

# Talking to Change: An MI Podcast

## Glenn Hinds and Sebastian Kaplan



### Episode 6: Change Talk (Client Language in Helping Conversation) with Theresa Moyers, PhD

#### **Glenn Hinds:**

Hello, everybody, and welcome back to Talking To Change, A Motivational Interviewing Podcast, Episode Six: Change Talk: An Exploration of Client Language in Therapeutic Conversations. Our guest today is Terri Moyers. But before we speak to Terri, Seb, perhaps you'd like to remind people how they can contact us.

#### **Sebastian Kaplan:**

Absolutely. Thank you, Glenn. Well, as some of you know already, I'm sure, the podcast has become available on iTunes, on Stitcher, and in other places where you might download and listen to podcasts. On Twitter, it's @ChangeTalking is the Twitter handle, right? Is that the term that they use for-

#### **Glenn Hinds:**

That's it, yeah.

#### **Sebastian Kaplan:**

I'm not a huge Twitter user myself but I'm just learning the terminology here. On Facebook, you can find us at TalkingToChange, and if you want to send us an email, the email address is [podcast@glennhinds.com](mailto:podcast@glennhinds.com).

#### **Glenn Hinds:**

Great stuff. So, today, as I say, we are joined by Theresa Moyers, who is an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of New Mexico where she specializes in the treatment of addictive behaviors. Her research program focuses on teaching counsellors to use evidence-based treatments including motivational interviewing in the addictions field as well as identifying active ingredients in motivational interviewing. Dr. Moyers has published more than 30 peer-reviewed publications related to motivational interviewing and has presented it at conferences and workshops in 42 States and 16 countries.

#### **Glenn Hinds:**

Dr. Moyers also trains and competes with her Border Collie in dog agility. She finds it a natural fit and uses motivational interviewing to help dog trainers warm up to positive training methods. So, you are very welcome, Terri, and it's great to see you.

#### **Theresa Moyers:**

It's lovely to be here.

#### **Glenn Hinds:**



And as with other podcasts, we have a number of different time zones. What time is it with you at the minute?

**Theresa Moyers:**

Early in the morning.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Early in the morning. So-

**Theresa Moyers:**

I'll just say "early".

**Glenn Hinds:**

Early.

Sebastian Kaplan

Yeah.

**Glenn Hinds:**

So, again we really appreciate you making yourself available to us, and as I said there's a couple of different directions we could find ourselves going in today. But I suppose in relation to motivational interviewing, one of the things that sets motivational interviewing apart from counsel and helping approaches has been an exploration of the influence of client language during interventions. And certainly, in the earlier editions of the motivational interviewing literature, this was referred to as self-motivational statements and more recently has been described as change talk.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Glenn Hinds:**

And I wonder perhaps we could begin with asking: What is change talk, and why does it matter?

**Theresa Moyers:**

Well, it's a great question to start out with. People that, first of all, there's not a standard definition of change talk. Change talk is a concept. It's a hypothetical construct not something that's like a cell or an organism that's real in the world. It's something that we make up to try to talk about and capture an important process that we see in the interaction between two people. So, the most important thing I think we should understand about change talk is that it isn't real. It's a construct that we should hold lightly.

**Theresa Moyers:**



So, when you're thinking about change talk and you're imagining it and turning it around in your mind, particularly if you're a therapist and particularly if you're in an interaction with a client, the most important thing you can do is grasp the concept or the construct as opposed to trying to decide whether each thing that the client says actually fits into a particular category. Because those categories that we have about change talk, desire, ability, reason, need, commitment, all those things, those are only markers that we put on something that isn't real to help us grasp it more clearly. So, change talk I would say is the map. It's not the territory.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Wow.

**Theresa Moyers:**

There's a lot more to client language and how people speak for and against changing in their interactions with interviewers than we have on the map of change talk that we have right now. So, what do you guys think about that?

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Huh. Yeah. And it definitely leaves us a lot to think about, right, right off the bat. Yeah. And I guess so you were kind of speaking to, well, obviously, speaking to us but speaking to the audience a bit particularly if there are therapists out there, and so there may be a risk, I suppose, in thinking of change talk as something really specific and well-defined-

**Theresa Moyers:**

And concrete, yeah.

Sebastian Kaplan :

... and concrete, yeah. So, what do you suppose would be a drawback to if we were to think of it like something so concrete and specific? What would be the drawback to that?

**Theresa Moyers:**

Yeah. The drawback is the same as it is with any time you reify or make real a hypothetical construct, which is that you miss the big picture because you're paying attention ... You miss the territory because you're paying attention to the map, right?

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

And your map says, "There ought to be a road to go this way," and there you are, and there's no road. And so, you keep trying to make the road and look for it instead of figuring out where you really are and going where you need to go. So, mistakes that I've seen therapists make, for example, are they're looking for change talk DARN, and the person will say something that's very clearly indicates a movement in the direction of change.



And the person doesn't respond to it because they don't see it fitting into one of those categories.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

Right? And there are all kinds of things that people say that would lead you toward moving towards change that therapists don't respond to or don't recognize because they're looking for a particular, specific, concrete category of change talk.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Okay?

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

So-

**Glenn Hinds:**

You've already mentioned the categories and both as an acronym and as a word. So, it's what it sounds like you're saying is that the one of the ways that motivational interviewing practitioners can recognize the forms of what is categorized as well as change talk would be when somebody uses language would that maybe implicates or offers an idea that they have a desire to change which is the D.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Glenn Hinds:**

And then, there's ability to change, the reason to change, the need to change, and the commitment to change. And it sounds like that if we are too wedded to hooking language to those, we miss the opportunity to really connect with the client and to work with them in the process of assisting them to move forward.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Bang. You hit the nail on the head. I mean, you could get all bothered about whether the person has given you DARN and failed to notice the process that the person's language about changing has increased in strength and frequency over the course of the session.



And that actually, there are some hints that the person's ready to move on to a different thing, and you're not. You're not following because you were stuck on the map, right?

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

So, the most important thing I have to say about change talk, I think, is that change talk isn't a concrete specific thing or instance of what a client says. It can be. You can grab it that way.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Hmm.

