

Talking to Change: An MI Podcast

Glenn Hinds and Sebastian Kaplan



Episode 1: The Spirit of Motivational Interviewing

Glenn Hinds:

Hello, everybody. You're very welcome to the first Talking to Change, a motivational interviewing podcast with myself, Glenn Hinds, and my good friend Sebastian Kaplan. Hi, Seb.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Hey, Glenn, and hello everybody. Thank you for joining us.

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah, welcome to what essentially is a transatlantic partnership with myself based in Derry in Northern Ireland. And Seb, where are you?

Sebastian Kaplan:

I'm in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, United States.

Glenn Hinds:

So we're talking over the internet and recording this conversation today really about motivational interviewing. So why are we doing this, Seb? What are we at?

Sebastian Kaplan:

Well, this was an idea that developed over many weeks I think. We've talked about ways of providing information about motivational interviewing to a broader audience and for us to collaborate on this, and we sort of landed on the idea of a podcast thinking that it would be a unique opportunity to, over the course of several weeks and months perhaps, to be able to share ideas about motivational interviewing, share ideas from both the two of us, but also from a number of guests from around the world that have dedicated their careers to the practice and the teaching and the research on motivational interviewing. And we hope that the audience, those listeners to our podcast will certainly find it interesting and enriching and helpful for them either as professionals or perhaps in their own personal lives. Our hope is to provide information in a way that someone who's never heard about motivational interviewing before could find it very valuable and an important learning experience.

Glenn Hinds:

So right through from the curious to the expert, we're trying to offer something across the range of these podcasts for individuals who have come along just with a curiosity, with an interest, who've heard of MI or motivational interviewing. And then there's other people who are maybe already practicing MI, and then some of our colleagues from the



Motivational Interviewing network, MINTies, really get an opportunity to hear from other MINTies from across the world talking about their own experience of practicing or teaching motivational interviewing or integrating motivational interviewing alongside of other things such as CBT or in different disciplines with criminal justice. So quite the range, we're throwing the net wide.

Sebastian Kaplan:

That's right.

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah. Yeah.

Sebastian Kaplan:

That's right. Lofty goals, but hopefully it'll be an interesting process and rewarding for all you listeners.

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah, so it's all really quite exciting because we know that we're going to get a chance to speak with one of the architects of motivational interviewing, Bill Miller, and we know we're going to be speaking to a friend in Australia Stan Steindl talking about compassion and its place in the spirit, and much broader integration of compassion in motivational interviewing and helping other people change. And we've targeted a couple of other people we're waiting to hear back from in relation to future podcasts as well. So we're really quite excited about what it is this might turn into.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Absolutely. Absolutely.

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, so I was being just curious there. People are maybe wondering, "Who are you?" So maybe you just want to start by telling us a bit about yourself then, Seb?

Sebastian Kaplan:

Sure, gladly. So I'm a clinical psychologist and associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry as well as the Department of Family Medicine at the Wake Forest University School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, United States. And so I'm primarily a clinician/educator I would say. Those are the two main worlds that I live in professionally. As far as the clinical work that I do, I focus mainly on working with teenagers and young adults and their families, and trying to help these individuals overcome any number of life challenges. There isn't a particular psychiatric condition that I specialize in, it's really more focused on that age range.

Sebastian Kaplan:



I see clients in inpatient settings at our hospital here, in outpatient settings as well, on college campus here locally, so just a variety of places where I'll see clients. As far as the teaching and training part of my job, There are... I would say the main people I work with are medical students as well as psychiatry residents. I do a fair amount of teaching and training in motivational interviewing and other topics, and occasionally we'll provide some workshops in the community for a variety of healthcare providers. So, my current role is that's sort of it in a nutshell. I'll occasionally have done some research projects, but mainly as clinician/educator.

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah, sure. You sound like you're a busy man and quite a varied experience throughout the day working with individuals and families as well as working with other professionals who you're coming into contact with, with people with psychiatric disorders as well. Yeah.

Sebastian Kaplan:

That's right. That's right. Yeah, no, it does keep me busy but it's really exciting to be able to work in just a variety of settings with a lot of different people and certainly the teaching component is quite enriching as well.

