

# Talking to Change: An MI Podcast

## Glenn Hinds and Sebastian Kaplan



### Episode 9: Motivational Interviewing & Positive Psychology – with Majella Greene

#### **Sebastian Kaplan:**

Hello everyone and welcome back to another episode of Talking To Change, a motivational interviewing podcast. For those who are new to us my name is Sebastian Kaplan and I'm in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. And as always, I'm joined by my good friend Glenn Hinds from Derry in Northern Ireland. Hello Glenn.

#### **Glenn Hinds:**

Hi Seb. How are you doing?

#### **Sebastian Kaplan:**

Doing well. Doing well.

#### **Glenn Hinds:**

Good.

#### **Sebastian Kaplan:**

And so, we are happy to have our guest speaker for today. And before we introduce Majella, Glenn, maybe you can remind the audience of the various ways to find our podcast and to get in touch with us.

#### **Glenn Hinds:**

Sure. So, for all the tweeters out there, it's @ChangeTalking, for the Facebook people it is Talking To Change and for people who simply want to give us back channel conversation feedback, it's [podcast@glennhinds.com](mailto:podcast@glennhinds.com).

#### **Sebastian Kaplan:**

Wonderful. Well, we'll get right into it today. So, we are very pleased to have our good friend and colleague Majella Greene joining us for a chat. Majella Greene is someone who enjoys a full range of human emotions, perhaps some that are yet to be discovered. Majella is curious about human emotions, self-fulfillment, resilience, positive experiences, and those difficult experiences that enable us to grow. A registered social worker, a MAPP graduate with an additional master's in social work policy and research, working with individuals, communities and organizations to increase wellbeing, actively promoting a best possible self-agenda. She lives in Brent, one of the most diverse boroughs in London, England with two cats, Cecily and Leonard.

#### **Sebastian Kaplan:**



Hello Majella and welcome to our conversation today.

**Majella Greene:**

Hello, how are you?

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

We're doing great. We're doing great. One thing I'm curious about as far as your bio goes, there's an acronym there, MAPP. I'm just being in the States, maybe I'm not familiar with that.

**Majella Greene:**

Well it stems from the States. It's a Master's in Applied Positive Psychology. So, it's from Penn State University originally where Martin Seligman is based.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Right. Okay, great. So, and that's really ... It's a good segue into our topic for today. At least the initial topic our conversation might go in other directions. But our plan for today was to begin anyway talking about positive psychology and its links to motivational interviewing. And so maybe that's a good place to start there, Majella just to talk a bit about positive psychology and what that is.

**Majella Greene:**

It is, and I think probably the first thing I'd like to say is when I studied the MAPP course, one of the first things that struck me was ... Hmm, seems to be that they've missed out motivational interviewing on this course when it fits completely with positive psychology and what positive psychology purports to stand for. So positive psychology is just the term that's been coined in the last 20 years, and it certainly isn't something new. Post-war, what happened was we lost the focus on wellbeing and human flourishing in favor of repairing and fixing all the damage that had taken place through the loss and deaths and horrendousness of the World Wars that carried on.

**Majella Greene:**

So, the development, and ... Sorry, I completely forgot the alarm goes off at 6:00. Yeah. So during post-war years, the focus shifted from a more balanced psychology practice, which was about looking at how and what enabled people to flourish in life and became much more focused on repairing and fixing people who had been damaged through the experiences of war. So, it's not something new. The term is something new and it was really put together to, I think, swing the pendulum back over the other side and to make a more conscious focus on human flourishing and move away from repairing and fixing. So, it's very much based around what are the factors, what are the things that enable the optimal living experiences for people.

**Glenn Hinds:**



So, it sounds like the ... What's interesting about what you just said is, is that there was a time before the war is that people were focused on wellbeing and balance. And then because of the consequences of the war and I'd imagine, if we think of from a psychology perspective that perhaps the traumas that we recreated by that then that there's this reparation work done (?) and the focus got shifted to what most of us practitioners would now know as normal, which is trying to make things better by filling in the gaps.. wow

**Majella Greene:**

Yes. And I think that ... I mean certainly I worked with a number of long stay psychiatric patients in the mid to late '80s before I qualified. And they'd been in hospital for 25, 35 years, some of them. And they ended up there because they were experiencing post traumatic stress symptoms as a result of witnessing horrendous things. And the- very much the focus was about medicating, taking them out of society and isolating rather than looking what, well how can we look after the people in our society to rebuild the structures, whatever that may be. And obviously the focus within a capitalist system is to have people who are fit to work. And so, the focus was on fixing people good enough to be able to work.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

And so positive psychology is looking to sort of fill that other side there. I guess it's not just about getting one good enough, but to really imagine sort of an optimal experience and help people strive towards that.