**Theresa Moyers:**

But what it really is it's a process that the person that's unfolding in the person's interaction with you, and are you paying attention to that process? And that process is what is the person saying to you about their internal movement or their internal experience when they consider changing.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

And change talk is a marker for that. It's a map for that, but it's not the whole thing. So, Glenn, you look like I've just puzzled the heck out of you.

**Glenn Hinds:**

No. Do you know what? I'm just I'm staring into middle distances as I reflect that the images that are coming up in my head, it's almost like it's one of the ingredients that goes into a cake. It's the cake we've got to be interested in, but these, the raisins, are important and a fruit cake. But we're not going to get caught up just looking for raisins. There's other things to be interested in as well, and it's the cake-

**Theresa Moyers:**

So, and when we do our research studies, for example.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

And we actually count instances of desire, ability, reason, need, commitment, action, taking steps, all of those kinds of different change talk instances we can categorize, and



we can get people to listen to client speech and put marks and count each of those instances of change talk reliably across coders. So, we can do that. But my point is we still miss a lot, and sometimes, not the biggest category, but sometimes a really important category is other, right, when we're coding you have to have a mutually exhaustive system for coding. That means everything the client says has to fit somewhere and in a coding strategy. And that causes you to be really disciplined and pay attention to this.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

And it turns out that not everything people say about changing and their internal experience can fit into those categories. So, you have to have an other category, and what ends up in that other category is really interesting, I'll give you an example of it in just a second, and convinces me that we don't know all there is to know and haven't captured the territory of change talk. We've only got a map.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Well, so I'm interested in hearing a bit about the research and kind of where the attention arose around change talk. But maybe before we jump into that, just think again, thinking about the people that may be listening, I would imagine many of whom are therapists, but there may be professionals in other settings that may be wondering, "Okay, so, okay. If I were a therapist, I get it. It's about the big picture, and it's sort of this unfolding process. But if I'm a primary care physician, or if I'm a dietician or a teacher or somebody else," do you, could you see that the notion that we're not and don't get too caught up in these discreet pieces, that there would be I guess the notion that change talk is this process? Do you see it fitting across professions where people might have less time or that the sort of the actual quality of the interaction or the type of interactions are different? Do you see cutting across all of these possible environments?

**Theresa Moyers:**

Well, yes and no. I think when you are trying to get somewhere having a map is way better than having no map at all. And so, I think there's nothing wrong with having a map that says, "Look for DARNC, and when you hear that, that's your signal that you should do this," right? So, if you see this intersection, then you turn this way, or when you see this guidepost, then you do ... then you look for this other thing. Nothing wrong with that, good idea, right?

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

But hold that lightly, as lightly as you can, and if you're a person that spends a lot of time doing motivational interviewing, it won't be long until you start to question your map. If



you're a person that uses motivational interviewing maybe not a lot or maybe for not a long time with clients, maybe the map is fine, right?

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

Maybe that's really all you need, or maybe it's a good place to start.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Hmm.

**Glenn Hinds:**

So, it sounds like in some ways, one of the ways that we can be measuring it as practitioners is the outcomes that we're experiencing with the client is: Has the client moved towards change? Has the client started to act on change? Which is ultimately what I think most helpers are trying to achieve, that if that has happened, is it as a consequence of sticking to the map, or using it as you describe it, holding onto the concepts quite lightly because it's the outcome that's more important than how we got there? It's not getting caught up as you say caught in up in the language that the clients are using or the way that we're trying to listen to that language. Is it leading to ultimately to the client's wellbeing, a sense of satisfaction? Is that there at the end of the conversation?

**Theresa Moyers:**

Right?

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Of course, outcomes ought to be our final judge about whether we, how we pay attention to change talk.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

And I think there, we've got some evidence that paying attention to DARNC is actually helpful.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.



**Theresa Moyers:**

But if a person spends a long time in a complex environment with a map, pretty soon they'll start to build a cognitive map or a cognitive structure about where they are. The same thing happens with change talk. If you spend a lot of time talking to people about change, eventually, and paying attention to their change talk, eventually, your cognitive map becomes very much richer than DARNC. And then, you begin to ask yourself, "Well, is there something larger that's going on here, or that is more detailed or complex than just DARNC?"

**Theresa Moyers:**

And my only point about this is that if you're there and that's where you are in struggling with this concept of change talk, then that's a good thing. That's a good thing.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

That means you're grasping the underlying process there and not just paying attention to the map.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

You're building your own cognitive map for it.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Okay. So, one of the things that strikes me is if we were to allow ourselves to raise above the map a little more, the idea of desire. We've been talking about that a few times. I wonder what does that mean? What is it if someone's listening to this and they're being introduced to the notion of change talk, we're talking about desire, ability, reason, and need, but for what? Why are we looking for desire? Why are we interested? Why are we marking desire? How does it sound?

**Theresa Moyers:**

A desire change talk would be something like, "I want my life to be different. I want to be free of cigarettes. I don't want to have to go to the store in the middle of the night to buy cigarettes."

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**



"I wish my children could play at the playground without having to leave early so I can buy cigarettes." That's all desire language.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Okay. So, it's-

**Theresa Moyers:**

And the reason it's important is because that language is giving way to or expressing a person's discrepancy or unhappiness or their ambivalence with some behavior or predicament that they find themselves in.

**Glenn Hinds:**

So, it's the client pointing in the direction of a better world or a better way of being, a happier place.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Yep. It's one half of their dilemma-

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right. Okay.