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah. So it sounds like that motivational interviewing sits alongside of what you're doing working and I'm sure the audience is interested to recognize that motivational interviewing sits in the psychiatric world, it sits in the adolescent world, it sits in the family intervention world, it sits in the education world as well. And I suppose that's part of what we're hoping to do over the series of the podcast is really explore the different opportunities for motivational interviewing to be of benefit to individuals and groups as practitioners and their clients.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Right, and that seems to be a theme over the years of MI really sort of growing and expanding to different worlds as you put it. This approach, which started in the world of substance use treatment, in particular treatment for people with difficulties around alcohol use, really has expanded into just about any profession or any context where somebody is considering a change in their life. And MI has become a fairly standard way of trying to help people through that process.

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah, and I know that in my own background when I was working as an addiction practitioner, that's when I was first introduced to motivational interviewing and certainly the idea was that it was an alcohol intervention. And it expanded then, into the idea of, "Well, if it works with alcohol, does it work with drugs," and so for the first 15 years of my professional practice I was working as a social worker in addictions and it felt it was the new utopian way. And for a lot of people it resonated.



Glenn Hinds:

And I know that it resonated very powerfully for me because we had grown up still working with forms of what I understood to be almost like the Minnesota model where it was confrontation was the approach and individuals with addictions needed to be confronted with the reality. And certainly there was lots of people in the treatment centers that I was working were actually benefiting from that type of intervention. But on reflection, I think what it was that was working most rather than the confrontation itself, it was the relationship that the practitioner had with the patient during the confrontation.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Right.

Glenn Hinds:

That there was a containment, that there was an actual desire in the practitioner who valued the individual with the substance issue, that the confrontation wasn't punitive although it could be used or it could be experienced as a punitive intervention. And I think it was that that didn't sit for me because of the nature and the values of myself were, so when I was introduced to motivational interviewing, which has its origins in person centered, this very Rogerian concept alongside of some cognitive work, that it felt much more person centered than from a social worker in a counseling background that it felt much easier to integrate into my conversations with people to help them change.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Glenn Hinds:

And I'm sure that you noticed it yourself. A lot of people I talk to hear about motivational interviewing, it felt like it sang a tune that resonated with something that was true to them.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Right. Right. A very common experience when you hear people's stories about what first drew them to MI. And certainly what you described there of being in the setting where you and your colleagues were trying to be helpful and you were doing what you thought was best or what the literature stated or what the theoretical models at the time were encouraging people to do. And while it certainly was helpful for some people, it seems like you kind of were boiling down to the key elements that were ultimately helpful for people when using confrontational models, and so you speak to the relationship in particular as sort of the key foundational component of that work.

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah, and I think that was something that come out of the Project MATCH, that these different interventions, CBT, MET, a variation of motivational interviewing and the twelve



step facilitation program, that each one of them showed that they were effective in supporting people with alcohol-related problems. But what was surprising was when they mined down into the information it seemed that it was the relationship the practitioner had to the intervention that also had an impact on the outcome, that the MI spirited people when they were doing the MET groups seemed to have more success in those groups. The people who were married to the CBT principles, when they led a CBT group, more people made progress.

Glenn Hinds:

So that was intriguing for me, that it was the relationship the practitioner had to the intervention that they were using ultimately had an impact on the outcomes for the clients or the patients.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Right. And you're using some important terms there that we'll certainly talk more about, like you talked about the MI spirit. So for those of you who are unfamiliar, we'll be discussing the MI spirit a bit later in this episode and in much more detail in future episodes. And I suppose it's worthwhile just to say about CBT for those people who might not know what CBT is, the cognitive behavioral therapy, which is something that is often used in conjunction with motivational interviewing to help people with any number of life challenges.

Glenn Hinds:

Right.

Sebastian Kaplan:

And so, Glenn, we've talked a bit about your history and early exposure to MI. Maybe you can share a bit about who you are now and what are some of the things that you do at this point.