**Majella Greene:**

And also, to recognize that doesn't mean walking around with a massive grin on your face all the time and denying that shit happens, right? It's definitely not about walking around clapping your hands and saying how fantastic everything is. It's recognizing that there are adverse things that happen in life that ... How do you manage those? How do you express those emotions? How do you express your full range of emotions and not deny those elements of yourself? And in order to really flourish, my belief is that you have to have the capacity to express an experience, a full range of emotions without denying or suppressing one end or the other. As we know in someone's experiencing clinical depression and they're sort of great medications out there for that, but when you suppress the shitty side, you also suppress the good side potential.

**Majella Greene:**

And I'm not knocking medication at all. I think it absolutely has a place in the world. But it's that kind of, let's not deny our full range of emotions. Let's not deny that we can be angry or that there's potential for violence or there's other things that are not associated with positive experiences in the world as such, because of the way it's framed. So rather than attaching shame to those feelings, it's really opening them up and having people be able to express, actually that doesn't feel okay to me. Or I'm really devastated for losing my job rather than, oh, great, okay, this is an opportunity, or it might be an opportunity, but the opportunities come from a really shitty place potentially. And maybe



in that moment you don't recognize it as an opportunity. So, it's rather than denying, it's allowing processes to not suppress your emotions, to allow those emotions to be there. And to learn how to observe them without spiraling out of control in one way or another.

**Glenn Hinds:**

And I'm trying to formulate in my mind that then the ... It sounds like there's a removal of a form of judgment that perhaps we would have considered that having, "Negative feelings or something to be avoided." But the other side of it is then we were searching out the positive feelings. It sounds like the positive in positive psychology doesn't refer to one side of that spectrum. And I'm wondering, can you help us understand we heard more about it, why it's called positive?

**Majella Greene:**

I'm guessing, it got called positive because psychology has looked at the negative all the time. What's wrong? What's wrong in the world?

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Majella Greene:**

Rather than what's right in the world.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Majella Greene:**

So that's where the ... Well, I'm not guessing. I know that's where the positive side came from. Is the focus was always on the negative. What are the things that are damaging us? How can we damage each other a bit more? Let's do something terrible to see if we can test it out in a clinical situation.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Yeah. And again, I suppose from a traditional helper's position is that I'm only in a place to help you when there's something wrong. But what you're describing is ... And again consistent with what we've been talking about in motivational interviewing and in the spirit of motivation in particular is that we can look at this from a different perspective, which is what's under these circumstances, what is it that you're already doing really well and how can you build from there rather than us trying to fill in gaps? How do we help you build from what's currently available to you internally and, in your environment?

**Majella Greene:**

Yeah. And I think really, the positive element is, it was bandied about for a long time without really considering the other side as well. So, it's taken it, there's a second wave of positive psychology, which I'll be honest with you, I thought was always there.



**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Majella Greene:**

And the second wave is looking at the dark side of life. So, it's not denying in it. And I think that's pretty obvious from where I've seen and worked in practice is you can't have one side of the coin. You might stick one side of the coin down on the floor, but you still got both sides of the coin, you are just not looking at the other one.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Right. And so positive and negative has ... Are sort of two ends that might naturally lead people to focus in on sort of happiness versus anger. And let's try to make you happy all the time. And it really what it seems like you're saying or, it may be some other words that might be not to suggest that we change the terminology, but like authentic and inauthentic I suppose. It feels like what you're describing is viewing people and viewing one as-one's experience as more authentic. That yeah, there may be an opportunity that comes from shitty circumstances, but there's also the reactions and the authentic experience of difficult times that aren't meant to be ignored or denied or sort of brushed aside in favor of, "Let's just try to always look on the bright side."

**Majella Greene:**

Well, and because if you're always looking at the bright side, you always are?/ you are] denying some elements of yourself and your human experience. But the others, I don't think happiness and anger are opposites. And I think possibly the opposite of anger is acceptance and peace rather than being at peace with something is more aligned in my view with the being, the opposite of being angry or depressed.