**Theresa Moyers:**

... that they're giving voice to.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Okay. And again, using your analogy of the map, you're describing that that's the signpost that when we hear that, the instinct is to encourage the practitioner to follow that path, look, help them, help the practitioner to explore with the client more about what this desire is about and why it exists rather than spend time-

**Theresa Moyers:**

Right. So, when people are ambivalent about changing, they have both of that kind of language within them. They have both change talk and then what we call sustain talk, which is the other side of the coin. And when a person is ambivalent, both of those sides and both of those kinds of language will come forward naturally. That if you, if they start talking about something that they're ambivalent about, you will hear sustain talk and you will hear change talk.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Now of course, things can conspire to make sure that doesn't happen. So, if you are in a really coercive environment, you might suppress change talk or you might suppress sustain talk because you're responding to the environment around you, for example. Let's say like if you're in jail, you may not give a lot of change talk to when you're meeting with



your therapist because you're feeling pretty coerced and unhappy. Or on the other hand, you may give a lot of it because you know that's what the person wants to hear.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Right? So, there definitely are situations where people do not offer both sides of that equation when they're ambivalent. But usually and sort of naturally, human beings, when they start talking about something that they're ambivalent about, they offer both change and sustain talk. And really, when that happens, the interviewer has the opportunity to make one of those sides grow stronger instead of the other.

**Theresa Moyers:**

And the way they have that opportunity is what they choose to focus on. So, in a situation where you're hearing both change and sustain talk, that change talk is a golden thread. And what you need to do is you need to pick that thread up and pull it and keep going and keep going and keep going rather than picking up the other thread which is the sustain talk and pulling on that. Right? So, you want to build up one of those sides versus the other, and the client's language is the way that that becomes stronger and builds up in them during an MI session. We think.

Sebastian Kaplan :

Right. Wonderful. And so, we talked a bit about desire and what that might sound like, and I wonder if you could expand on some of the other elements there, the ability, the reasons, the need. Because this is some of the key points that we try to make when we're teaching MI, and I think really helpful for people to sort of expand from the notion that motivation is some unitary construct, right, or it's just about whether people want to do something. There's other things that influence the choices that we make, right?

**Theresa Moyers:**

Oh, sure. So, when I teach about change talk, the first thing I do is say is introduce it as a broader concept and say and talk about the things that we've just been talking about. That it's a process, that it occurs naturally when a person's ambivalent, and that there are all different kinds of change talk that you will be hearing in a session.

**Theresa Moyers:**

And the most important thing for you to do is tune your ear or start paying attention to that kind of language so that you get really good at hearing it. There's lots of things that go by us when we're sitting down talking to people because we haven't tuned our ear, and we don't hear that, right?

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).



**Theresa Moyers:**

So, just start. Just begin. If you want to begin with change talk, just start tuning your ear to the things that the client is saying that indicate that they're moving towards change or away from change. Think of a giant slide ruler in your head, right? A ruler with one of those slides that goes across it, and the positive numbers are like the person's speaking towards in favor of change, and in the negative numbers, they're speaking against it. And as you're listening to that person speak, just imagine that slider going back and forth across the ruler, and that's how you tune your ears or one of the ways you can tune your ear towards what the person is saying about change, about their internal process.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Once you get a feel for that, some of the signposts along the way that you can look for have to do with desire, which are statements like, "I want to change," ability, "I can change," reasons, "I have good reasons to change," and need, "I must change. I'm compelled to change. I have to change." Those are all a preparatory change talk, right? This is preparatory language. These are the foundational statements that build the platform upon which commitment language rests, and commitment language is, "I will change. I'm going to change. I'm going to do this." That's the solid gold in MI is when you can go for commitment language, and you can, and you hear it.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Now, what I will tell you is that lots of times, people give commitment language without preparatory language, and lots of times, they give preparatory language without commitment language. It doesn't seem to matter in the end in predicting how much change occurs. So, the idea is that first will come preparatory language, and then will come commitment language, and then that will predict change. And there have been some studies that found that, but there've been a lot of studies that have also found that one or the other without each other, they still predict change perfectly well.

**Theresa Moyers:**

So, one of the take home lessons that I have about change talk is if you're hearing change talk, it doesn't matter what kind of change talk it is. It doesn't even matter if it fits in the categories. Pay attention to it and try to get some more of it.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Glenn Hinds:**

And-

**Sebastian Kaplan:**



And I guess that's a potential trap also then if, or a potential way to get really focused on the map, is if people think that it's this sequence that has to happen in this particular direction, where it starts with preparatory language and then you have to get commitment language, and those are the two things that need to happen for people to change, that that's also kind of missing the big picture.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Yeah.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

I guess what you're saying is it doesn't have to happen in that way.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Absolutely. I mean, you might be surprised to know that I've had more than one person learning MI about change talk that waited and sort of got stuck in a session because they heard desire language and ability language, but they didn't hear any reasons. And so, they didn't move forward into any kind of planning because they hadn't heard reasons and need yet. There was lots of desire and ability but no reasons and need. And so, they said, "Okay. Well, I can't move forward because I got to hear reasons and need." That's an example of what happens when you pay attention to the map and not the territory.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Glenn Hinds:**

And again, what strikes me is that'll be very, very helpful I think for some people in the audiences that for many of us as practitioners, we have learned that the notion that change is what we can see. It's about behavior. That the change is that when we're talking about change, change talk, it's almost like we're talking about the person behaving differently. But what's important about the desire, the ability, the reason, and need as you described it, it's the preparatory change talk. It's recognizing that these are the things that are happening internally. These are the thoughts that people are having about the possibility of change, and that the practitioner can tap into that. And in relation to their own needs I suppose as helpers, are they making a difference?

**Glenn Hinds:**

It's recognizing that when we're hearing a client talk about their desire or their ability or their reasons or their needs to change, that this is something to celebrate and to, in fact, then encourage because it's leading to the possibility of the observable behavior change. That if they get caught up in the last bit, which is the observable behavior change, they're going to be disappointed because there's a lot of work to be done before we change our behavior, and the desire, the ability, the reason, and need is where that's been built.

**Theresa Moyers:**



Yeah. So, there's so much. There's so many interesting things in what you've just said, so let me just unpack that a little bit. The first thing is change in behavior. So, now, I'm a researcher in addition to being a therapist, and it's an interesting world to live in, right, to be both a therapist and a researcher. And as a researcher, I like behaviors as an indicator of change because I can count them and I can measure them. And so, I know something at the end of looking at a behavior and whether it's changed that I didn't know before that I if I can measure it and see it.