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah. Well, I'm Glenn. Glenn Hinds, and I'm based in a town in the northwest of Ireland, Derry. My own background is a psychologist college, came back to Northern Ireland from England and started working in mental health in traditional day care where a lot of people who had traditionally been in long stay hospitals were being reintroduced into the community. But what was noticed was young people around the ages of 18 to 30 weren't really interested in spending time in essentially arts and crafts type environments. So I'd moved from that traditional day care setting into quite a novel project where we were supporting individuals who had been diagnosed with psychosis and more predictive schizophrenia, offering them a social intervention, offering 37 and a half hours over a seven day week and really just offering them engagement in the community.

Glenn Hinds:



While I was doing that I was fortunate enough to get some training with an organization in Belfast called Nexus, who offered support to adult survivors of childhood sex abuse, and had some wonderful training with them and counseling interventions, and I suppose that's where the person centered part of me was first ignited, or it was the person centered nature of who I am was fanned and I understood what I was doing. So when I eventually then trained as a social worker and was introduced to motivational interviewing, the crossover was seamless. Like I say, the tune was already in me, and that was motivational interviewing.

Glenn Hinds:

So I spent another 10 years then working in addictions, either in alcohol and substance misuse, and then later back in Derry here as a drugs therapist. And having trained in motivational interviewing, I then had a chance to go away and train. About 12, 13 years ago I trained as a trainer, and about 12, years, 10 years ago I'd left the trust and am now primarily teaching motivational interviewing to health and social care practitioners and management teams in relation to supporting individuals make decisions about their health, their wellbeing, and their lifestyles that are consistent with motivation as individuals within organizations, but also taking care of themselves when they're patients or clients.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Right. Wow, quite a journey and really some early experiences working with people that I imagine were going through some really difficult times and who also had some really challenging early relationship experiences. So you say that's where you really started, or your interest in person centered approaches were sort of ignited and fanned at that point.

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah, it did. When I was working with the young people with the diagnosis of schizophrenia, that it was very clear that our task was not to cure the schizophrenia but there was things that were influencing these individuals experiences of episodes. And it was clear that stress was often one of the triggers, so we were doing social things but we were offering interventions in a very informal way, and what was interesting was that as I was being trained as a counselor in person centered approach, that it allowed me to be conscious of the type of conversations that I was having. So being purposeful in the questions I would ask, learning to listen in a more particular way, and guiding questions and information towards the client coming to insights that would ultimately help them make decisions about how to take care of themselves in situations that previously had been difficult for them.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Right. So even before coming to motivational interviewing, you had already begun a journey of learning about how to engage someone in a particular kind of conversation that was designed to, I guess, engage them in thinking about their own life and the direction of their life and how it might be different for them.



Glenn Hinds:

Yeah, and looking back on it from now and my experience of working with other practitioners, I think that's what brings most, if not all, helpers to the helping game. It's that desire that's within us to be of benefit to other people, and it's that desire to use our knowledge, our skills, and our willingness to be available to people for their benefit. Again with hindsight, I recognize how raw much of what I was as a young practitioner, what I was doing with the intention of being helpful. I now understand there are things that by doing them differently today and I suppose as a work in progress I am continuing to learn about the human condition, and more particularly what works in human relationships, or the helping relationships more particularly, that ultimately is benefit to the other person.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Right. Right. All helpers in any setting or any field, they're drawn with the idea of being helpful. And so, motivational interviewing has this sort of attraction there, that it provides people with fairly easy to access... It's not an especially complex model, it's a model that a lot of people are naturally drawn to and resonate with. My experiences I think, were somewhat similar in that my path in learning about motivational interviewing and becoming a practitioner of it didn't start with a workshop in motivational interviewing by any means.

Glenn Hinds:

Right.

Sebastian Kaplan:

I would sort of chart my origins with early experiences in college while I was in my early 20s. I would say it really started as a basketball coach. I was coaching young people in the area schools that I was living near, and was really drawn, not only teaching these kids how to play but also just getting to know them and them sort of reaching out to me as a bit of a mentor figure, and those are my first memories of having helping conversations in an untrained way but still trying to sort out for myself, "How can I be helpful to this person, both on the basketball court but just also in life in general?" And I was also very much influenced by a teacher that I worked with during an internship in college. This was a teacher who was in a fifth grade classroom.