**Glenn Hinds:**

So, it sounds like maybe a similar type debate going on within the positive psychology world about, what's the right words to describe this? And in the same way is it, that very often you'll hear people say motivational interviewing is that talking to people, and it's almost like the word, the term motivational interviewing in itself doesn't capture the nature of what it is that we're doing. It's not exactly what it says on the tin.

**Majella Greene:**

It absolutely isn't. I think Bill Miller said that years ago, didn't he? it was like a misnomer, but it would already taken off by then so it was too late.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Majella Greene:**

And I think that people make a value judgment based on words and language we use, which is, it takes me down the route of thinking about how we phrase things, how we



think about things, how we are inclusive and make things more accessible and less exclusive to a particular group or even with research and processes where the majority of research is we had carried out in white, educated, industrialized rich democracies. And really a lot of it is based on American students who haven't even from a freudian (?) point of view managed to get out of their adolescence yet. But we're going to draw value-based decision making and treatment and thoughts about what works with people based on under 25-year olds who are participating in research to get credits on their degree.

**Majella Greene:**

It makes no sense. So it's also to be mindful that a lot of what people will read are soundbites from research that when you look at the original research, you would be questioning, can you really base ... Draw those conclusions based on that population in that limited environment? And whether the research methods are ethical or not? It's neither here nor there in some respects. It's the, we don't look at it deeply enough because people get funded for research through grants and they have to meet certain ethical criteria. Each of the stages limits the possibilities of what we should be or could be looking at.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Right. So, there's this ongoing, really conscious intention it seems to be aware of when we start to limit the possibilities of growth or connection or of understanding another person's experience. And both when we ... If we focus just on looking on the bright side or in the case of evaluating, interpreting research for instance, it's always trying to be careful not to draw too quick a conclusion or too general conclusion, I suppose. Without really understanding sort of the nature behind it or the context of it.

**Majella Greene:**

And the populations, we draw conclusions from populations. And we're not even looking at the diversity or the lack of diversity within those structures. And also, it's from a very Western viewpoint and not embracing cultures. And I think that when you look at what's really been adopted and westernized in positive psychology, a lot of stuff around mindfulness practice and working compassionately with people, really all the things that have now been validated and, "By science," that have been around for hundreds of hundreds of years that suddenly now because some guy has brought it over and we're going to make it a bit more accessible to the general populations and show them the benefits that we can take from that whatever we want. But ignore the other elements of the cultures that we're taking from.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Yeah. It sounds like you've really thought deeply and quite expansively about this topic Majella, and it's almost like when you were describing there the dynamic, it's ... And my guess is, it's certainly for me, and my guess is does possibly people in the audience are thinking about this from an organization perspective. Is that the dynamic of the organizational need, the founders of the organization that are paying people's wages,



that they have a certain outcome that they are striving to achieve. And as a consequence of that, it causes a limitation on the potential of the practitioner to allow themselves to shine as bright as it possibly can. But also then potentially restricts the opportunity for the clients within that organization to achieve their potential because it's not on offer because there's a certain outcome we are expecting and that's the one we want you to work towards.

**Glenn Hinds:**

And it's very limited whereas what you're describing from a positive psychology perspective is, if we were to strive for an individual flourishing, whatever that actually might mean for that individual, that itself opens up the potential and the possibility both for the practitioner to allow themselves to allow their magic to grow. But also for the client then to experience a much more authentic and enriched relationship, which the conversations we've been having with most people is that seems to be a thread that's running around that there's - the richness of the human relationship is where things change. It's, there's more to us than the small titles. And it sounds like positive psychology is encouraging us to think like that we're bigger than this, how can we allow our bigness to come into place, facing the challenge as you're describing and which is the limited nature of research or the organization's funding it], or the organization's offering to help?

**Majella Greene:**

I wonder though with the limitations are really primarily in the people who are implementing organizationally. Because those people, things have been very fear based. And I think that's what psychology what was very fear based. How do we contain these terrible illnesses, these diseases, these symptoms within society? So, it was very much driven from a fear base. And organizations tend to get fearful and managers get fearful. I can't really make one rule for one and one for another. Even though my other employees, I know that what their strengths are, they work and function in completely different way, but I can't make a decision to treat them any different or to provide different opportunities for them.