**Theresa Moyers:**

If I'm looking at things like internal experiences that I can't really measure like forgiveness or becoming more contemplative or other changes that people might want to make that aren't behaviors they just occur internally. As a therapist, I know those things can be important and powerful. As a researcher, they cause me a lot of trouble, and I don't really like to pay too much attention to them because I want to be able to demonstrate and show that change has happened. And so, that's a lot harder if you're talking about something like forgiveness. Probably there's some really clever people who could do that. I actually don't doubt that. But for me, simple as I am, I like to think about things that I can count. And my favourite thing to count is how many drinks you're drinking and cigarettes you're smoking and people you're having sex with without a condom and things like that.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Those are the things I like to count because that's in the field of addictions. It's sex drugs and rock and roll. That's what we pay attention to. But that doesn't mean that only those things really matter in therapy and in the way people change, so I get that you might have a change that's not a behavior. I get that. Just for me motivational interviewing in therapy is about behaviors that's partly because of the way I was trained.

**Theresa Moyers:**

So, the other thing you've talked about is when you hear this change talk, that's a reflection of an internal experience that the person's having, and we should be happy to hear that, and we should. And that's right. The larger question is, yes, of course that I mean I'm perfectly willing to accept that that change talk that I'm hearing is a reflection of the person's internal experience. It tells me something that's happening inside of that person. The question is: Can that change talk also contribute to making that experience different? So, is change talk just an indicator of something that's happening inside of a person, or is it also something that actually creates change?

**Theresa Moyers:**

So, the analogy that I'd like to use here is the smoke and the fire. When you see smoke, that is an indicator that there is a fire.

**Glenn Hinds:**



Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

That smoke isn't the fire itself. It's the indicator that the fire is happening.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Now, paying attention to that smoke is a really good idea because that tells you, "Gee, there's a fire here."

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

Right? But it could also be that change talk is not just the smoke, but it's also a fire. That actually speaking that language out loud in the context of an empathic interpersonal relationship spontaneously actually creates the conditions for greater motivation and commitment to change to happen.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Hmm. So, I guess that that might be a natural segue into some of the research that you've done and, I guess, some of the conclusions you may have drawn already or may be drawing about those questions. So, I guess I'd be very interested to hear what some of the early research around change talk that has sort of led to the focus on it as a concept. But then maybe if there's some research that addresses that question about whether change talk is just smoke, or perhaps it's smoke and fire.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Yep. So, the only research that's been done ... Well, that's not exactly true. The overwhelming majority of the research that's been done is smoke research in which we look at change talk, and we see does it tell us that there's going to be change later? Does it tell us that there's a fire? And for a long time, that's the only research there ever was. And the problem with that is that it doesn't tell us why that happens, right?

**Theresa Moyers:**

So, if you look at sessions with people doing motivational interviewing and you count up all their change talk or all their sustain talk or you use sort of a ratio but to a proportion of the two that occurs in the session, you will be able to predict behavior change. So, the client language is a pretty good smoke. It will give us a pretty good idea of whether or not the person's going to make the change. And I say, "a pretty good idea". You got to realize that's a ... When you do a study like that, what you're looking for is you're looking for a



signal amidst a bunch of variants about whatever else is happening in the session with the client, with the therapist. So, it's kind of like looking for a lighthouse in the fog.

**Theresa Moyers:**

And the question is: Can you see the lighthouse for the fog? If the lighthouse is there, are you really going to ever be able to see it? And so, change talk is a pretty weak lighthouse for allowing us to see the signal through the fog. Nevertheless, I mean, it's a valuable one, and it tells us, "Yeah, this isn't trivial. This is something that we could pay more attention to."

**Theresa Moyers:**

This kind of research is done by looking at associations. Here's this stuff that's already happened, and here's the outcome. And statistically, do we see a relationship between those two things? Do they vary together in a predictable way? So, that's the smoke research.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

There've been very few studies that have actually looked, have done fire research, and fire research would be the kind of research where you actually experimentally manipulate that change talk in a session. And the two studies from my own lab and from my own colleagues are ones in which we experimentally tried to manipulate the client's language and then look at the outcomes of that. And in those two studies, we were successful in actually being able to manipulate client change talk by what the therapist did. So, that's the next step, right? Okay, well, if there's an association, can it be influenced by the interviewer? And I think the evidence really is pretty strong that, yes, interviewers do have an impact on the change talk and the sustain talk that the client gives both.

**Theresa Moyers:**

So, now, the next kind of research that needs to be done is to take it one step further and say, "If the therapist actually does manipulate the client language in session," and I use the word manipulate advisedly, right? I realize that's a word that a lot of people don't like in the MI world. So, you could always say influence if you like that word better, but clearly, we want therapists to do something about change talk, right?

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

And so, if therapists do that and they influence the proportion of the client's language that's devoted to change talk rather than sustain talk, does that in fact lead to better



outcomes? And that's the next step that we have to take with change talk research, and nobody's done that yet.

**Glenn Hinds:**

It's really quite exciting. Awareness drawn from the difference between the smoke research and the fire research and particularly the fact that the practitioner is so influential about the essence of the experience that the client has, and in many ways, the interventions that the practitioner uses influences the client's talk. And I know I love one of the ways that motivational interviewing was described to me. I think it was Bill in one of our lectures was the idea that motivational interviewing and what we're essentially doing is trying to encourage and support the client to talk themselves into change-

**Theresa Moyers:**

Absolutely.

**Glenn Hinds:**

... and the practitioner's job is to listen them into change. But what you're describing there is that the listening is an active role that the practitioner uses and that they ask questions and they reflect in a particular way that continues to guide the client to talk about these desires, these abilities, these reasons, and these needs, ultimately teaching-

**Theresa Moyers:**

And to build the frequency and the strength of that language.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right, okay.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Right? And in some ways, it is a kind of a strange idea that we should be able to help clients talk themselves into change, right?

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

In some ways, that's a very weird idea.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Yeah.

**Theresa Moyers:**

But, and if you talk to therapists about it, they're like, "Really? Really? Is that what I could ... Can I really do that?" But think about the opposite which is do you think you could



influence somebody to talk themselves out of changing? And the answer to that is almost always, "Yes," right? I believe that if a person comes in, I could arrange the conversation in a way where they end up talking again about all the reasons they don't want to change, and they give up and leave. Right? So, could you, Glenn, could you, Sebastian, do you think cause a person by the way you interact with them to be less positive about changing than when they started?