Sebastian Kaplan:

For those who don't know the grade system, it was [probably 10 to 11-year-old students. It was at the beginning of the school year and I was there to help support a group of children that had special needs and they were being integrated into what we call a regular education classroom setting. And as we were talking about these children, before I even met them I was so struck by this teacher who thought so highly of these kids, many of whom had a long history of problems at school and a history of getting into trouble. And she had already met some of these children and she talked about how much she was looking forward to having them in the classroom, and one kid in particular that she described in such a warm way.



Sebastian Kaplan:

It was just really striking, I'll never forget it. But it may have been the first experience that I had where on paper, so to speak, a description of a young person, of a 10 year old boy, was by and large fairly negative, and here is somebody, this professional, this teacher who is going to have a classroom full of children, who is able to talk about the same person in a much different way. And I always go back to that as one of the early experiences of thinking creatively and flexibly about people, about problems, about challenges that people go through.

Glenn Hinds:

So it sounds like in some ways that search that you were describing as the basketball coach, "How can I be as helpful to these people as I possibly can," that when you met this teacher you saw something in her that intrigued you. How could she turn what on paper, was a difficult individual into this quite bright, warm, positive? And it sounds like that really resonated and tweaked your curiosity.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Yes, it absolutely did. And I worked with her throughout the year, so I was just sort of immersed in her classroom, and just heavily influenced by the kind of energy and mindset that she brought to her work and to her classroom. And I think some other things that began to shift for me as well is thinking about my role as a basketball coach, the idea that I could have taken the approach of, "Well, I'm there to tell everyone how to play basketball. I know how to play better than these kids, and I'm there to tell them what to do. Do this, do that. Play this way, and not that way."

Sebastian Kaplan:

And I certainly did fair amount of that, but I also found myself wanting to hear from them what they thought they could do better both as individuals but also as a team. And I don't precisely know that I learned that from anyone. I think I was influenced by this teacher that I've mentioned, but for many years throughout my 20s while I was coaching, I always tried to draw out some ideas and some thoughts that my players had about, I guess first of all what is it about basketball that peaked their interest and what they really cared about. But also, how they could perform better, so I really wanted it to be a two way process as opposed to me being the one to just tell them, "Do this. Do that."

Glenn Hinds:

So again, it sounds like that experience of being with the teacher amplified what was naturally there for you, which was that curiosity about an individual's experience and how they can achieve their potential. And by simply spending time with this good teacher, that in many ways it helped you notice how she helped people who were being described as difficult to be integrated into mainstream education and to achieve their potential in those environments, and that that then was able to cross back then into your conversations with your basketball teams that you trusted. It sounds like you trusted the team, that while you were the leader you weren't always out front.



Sebastian Kaplan:

Right. I feel like trust is a great word to describe how I felt about them. But I think it's a word that listeners perhaps should attach to motivational interviewing. There is a level of inherent trust that we have in the people we work with, even in the most difficult of circumstances, even in the most challenging of settings, trust in the other's sense about themselves, their own ideas about themselves, and where life might take them.

Glenn Hinds:

So it- Yeah, so it sounds like you're saying the trust is beyond that when you work with this person that they're not necessarily going to run away with your wallet.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Right.

Glenn Hinds:

That it's a much broader, deeper understanding of the trust in who this individual is, and what this individual has the capacity and potential to be.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Right. Exactly. And that stayed with me for many years, but as I continued to work in educational settings as a special education teacher, and then into my decision to switch to graduate school and psychology where I first learned about motivational interviewing. It was more of a passing comment from a supervisor who again described it in a similar way that resonated with my interest in drawing out ideas from others. My supervisor described this approach where you would ask clients about their smoking behavior for instance, in a way that was a very curious, non-judgemental way of having a conversation, which was so interesting and quite a bit different from some of the methods that I was learning in school.

Sebastian Kaplan:

And then eventually, it was really the year after I graduated where I took my first motivational interviewing workshop with Cathy Cole, who's a trainer out in the Chapel Hill, North Carolina area, and I was hooked. I was hooked from the very beginning and it just all really made sense to me, this wonderful method that I was learning.