**Majella Greene:**

So, it's kind of not really implementing any innovation or considerations of what or how to reach the outcomes. So, you've got outcomes that are dictated to within funding possibilities, but no one's willing to really try anything new in order to see if those outcomes can be achieved without doing something that someone else has already tried. And I think that there's elements of if we want things to be different and if we want change to happen, then we have to be willing to fail.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Well, I'm tempted to come back to something you said at the beginning Majella, when you mentioned briefly as you were describing positive psychology that there was a link there right from the start for you with positive psychology and MI. And I think maybe you said that you noticed that motivational interviewing wasn't a part of what you were



learning, although maybe it felt like it should have been there. Where do you see the overlaps in the connections there between MI and positive psychology?

**Majella Greene:**

If I was going to be more explicit, I would say actually a lot of positive psychology stems from social work practice. So, I was constantly sat in lectures and things where I'd be thinking, yeah, social work's been doing this for donkey's years. This is not new. This is just reframed. And with motivational interview I actually ended up going back and lecturing on the courses on motivational interviewing because it's very much focused around being person centered, working with where the strengths are in that person and where they connect and think about them in the context of them personally but also within their family, their culture and society. Rather than delivering something that's isolated. And that goes back to the whole Neil Thompson's, Anti-Discriminatory Practice model, which is a concentric circle and at the center is the person, is PCS model the person. Then the next circle is culture. And the third circle is society.

**Majella Greene:**

So, it's always reviewing and thinking about that person and holding space for them in relation to all of those elements at any one time. So, you're not just kind of putting a plaster over a boil and saying it'll be fine. You're actually exploring, is it appropriate, does this person have support and resources in order for that change to happen? And motivational interviewing is by far an obvious positive psychology intervention. It's an absolutely obvious one. It's obvious like gratitude diaries or thinking about mindfulness practice or thinking about different ways that people can utilize their strengths. And probably the biggest crossover is the strength focus, is the coming alongside and working collaboratively with people rather than prescribing something for them and offering unsolicited advice.

**Glenn Hinds:**

So, a couple of things come into my mind. One is that last point you were making about the way we view the world, which is and perhaps initially we were ... And for many of us still we're looking at the word from a deficit worldview. Whereas this positive psychology is encouraging us to look at it from a strength-based view. And maybe that's a more accurate word than if we think about the word positive it's more of a strength that we find ourselves in these set of circumstances. And yes, there are difficulties, but there are also strengths present. Let's look at those strengths to help us work our way out of this place in whatever way is useful for the other person.

**Glenn Hinds:**

And another thing that you said resonated, Steve Rollnick when we spoke to him said an interesting thing. He says, that the more and more he is looking into motivation interviewing, the more he's realizing it's that notion that is very little new under the sun. And he described himself as a psychological archeologist that I suppose consistent, if you think about Western philosophies, he said that, "The truth exists of itself." And what we're doing is simply ... We're not finding or discovering that it's there we're just coming





to see it. And it sounds like the positive psychologists is discovering an element of this truth.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Motivational Interviewing has discovered an element of this truth and other approaches are trying to find elements of this truth and it's how do we ... And maybe that's part of what we're discovering here in the podcast is that whenever we talk to people, people are stitching together the information they have for the same goal, which is for the wellbeing of other people. And the more we can stitch this stuff together in a quilt, patchwork quilt, maybe we'll get a better sense of what this wider truth really is for humankind.

**Majella Greene:**

And I would say I completely get all of that. But we are limited by our filters.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Majella Greene:**

We are completely limited. We are blinkers by our own socialization, by our own life experiences, by our own projections. No matter how much you try to look at those, we're affected by all the unconscious bias stuff that comes up and all the everyday use of language and how that limits us. So, I would say that quilt might be one quilt of one view of one truth. And that we are all of us, and I've ... I mean me, everyone, we're all limited by how we've been socialized and what our expectations are. So, we think we're rebelling against something because we've broken away from what the social expectations are because of our gender or our ethnicity or whatever it might be. But actually, we're just, we're still as limited, which is limited in another way.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right. But conventionally unconventional?

**Majella Greene:**

Yeah.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right. Do you hear that all you punks?

**Majella Greene:**

Yeah. It's just making it off because I saw ... My son lives on a boat in Kings Cross, and they have a garden. Him and his girlfriend have a garden next to the boat. And where there's, the side is private. And so, but across the other side, it's a public right of way. So, there's people constantly going up and down. It is like being in a human zoo. People are so curious about people sitting outside having tea on the other side where they live



in a boat. And a few weeks ago, they were sat outside having breakfast and these two American tourists who were cycling on the other side went past and one shouted to other, "Hey honey, look, the non-conformist are here."