**Glenn Hinds:**

Yeah.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Certainly.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Yeah.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Yeah.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Right?

**Glenn Hinds:**

When you say it this way, and you describe it like that, it's very easy.

**Theresa Moyers:**

You could imagine it happening, right? And in some-

**Glenn Hinds:**

Yeah. Yeah.

**Theresa Moyers:**

For some of us unfortunates, we can actually remember having interactions with clients that went that way.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

Right? I can. So, the opposite side of the coin we can easily imagine which is to have an interaction with somebody that is that ends up being negative in a way where they end up speaking against change more than for it. So, in some ways, this is just really the opposite side of that coin which is arranging your conversation with somebody in a way



that increases the likelihood that they'll be speaking for change and be thinking for change as opposed to against it.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Well, and I guess it just has me thinking that your use of the word manipulate or influence-

**Theresa Moyers:**

Influence.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Right, which could be loaded words, but ultimately if we could invite the audience in from whatever professional capacity they come to the podcast from, there are likely to be somebody who ultimately has conversations with other people about their life, about aspects of their life that aren't working or are problematic for them. And I guess I would just want to invite the audience to think about what is it about that conversation that they hope to be helpful to the other person or how does that conversation ultimately lead to them, I guess, arriving to that destination that they're hoping to get to or to get on a new road perhaps.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

I'm sure there're some people that feel like the key elements are to educate, right? If it comes from the assumption that this other person that I'm working with doesn't have information that I have, and my role would be to inform them about whatever change that they're discussing. Or maybe for some people, it's about helping the person gain some insight, maybe different than information, but insight might be another reason that someone will change or become healthier or whatever it might be. And really what we're talking about here is from the standpoint of MI, what are the key ingredients in that conversation that we hope that to help people towards change? It's not-

**Theresa Moyers:**

Right.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Yeah. I just hope people don't get too caught up in the idea of, "Oh. We're trying to influence people?" Well, we hope that the conversations we have are influential, right?

**Theresa Moyers:**

Right.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

I mean-

**Theresa Moyers:**



I think people who get uncomfortable with the idea of influencing others haven't really thought that through, right? Haven't really thought through the implications of their professional role, right? They're not accepting. They're getting queasy with the responsibility that they have which is incontrovertible. If you're a therapist or an interviewer, you are accepting the responsibility for having an aspiration for your client.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

And if you don't have that aspiration, then you really start to worry me, right? So, I'm notoriously impatient with people who are not willing to accept the fact that they actually have the job of influencing people and to accept that responsibility and become comfortable with it. Because when you do that, that's what tells you when you don't want to influence people and when you don't want to have an aspiration for them. And certainly, there are situations where even if you're a therapist where you may say, "I don't want to influence this person. Ethically, I'm not comfortable doing that."

**Theresa Moyers:**

But if you never are in a situation where you want to influence a person in one direction or another, I don't know who's paying your salary. That just doesn't make any sense to me. So, I'm probably the wrong person to ask about that. I mean I know that there are lots of people in the MI community, well maybe not lots, but some of the people in the MI community who make a very honourable and thoughtful and well-conceptualized argument that you shouldn't try to influence people, but I don't understand that. That, as much as I've tried, I just don't get it.

**Glenn Hinds:**

So, in some ways like you were inviting us earlier on not to get caught up too much on the change talk and hooking ourselves to that, it's again, not getting caught up on the language, that we're describing the process of helping other people whether it's influencing or manipulating. But it's recognizing we've all chosen this career because we want to be helpful, and that the helping means assisting someone essentially in many ways to be different from how they are, whether we are setting the agenda or the target for them or they've come to us saying, "Look. I'm not happy with the way things are."

**Glenn Hinds:**

And they're looking to us in some ways to help them to be different than that. It sounds like that's what's been described here. It's that they're looking for guidance, which in another word, in another way could be described as manipulation. If they're looking for guidance, they're looking for direction. So, again, it's to have it's just to not get caught up too much in the language that we're using here today. It's recognizing it.

**Theresa Moyers:**



Yeah. I'll buy that, but I also I also think it's really a fundamental thing that people struggle with a lot, some people, when they're trying to use MI, and it really speaks to the way therapy or conceptualizations of therapy have changed over time. It used to be that therapy was a thing that occurred over a long period of time, and you paid for it, and there was no such thing as insurance. You went to the therapist, and you paid for it yourself. And not having the desire or the ability to influence people makes sort of more sense in that context.

**Theresa Moyers:**

But since, as time has gone along, and therapy has become more powerful, actually, and we're better at it, what's happened is that in many ways, we have societal expectations about what therapists ought to do.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

And some of those are so explicit that they're actually legal. You as a therapist, you're required to do this if you have a license. And we've become a lot more comfortable with the idea that therapists and motivational interviewers should be accountable to the larger society.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Hmm.

**Theresa Moyers:**

And part of that's because that's often who pays us. It used to be that our clients would pay us their fees directly, but now we're most often paid by waitresses. And what do I mean by that? What I mean is that we're paid by taxpayer dollars, and where do taxpayer dollars come from? They come from people who work hard, and they're giving us the money to do what we do with our clients. And so, I have something called The Waitress Test which I ask people whenever they talk about how they're uncomfortable with influencing clients. And I say, "My money to do what I do as a therapist comes from waitresses that work on their feet eight hours a day, and they pay me through their taxes to sit down with clients." And if I said to that waitress, "I really don't feel comfortable influencing this client towards any particular direction," I can only imagine what they would say. I was a waitress, and if somebody said that to me, I would say, "Then, why am I giving you my money when my feet already hurt so much, and I have to work harder?"

**Theresa Moyers:**

So, I think if you're not comfortable influencing people you have to ask yourself those kinds of questions about accountability in your work, who you're actually accountable to. And if you're really able to say, "No, I'm not accountable to anybody else except this client," and I have no other thoughts about the larger impact of my work then maybe it's okay not to be comfortable with influence.