Glenn Hinds:

She had you in MI.

Sebastian Kaplan:

She did. Oh, for sure. Without a doubt.

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah.



Sebastian Kaplan:

Without a doubt.

Glenn Hinds:

And that's interesting, and I suppose other people might be curious about it as well, but that idea that you were saying that being curious about this individual's addiction and somehow that being curious about almost like the relationship they have to smoking or drinking or drugs, which was very different from some of the other things that you were learning about how to help someone make changes in their lifestyle or health behavior.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Right.

Glenn Hinds:

And I wonder can you say a wee bit more about what that difference was for you?

Sebastian Kaplan:

Yeah, well I think a key difference, I think was what I was learning in school and what may be sort of a natural place that people in helping professions might find themselves, is that the expectation that their role is to learn enough about another person that that helper can therefore know what to do for that person. You know, if I just do this test or ask these questions in such a way, that will lead me to say, a psychiatric diagnosis. Or it might lead me to understand where their social needs might lie, and the helper would feel this natural, well intentioned pull to say, "Ah-ha, now I know what to do for you."

Glenn Hinds:

Right.

Sebastian Kaplan:

And the real distinction for me when I learned about motivational interviewing was the goal wasn't for me to know just enough for me to be able to do something to the other person, but it was to engage this person in a conversation in such a way that I would learn but perhaps they would learn as well through their conversation, what their own ideas about change might be and how they might go through the change process, whether it was with drugs and alcohol or in educational settings or in helping themselves through anxiety treatment. And that was really the biggest distinction for me.

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah, so again it sounds like that shift includes that trusting the other person to be able to navigate their way through this journey, to trust the other person to be able to make a decision about themselves that includes when they are ready to make a change in their relationship with a substance or another lifestyle behavior, that your job, your role was simply to help them discover that place for themselves knowing that when they got there



they would have many if not all of the ideas about what to do next to help them achieve that success.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Right. Right, and success isn't necessarily a linear process either. So they might learn from the foundation of a trusting relationship and one where they feel more able and free to talk about whatever struggles they were experiencing, that they could then make some initial changes and come back and wrestle with those ideas and those struggles. And change isn't always a clean, straight line, and so also having somebody return after not having seen them for a period of time and maybe not have had much success with the change, and then how do you respond to somebody who's maybe feeling a bit down or not feeling very successful, and MI still allows for kind of a supportive environment that people might feel a bit more open and safe to have those failures, so to speak.

Glenn Hinds:

Right. So again, that lovely idea that change is not a straight line. Change is a process. It's not an event. And I suppose in many ways it's recognizing that when we each look at our own lives, there's probably things anybody listening to this right now is probably have gone through different stages of moving towards it, moving away from it, moving across it, and that each step has been an important part of their journey in the context of everything else that's going on for them. And it sounds like that idea that the motivational interviewing allows us to take that into account when we're meeting people.

Glenn Hinds:

I love the idea that everybody is doing as well as they can, and I know that that takes some time to really get, to really trust that individuals whose lifestyles look problematic, who look catastrophic on occasions, to be able to still consider this individual. For whatever, reason, this is as well as they can do it right now, and then the challenge for us as practitioners is to be able to go and meet them in that place, with that mindset. That the fact that they're doing anything, the fact that they're living in this way is a form of communication that we need to understand. Before we try to change them, we need to understand why this is currently as well as it can be.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Yeah, so that's a really interesting way of thinking about this work, and thinking about how we approach someone in the various clinical settings that we might have a conversation with someone. That is the idea that they're doing the best they can at this moment, and really trying to work hard to accept that reality. And it strikes me that that idea and that concept fits very well with a very important part of motivational interviewing, specifically the MI spirit which is something that we will talk about in sort of an overview way this episode and we'll return subsequent episodes to talk about in more depth. But I wonder Glenn if you'd like to pick up on that, and tell the audience a bit more about the MI spirit.

Glenn Hinds:



Yeah. Yeah, in many ways as you mention the word spirit I remember, I think it was Bill in one of his workshops at one of our conferences, described it. The spirit is almost like the roots of the tree that is motivational interviewing, that motivational interviewing grows from this place called the spirit and in the most recent edition of the literature both Bill and Steve talk about four key elements of what makes up the spirit of motivational interviewing.

