the book that you said, the other books that have been recommended, there's a lot of resources out there that will help us help kids. But remember, the number one thing is teaching them how to read.

To decrease that anxiety, as Anne said, she said, "I don't even need to say many things. I have one. When I learned how to read, my anxiety plummeted." So I'm like, "That's a good one." So, and if you're not sure how to teach them how to read, then keep thinking, asking that question, "What do I need to do differently?" And then do it. And we've got this.

Together, we can really make a dent that's significant. So thank all of you for coming, for staying, for being on. This is a little bit a lot longer, even than my overlong ones typically, but it's an important topic, and I appreciate all of your interest, and I appreciate all of you being here with us.

So, thank you so much.

And thank you, Anne-

Thank you

... very much, my dear. You're amazing.

Thank you, Nora, for teaching me how to read.

Thank you for teaching me. We got this mutually learning experience, so I appreciate it.

We do. So, thanks. Bye.

Thanks everybody. Bye bye.