**Glenn Hinds:**

So, in some ways, that the idea of influencing is working towards the common good is that it's making the world a better place.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Yes, and there's some dangers. There's some dangers in that, too, right?

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

If you don't protect the client's interests in the larger sphere of accountability, there's definitely some dangers there. But, yes, it is. It's a larger picture of to whom you are accountable.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Hmm. Hmm.

**Theresa Moyers:**

So, anyways, I told you I'm notoriously impatient about this. There will be lots of people that you can have in your podcast who will speak about the other side of that. I often think it would be an interesting debate.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Hmm.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Oh, and actually, to be honest, Terri, I was secretly hoping you'd bring up The Waitress Test because I've heard you mention it a few times over the years, and it's always an interesting way of thinking about this. So, I'm actually glad you brought it up.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Yep, and it's a larger issue, of course, than MI . You could make the same argument about really any kind of therapy that you do or any other kind of intervention that you do. It just seems to be something that people in MI struggle with a lot, and I think there's a reason for that.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Right. Hmm.

**Glenn Hinds:**

So, that's, yeah, what's really interesting it's just as with each one of the conversations we've had in the podcast, that the conversation can go in many, many different directions,



and clearly you're very passionate about that responsibility that the practitioner has "to do the work" in a way that's useful both for the client but also taking into account who it is they're responsible to as their employers.

**Glenn Hinds:**

If I draw you back a little bit more towards the notion of change talk in relation to motivational interviewing, I suppose one of the things that comes up in each one of our conversations so far has been about the relationship with and in motivational interviewing. And I'm curious about how you see that the client language interacts within the relationship to make the MI session as powerful as MI has been described and as has been found in the evidence.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Well, interestingly enough, my work, my research has been focused a lot on change talk, but I think I've done just as much research and actually published just as much on the value of the relationship and the components of the relationship in MI as I have in change talk. And I like that, actually. I like the fact that I have been interested in and willing to invest time in thinking about both of those components.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

We recently published a study about the value of therapist empathy and the predictive value, and it was a smoke study.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

But a really good one, if I don't mind saying so myself, in which we measured therapist empathy as it was expressed in alcohol treatment sessions.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

And then, we then later saw how much of that, how much prediction we had from that therapist empathy during those sessions for drinking outcomes. And it turns out that how much you're drinking at the end of treatment is predicted by how empathic your therapist is during those treatment sessions, and that's a really powerful I think idea. That I mean we've always had the idea that the relationship ... This didn't come along in motivational interviewing, as Chris Wagner no doubt told you. This is a very Rogerian ... It was really Carl Rogers, and actually, you could make the argument that Freud did as well, talked



about the value of the relationship. But to see research that supports the idea that empathy in MI sessions actually predicts drinking outcomes to me is very powerful.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

So, I think the relationship between empathy and change talk is that you can easily imagine the therapeutic value of empathy and the relationships between the therapist and the client without thinking about change talk.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

That's easy to imagine, for me.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Sure. In some way-

**Theresa Moyers:**

I cannot imagine the value of change talk in the absence of a relationship with a client.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

So, I think the focus on change talk, if it is mechanistic, if it's like ... Because you could imagine a computer program that would actually listen to what you say and reflect change talk.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

And I know that there are people who are actually working on computer programs that do this, and I don't think they're ever going to work because I think it's not just the mechanistic features of change talk that help. I think it's the fact that it emerges spontaneously in an interaction that you're having with another person and is public. That's what I think is the value of change talk and sustain talk, by the way.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Hmm.



**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Hmm.

**Glenn Hinds:**

So, empathy is in the territory as well.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Yeah. I don't know if I can fit MI into that metaphor of the map in the territory because it would be something like the earth or the sky or the-

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right, okay.

**Theresa Moyers:**

It's like something that holds all of the rest of it.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Right.

**Glenn Hinds:**

So, in some ways you're saying it's that by being empathetic, the likelihood is that there is change talk happening within that conversation whether you're looking for it or not. Whereas, if you're just focused on the change talk, empathy may not be present.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Well, yeah. So, let's put it this way. If there's a blizzard and it's so cold and there's wind and the snow is blowing horizontally, the map doesn't do you any good, and the territory doesn't do you any good. You can't move. You can't get anywhere. You're just covered by that blizzard.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

And so, and that's what happens if you try to use change talk or to focus on change talk without paying attention to with the relationship that you have with a person.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.



**Theresa Moyers:**

And sometimes, that's all you can do is pay attention to that relationship. I have people say to me, "Well, what happens if my client doesn't give me any change talk and all they're offering is sustain talk?" Well, all you can do then is pay attention to the relationship and try to build that person's sense of being understood so that change talk can emerge. It's probably there.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

Right? It's likely that it's there because people are usually ambivalent when they're in a predicament, a painful predicament, which is what our behaviors cause us is painful predicaments. And when human beings are in painful predicaments, they're naturally ambivalent not always but naturally. And when people are ambivalent, change talk and sustain talk are both natural. They're usually there. But if there's a blizzard, it doesn't matter how much and how good your map is. It's not going to be helping you much.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Hmm.

**Theresa Moyers:**

You just got to hunker down.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Well, and this seems to me it would be a great reminder for people that are learning about, hopefully people are learning about, MI that are listening to the podcast, but there may be people that are in the early stages of career development or in a training program. And it can be very tempting, for say, a counseling student, let's say, to hear about a particular approach like motivational interviewing and think, "Ah-ha. So, the key feature to MI is to reflect and selectively reinforce change talk." And you might miss, again, miss the big picture or miss the really key elements of what seems like a simple concept, but it really is so critical, which is the relationship itself and whether the client is experiencing genuine curiosity, genuine interests in a real, true, accurate understanding of their world view.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Absolutely.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Yeah.