Glenn Hinds:

The first is acceptance, a bit like what we were just talking about, that idea of, "Can I as a practitioner accept this person for who they are, with their own worth and their own right?" And then alongside of that then, there's collaboration or partnership and the notion of as practitioners we work with someone rather than on them. And compassion which we'll hear a whole lot more about when we talk to Stan, but it's that idea that as practitioners we're actively promoting the other person's welfare, and the priority is on the other person's needs rather than mine or the agency's.

Glenn Hinds:

And finally then, a notion called evocation, which in many ways sounds a bit techy but it's the idea of calling out or drawing out, and that idea of trusting and believing that the way forward very often already exists within the other person and that the practitioners job is rather than to instil the way forward, it is to elicit it, draw it out from the person that they can hear themselves, essentially talk themselves into change and the practitioners listens them into change.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Right. I often think for myself, and also in trainings, try to help people see evocation as the idea that we want to, when at all possible, start with the other person, and that's been a helpful concept for me. You know, at any point in a conversation I want to know, I want to draw out a person's ideas about what the problem might be, what some ideas around change might look like, what they think a change plan might... how it might fit with their everyday life. As well as, if I have any advice or feedback for somebody I also want that person to have the last say in whatever idea that I might have for them, or piece of information that I want to share. So this notion of evocation kind of runs throughout each and every MI conversation.

Glenn Hinds:

Right, so it's not just a case of, "Tell me what's wrong. Now sit back, I'm going to fix it for you." It's, "Tell me what's happening. What's that like for you? How have you thought about it? What do you think would work? Where do you want to go with this?"

Sebastian Kaplan:

Right.

Glenn Hinds:

It's like a continuous journey back to the other person's perspective.



Sebastian Kaplan:

Yeah. And this would be an opportunity for the other person if they don't quite understand what you're trying to share with them, if you're providing some advice or feedback, they could ask for some clarification. Sometimes that's an opportunity where they can clarify things for me, because I might not fully understand how an idea might fit with their life.

Glenn Hinds:

Right.

Sebastian Kaplan:

And there have been occasions where I've had a wonderfully brilliant idea that I thought was going to solve all their problems, and they mentioned to me or maybe even reminded me that whatever that idea might have been didn't quite work for them at that point in time in their life. And so, I would continue on the process of helping them find a way to change that was more realistic for them at that point.

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah, and even in that example that you can see the crossover between evocation and collaboration, that you're endeavouring to draw out a way forward but you're working alongside of them, recognizing that while we as practitioners are focused on a single behavior, this single behavior fits in the context of this person's whole life and they have that insight.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Right.

Glenn Hinds:

So that curiosity, "Here's the idea you're looking at, how does that for you, where do you want to go with it or how does the sound to you," and that gives them the opportunity to think about that way forward taking into account everything else that's going on.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Exactly. It's a real contrast to perhaps a more traditional hierarchy in these professional settings where you have one expert, namely the physician, the psychologist, the social worker, whoever it might be. And then there's the patient or the client who's there to sort of absorb the wisdom of the expert. In MI, and pertaining to the spirit, it's a lot more of a conversation where there are two experts. Hopefully we as professionals have expertise in whatever area of practice we are in, and certainly the client will have expertise on themselves, on their life, on their history, and what change might look like for them.

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah, again that working together, and one of the analogies that you used to describe the spirit of motivational interviewing is the comparison of wrestling with our clients,



where our expertise and very often in helping situations the power that we have, that we have access to resources that the client may need and that we use that access to resources as a way of almost ensuring that they do what we think they should do because they need this stuff.

Glenn Hinds:

So we're pushing and pulling in one direction or another, whereas in motivational interviewing the idea is, "What if we were to dance?" What if we were to enter into a movement in a direction that we understand as the experts in our field that will have some benefit for the client, but recognizing that it's not necessarily going to take a straight line and that the idea is accepting that first of all it's this person's choice whether they want to dance with us. And that when we enter into the dance, have we chosen music that suits the client?