**Theresa Moyers:**

So, that if you focus on the language element in MI, and you do that at the expense of the relationship, there's two ways you can go wrong there. And the first one is that you



attempt to manipulate language without the proper relationship basis for that, and that doesn't go well. And that ends up feeling mechanistic and cold and unhelpful, which it is. And the other way you can go wrong with it is that you say, "Well, do you mean all I need to do is get the person to say it and then they're going to change? That doesn't ..." Like, "Why couldn't I just give them a chant that they do to themselves before they go to bed each night?" Right? That doesn't make any sense. So, without the understanding that that happens within a relational context, it just goes badly in any way you think about the language element in MI.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Right. No, great. I had another question, too, in thinking about the listeners and different areas of work they may be in. Granted, the bulk of the MI literature originated from the addiction world. That's certainly what your background is in, and a lot of the change talk research in particular came from the work in your lab and Bill's lab and other people like that.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

I wonder if you have any thoughts or if there are, if you know of any evidence where change talk is as powerful a predictor or is also the smoke that occurs in work in other areas. So, I don't know, eating disorders or diabetes management or other places. I know I'm asking you about areas that aren't specific areas of interest, but I don't know if about that, or if that shows up as powerfully as in the addiction world.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Sure. I would say have a look at the work of Molly Magill at Brown University because Molly's done several meta analyses in which she takes change talk studies across a variety of different kinds of settings and with different kinds of people and problems and finds some very interesting flashes from the lighthouse through the fog regarding client language.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Great.

**Theresa Moyers:**

So, yeah.

Sebastian Kaplan :

Molly Magill, excellent.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Molly Magill, M-A-G-I-L-L.

**Glenn Hinds:**

And I wanted-



**Theresa Moyers:**

And she's a smart cookie, so I imagine she'd be a good person for you guys to follow up with.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Yeah.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Yeah.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Good plug.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Tell her I sent you.

Sebastian Kaplan :

Okay. A referral.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Yeah.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Our first referral.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Yeah. And I wonder Terri, it's something that's been just talked briefly in our other sessions as well is that as we're learning motivational interviewing, it's recognizing that we ourselves are going through a change that very often what we'll have to do is change our thinking about what it is we're doing and why it is we're doing it. And then, we've got to learn open-ended questions, affirmations, reflections, and summaries, and it sounds like in some ways that it's recognizing that there's almost like a mechanical element to that learning. There's a concreteness to it until it becomes something we could just tune in and out. It comes much more natural.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Glenn Hinds:**

And I suppose it's I'm thinking about maybe some of the audience members that they've been encouraged to be able to let these things go, but I suppose one of the things is to recognize it. Before we can let them go, we have to know that we're holding them if that makes sense.



**Theresa Moyers:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative), mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Glenn Hinds:**

And it's about I wonder how then we can support people as they're learning motivational interviewing to enter into this in inverted commas discomfort of this new skill and new way of thinking long enough for them to get comfortable with it, and then what thoughts. How you promote that or support students when you're working with them to go through that transition to let go of an old way or introduce a new way into what it is you're already doing.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Well, so I have a couple of things I want to say about it. You learn MI the same way that you do any complex skill or any complex therapy, which is that you receive feedback from someone who watches your work, who knows more than you do about it, watches your work and gives you feedback about it. And then, you try again, and then you receive feedback. And then, you try again, and then you receive feedback. And you try again. This is the way you get good at tennis, and this is the way you get good at cognitive behavioral therapy. And this is the way you get good at MI, and we have research that clearly shows that. That's incontrovertible, that people who get feedback about their practice actually do better, gain more skills, keep them longer than people who don't. So, the first thing I would say is if you want to get good at MI you got to get good at it the same way that everybody else does when they do anything else.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Get a coach?

**Theresa Moyers:**

Go ahead.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Get yourself a coach? Make sure you have a coach, yeah?

**Theresa Moyers:**

Yeah, or a teacher.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative), mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

Right? Get yourself a teacher, and some people are good enough to teach themselves, as in any endeavour, right?

**Glenn Hinds:**



Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

Some people just take to it naturally, and all they have to do is sort of grasp the concepts, and they're off.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

Who knows why those people are so good at what they do? Because there really are a group of people who don't need a lot of instruction, and they just take to motivational interviewing, and they can do it very well with relatively little feedback. Those are the fast learners, and the easy adapters. I don't know. We don't know why. We've studied that, and we don't know why, yet.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative). And then, there's the rest of us.

**Theresa Moyers:**

And then, there are also people who really struggle, and it's like it doesn't matter how much coaching and feedback they get. They just never get any better at MI. And we also don't know why that's so, but we do know that that's true. So, there are some people who shouldn't try to do MI. They should try to do ... They should get better at something else because MI is not their cup of tea.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Hmm.

**Theresa Moyers:**

And then, there's mostly people in the middle, and I put myself in that category when I was learning motivational interviewing right there. They learn a bit. They struggle. They learn a little more. They struggle. They learn a little more. They struggle. And it's feedback that helps them learn a little more in an efficient way.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Cool.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Well, I'm just keeping an eye on the clock here. As with all our conversations with our guests, we could go on and on and explore other aspects of change talk, but I think we've covered it quite nicely in lots of different angles and different metaphors, certainly, we've used. So-



**Theresa Moyers:**

Certainly, yeah.

Sebastian Kaplan :

Yeah. Fires and lighthouses and maps.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Yeah.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

It's great. So, one thing that we do like to ask all our guests as we begin to close an episode is: What is something of particular interest lately? What's been something that you've been thinking about in relation to MI?

**Theresa Moyers:**

Hmm.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Either a new project or maybe a different sort of application of it, I guess.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Right, right. Well, so I'll talk just a little bit about my work with training people to train animals. So, anybody who knows me knows that I am very interested in training dogs, have been all my life, but the older I get, the more passionate I get about it. And I use sort of what I would call hands-off or positive methods for training dogs, nonviolent, non-coercive methods for training dogs. And I feel very committed to that, and there really is a natural overlap between motivational interviewing and training dogs to get what you want without being coercive, right? That's kind of the underlying similarity.

**Theresa Moyers:**

And I think the work of Monty Roberts and Bill talking about training horses is really relevant here, right?

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

The two of them really see an overlap between the way they work across species, and they see similarities in the way they work in MI and what Monty calls his Join-Up method. But for me, the most direct application has been working with people who are trying to train their dogs, and often people who are trying to train their dogs have this old paradigm that what you do is you correct and you punish the behavior that you don't want in order



to get the dog to do what you want. And sometimes, they've transitioned into using rewards, but they still use punishment or coercion.