Glenn Hinds:

Have we chosen a dance that the client prefers, and are we genuinely interested in that relationship we have with them, so that we only go in a direction that they feel comfortable with towards the ultimate goal but recognizing that we might dance left and right, back and forward, and after the first or second song we may not look any closer to the outcome. But often when I'm talking to students, I talk about the idea that my motivation for dance one is dance two. What do I need to do in this first session? What do I need to do in this first dance with this client, so that at the end of it when I offer them the opportunity, "I'd like to offer you another appointment," that they say yes, now not because they have to come back but because they want to come back.

Glenn Hinds:

And what we're exploring is what do I need to do in that first session that will enhance the likelihood that the person would want to come back and work with me on this issue? And I think that the spirit really speaks to that, it's about the nature and the essence of the relationship. And the four concepts of collaboration, acceptance, evocation and compassion, really are I suppose guides or concepts of frameworks for the practitioner to understand and then manifest in their conversations with people.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Yeah. Yeah. I often think of them as professional values-

Glenn Hinds:

Okay, yeah, nice.

Sebastian Kaplan:

-that I am trying to uphold. Every conversation I have with someone, I might not be doing motivational interviewing per se in a traditional sense with every single conversation I have. However, I strive to uphold these four aspects of the spirit, these four professional values if you will, regardless of the nature of the conversation.



Glenn Hinds:

Yeah, so in some ways it's almost like considering that the spirit of motivational interviewing is also the spirit of good helping. It's also the spirit of good relationship with anyone, that we treat people with respect and understanding and trying to see things from their point of view, not just our own.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Right. Right. Now, I wanted to ask you something and kind of loop back to this idea that you shared about approaching someone or meeting someone with an understanding that they're doing the best they can at that point in time in their life. I know you've experienced this in training situations. Perhaps you even experienced it yourself as a practitioner, I know I have, which is a bit of this tension or a different point to try to reconcile, which is if you are accepting someone for who they are and accepting the idea that they're doing the best they can, how do you then take that notion with the reality in many instances that someone is struggling and someone is looking to change and looking to a different path for themselves. It seems like for some people that's two ideas that are difficult to merge and to sort of balance out.

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah.

Sebastian Kaplan:

What do you think of that?

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah, I recognize that and I think there's a third element to that is where staff or practitioners will often say people are coming and they haven't identified that the issue that they are living with is an issue but everyone else does, and if we're genuinely accepting that this person is doing the best they can why are we trying to change them at all, even without their permission. And it's a really important thing to step back from and think about. I think it fits with the spirit of MI which is that notion of acceptance and recognizing that this is a concept for the practitioner to understand. That it's not, "Can I accept this person for who they are right now," knowing that they are struggling. And understanding what sort of person would be struggling with who they are, and more often than not it's recognizing it's someone who's trying to be different.

Glenn Hinds:

So in many ways it's recognizing that when we meet a client who we hear is struggling with something, we're also in the presence of somebody who's working very hard to be a better version of themselves. So it's how we treat that person, it's the circumstances that we create within the therapeutic space I think is really important, and I think that fits very much with the Rogerian element, that acceptance of this other person is the fertile ground where change can germinate if the client chooses to work with us.

Glenn Hinds:



I love the metaphor that, I think it was Rogers used, that if you put a potato in your vegetable drawer and let it sit for a couple of days, then it sprouts. And just the queries why does that happen, and it's the idea that the potato by its very essence is striving to live and to fulfil its potential. And the only thing that can inhibit or enhance the opportunity for that potato to become its own best version is the environment it finds itself in. If it's in the vegetable drawer it'll live for a while, not have the resources and deteriorate and extinguish itself, or be extinguished.

Glenn Hinds:

But take that potato out of that and put it in a different place. It has the potential of growing into a potato where it produces five or six pounds of potatoes for the next season. And it's that idea that, that's not just true of potatoes. It's a notion that, that's true of every living entity. Within every living entity is the spark of life and the potential to be the best version. And I think that maybe explains why clients come to us with that tension, that they're not happy with their current version of themselves. And our job is, I think, that acceptance is to appreciate this person is striving. And one of the ways to help them to achieve that for themselves is for us to draw out that evoke, draw out, "Why is this an issue for you? What ideas have you got about how to resolve it?"

Glenn Hinds:

So that they hear themselves, navigate that journey towards their own best version. But the starting point is, "You're already good enough for me to want to be with you. You won't become a better person by changing this behavior. Your behavior will be different, but the who you are has always been good enough." And I think that fits with that notion of UPR, unconditional positive regard. "You don't need to do anything for me to accept you for who you are." And again, I think that's one of the great challenges, certainly that journey for me in my own practice was getting to a place where I could be with someone who was behaving in a way that didn't fit with my values or potentially society's values, and to really work to the place where I recognized this person doesn't need my permission to behave that way but I do need their permission for them to want to work with me, and that shifting power and that shifting relationship.

Glenn Hinds:

So again, that's that notion of me seeing the world from this perspective doesn't mean that I'm telling the client, "This is the way you're supposed to see it." It's recognizing they are struggling, and it's how to help them find a balance or to reduce the struggle for themselves so that they can be as close to peace as possible, being themselves.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. So it's not necessarily saying that you agree with their choices or agree with their specific behaviors, and in fact it's acknowledging that your role isn't even one where agreeing or endorsing their behavior is even relevant.

Glenn Hinds:

Sure. Sure.



Sebastian Kaplan:

You're not their parent, and so it's the idea, or I guess to go back to the potato example the goal isn't to try to disassemble the potato or to make the potato into something that it's not and to sort of reject it. It's to try to understand what is the environment in which this potato is most likely to blossom and to implement change. And the idea that you are accepting someone for who they are unconditionally is part of creating an environment that actually would make it more likely for them to consider changes in their life, again regardless of the context that you're [inaudible 00:52:13].

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah, and even that idea that I'm not their parent, it's recognizing how many times did our parents tell us what to do and we didn't do it? So even having someone as important as a parent in our lives doesn't mean that we follow their path, and more often than not there comes a point in our lives where we don't want our parents to be telling us how we should be living. We want them to support us navigate that for ourselves. And again, it's not that we can't make the potato grow any faster than it's currently able to, but whatever stage of its development it's at, we meet it there. And consider the point you made there, what does it need now at this point along this journey? What could I be doing that would be most useful for this individual to take the next step?

Glenn Hinds:

And certainly even that idea of the next step, I think we often feel a pressure as practitioners to get someone to having produced their full potential, whereas it's much more, I think, compassionate towards the self and towards the client which is, "What if I didn't try to get you to the end of the journey today, what if I explored what the next step would be?" So that it's manageable, it's achievable, and that people have the opportunity to build on the success, the inches rather than the miles of the journey.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Right. Yeah, each step along the way. Well, so what do you think? It feels like we've covered some really important ground today and hit some of the main parts, certainly of the MI spirit. There's lots more to discuss about motivational interviewing, other terms and concepts, but it does feel right to start with the MI spirit, at least introduce that notion for the audience. And certainly there's other concepts that we'll explore in future episodes, but it feels pretty good what we've done so far, huh?

Glenn Hinds:

Yeah. I've really enjoyed today Seb as always, having a good chat with you and just thinking about things that are important to us and just sharing some ideas for ourselves and with the audience.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Right. And so, speaking of the audience, possible that the audience would want to contact us or maybe had some questions or suggestions for us. How might they reach out to us?



Glenn Hinds:

So, we're always keen to hear from anybody that's listening. So if you've any questions about anything that you've heard today or any of the future podcasts that you want to query, or you want to send in questions in advance of any of the future podcasts that you want some of our guests to answer or myself and Seb to answer, you can contact us by emailing podcast@glennhinds.com. So podcast@glenn, G-L-E-N-N, H-I FOR India-N-D-S, all one word, [.com](mailto:Podcast@glennhinds.com). Podcast@glennhinds.com.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Well Glenn, time to wrap things up.

Glenn Hinds:

Seb, as always it's good to see you and look forward to talking to you soon.

Sebastian Kaplan:

Thank you Glenn, and great to be with everyone listening.

Glenn Hinds:

Thanks everybody. Bye.