**Theresa Moyers:**

And when I'm teaching these classes about people who want to be good dog trainers, I am trying to get them to shift their paradigm and think about only using non-coercive, positive methods to get behaviors that they want, and that's a really revolutionary, difficult thing for people to do. And it has a lot of parallels to what we think about in therapy which is that their dogs won't respect them, that they have to be the alpha in the relationship, that it takes too much time to do things this way, that it's dangerous to do things this way, all of these kind of prohibiting ideas. And I think it's really helpful when I'm using MI in situations like that to ask people to think about a different way of training their dogs.

**Theresa Moyers:**

And it's also directly relevant in that most people are ambivalent about using coercion and punishment with in order to train their dogs. They're really ambivalent about it. They're queasy about it at some level.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Hmm.

**Theresa Moyers:**

And if you ask them to talk about that, then that ambivalence emerges, and some change talk emerges. And then, you can build on that change talk, and in a gentle way, as opposed to, for example, giving the people information about why this is such a good idea or how it works better. Or asking them to be insightful about themselves, and why they should do this. Using MI and allowing them to verbalize the reasons that they think they could do that is so much more powerful, and I just enjoy that so much.

**Glenn Hinds:**

It's almost like you're creating a domino that you're being patient and understanding with the other trainer who will then translate that into their own relationship with their dog.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Yeah. I wouldn't say patient. I wouldn't call myself patient. No. That wouldn't be the first word I'd use. No. Not really. You can do MI without being a terribly patient person, I think.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Ah. Wow.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Right.

**Glenn Hinds:**



That's an interesting idea, and I wonder if we had other people around you, would they describe you as a patient person? I imagine that-

**Theresa Moyers:**

No.

**Glenn Hinds:**

No.

**Theresa Moyers:**

No, I can tell you they wouldn't, no.

**Glenn Hinds:**

No. No. You're not.

**Theresa Moyers:**

No.

**Glenn Hinds:**

That actually-

**Theresa Moyers:**

No.

**Glenn Hinds:**

That really genuinely does surprise me. I imagine there are times where your humanity shows itself in different ways. But I imagine for you to be a researcher, for you to be such a good MI practitioner, that it sounds like in some ways you're not recognizing that your ability to contain and support and hold someone else's pain and frustration and hurt as they make that transition through-.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Yeah, I would say that that's-

**Glenn Hinds:**

-itself needs patience on your part.

**Theresa Moyers:**

That I don't think about that as being patient.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.



**Theresa Moyers:**

Right?

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

To me, patience means like you're sort of naturally not irritated by things.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

But, actually, maybe it does mean just not acting on that irritation-

**Glenn Hinds:**

Oh.

**Theresa Moyers:**

... in which case, I can be patient.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Okay, then.

**Theresa Moyers:**

I can be.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

But actually, I think it's really great to hear you describe it in this way because I think there's one of the major barriers for some people is the notion that it's going to take too much time and to sort of wait through this meandering process. And you're somebody who you cut to the chase. I mean that was certainly one of the first impressions I had of you when you were my trainer in Albuquerque, and you kind of you had this elemental view of getting to the point quickly but not in a way that was offensive or insulting or anything. And so, there is a way to do this work that doesn't require a 50-minute therapy session.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Yeah.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Or it doesn't require five years of intensive, multi-sessions per week kind of work.



**Theresa Moyers:**

For sure. But I'll tell you. When I'm in a class with somebody, and I see them, they have a dog, sometimes, even a puppy, and they have a choke chain on that dog, and the dog doesn't do what they want, and then they jerk that choke chain as hard as they can so that and say, "No," so that the dog will do what they want, I don't feel patient at that moment.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

I do not feel patient. I feel the same way a therapist feels when somebody in front of them is drinking themselves to death, which is not ... I don't associate that feeling with patience. There's a sense of importance and urgency to it. The question is what you do with that, and do you do you allow that to come forward as lecturing and denying and, I mean, confronting and/or do you try to put that into another sort of a path?

Sebastian Kaplan :

Right.

**Theresa Moyers:**

I just don't think of it as patience because that just doesn't fit with what I feel at that moment.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Yeah. Well, you're just moved strongly by the suffering of the animal or perhaps the suffering of another person who's in the throes of an addiction.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Right.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

And it just it leads you to really trust and do what it is that you do in a very focused way.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Yeah.



**Glenn Hinds:**

Yeah.

**Theresa Moyers:**

I'll go with that.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Theresa Moyers:**

Well, you guys this has been great.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Yeah.

**Theresa Moyers:**

It's been fun talking.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Yeah, it's been fantastic to have you, Terri, and again, we really appreciate your time. And for the audience, if they want to follow up with you, I wondered if you'd be happy to allow people to contact you after, if they listened to the podcast, if they were looking to speak to you or to contact you?

**Theresa Moyers:**

Oh, certainly. I mean, mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Glenn Hinds:**

How would they go about doing that?

**Theresa Moyers:**

I get a lot of emails with people asking me what I think about MI, so, yeah, no problem. The way people can reach me is tmoyers, that's T-M-O-Y-E-R-S, @unm, University of New Mexico, unm.edu. So, that's tmoyers@unm.edu.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Fantastic, and again, just to remind people if they want to get in touch with us on Twitter, it's @ChangingTalk, TalkingChange, or ChangingTalk? What is it, Seb?

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

ChangeTalking.

**Glenn Hinds:**



ChangeTalking. Oh, my goodness.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Uh-huh (affirmative).

**Glenn Hinds:**

@ChangeTalking and TalkingToChange on Facebook. And the email address is podcast@glennhinds.com. But let's just draw this session and close and just again thank you very much, Terri, for coming along.

**Theresa Moyers:**

My pleasure.

**Glenn Hinds:**

And good to see you again, Seb, and we'll see you again very soon. Thanks, everybody.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Yep. Okay. Goodbye, everybody.

**Theresa Moyers:**

Bye, now.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Thanks, Terri.