**Majella Greene:**

And its kind of makes me think, we all think we're rebelling. We all think we're being really open. We all think we woke or ... And it's actually we're only, we're so far removed from achieving because I think the fact that we are still looking at individuals and not collectively and not community oriented and not- We driven the world politically into what's right for me rather than what's good for all, how can we ... Rather than making a quick buck on something we're- we've missed opportunities to really connect with each other. And I think that's the heart of human flourishing is connection.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

And so I imagine there's people in the audience who are wondering then, you referenced working with someone with say, clinical depression earlier and that perhaps that person would choose to take medication to alleviate symptoms or to tolerate their distress better or whatever they would choose to do that for. But if you were engaging with that person in some work, in a conversation about change or about their life and you were bringing to that conversation your ... All of these ideas and ways of thinking about the world and the training and positive psychology and social work and MI, and all that, how, people might be wondering, so what would it be like to have that experience with Majella. If Majella was my counselor or ... How do you bring all of these ideas to the work that you do with someone, say with clinical depression?

**Majella Greene:**

Okay. First of all, I'd never described myself as a counselor.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Sure.

**Majella Greene:**

Or a coach.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Sure, sure. Whichever phrase that fits

**Majella Greene:**

So, I would say that, it would depend on the person and what they would experience. So, when I'm working with someone, it's very much about first of all, figuring out what works for them obviously. And it could be usually during my first sessions with anyone else, I'll say, "So you need to understand, I might take you into the park and get used to walk barefoot and hug trees or we might just sit here and talk. Or we might use



medicine cards, or we might use affirmation cards, or we might use all sorts of range of things to help us discover and work together." So, if it's not your cup of tea it's fine.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

There is a transparency early on just to say, "Let's be sure this is a good fit."

**Majella Greene:**

Yeah. And so, it really, how I would work with someone is that's a really hard one. So generic you can come and see me. I have clients online.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Right.

**Majella Greene:**

In a way it would be a range of ... It would be definitely person centered. Definitely, aiming for an empathic understanding of where someone is at, the first session would be a lot about I would take a history, work with them in lots of different ways. We may not ever look at that history if it's not really something that they are connecting with or it's not anything. So, it doesn't have to be that this stems from when you were four. Although I would definitely be looking out for trauma. I think there's a lot of trauma in the world and people's experiences that goes unnoticed. We would spend time; people have tea when they come to see me genuinely. I'm not one of these people is going sit there and say nothing and get them to lie on the couch unless, and also the cats get involved.

**Majella Greene:**

So, I'd like to say Cecily and Leonard offer some help and support. So, we would really explore whether this is the best fit. If I felt really that this wasn't appropriate, I'd hopefully be able to make a referral or signpost someone to somewhere else. Oftentimes the work that we do, we might do some work together around mindfulness or I might suggest that someone will go away and do an eight-week MBSR course. Because there's definitely really good links and strong evidence around clinical depression and successful non reoccurrence post learning mindfulness.

**Majella Greene:**

We would definitely be looking at exploring whether it's appropriate to use gratitude diaries on a daily basis and see whether that makes a difference. And we'll create theme tunes or different things to use to reactivate or fire in a different direction, the neural pathways. So, if someone can recognize under these circumstances, this is when I notice my spiraling moods. I will work with them to recognize when that happens, and we would try and figure out different ways of firing their neural pathways in a different direction so they don't spiral downwards. And that could be using a theme tune, creating a character so it's like, okay, my character is an Edwardian lady, so she'll think very grandly about things.



**Glenn Hinds:**

So, your authenticity is offered to the clients at the very beginning, "This is who I am. This is the way I do things. If this is something that you think can be of benefit to you, let's see where this goes. If it's not, let's see where else you can be helped." But alongside of that it sounds like you're integrating what you've been telling us about in relation to positive psychology some of the ideas that may be of benefit. It's and they're not fixed, that it's a very flexible, you have a range of, a very creative range of possibilities and you are willing to allow individuals to pick whichever one works.

**Glenn Hinds:**

The expertise that you're bringing in is that emotional awareness or emotional intelligence and the brain chemistry and so that's what you're bringing to the party, that you can see things and you have ideas about what might help change what's going on for the client and then you offer them, "Do you want to go out and hug a tree? That might really help you." And for some people that really works. Some people, it's barefoot, some people it's mindfulness, some people it's ... But you've got that full range of opportunities.

**Majella Greene:**

And also, sometimes people will just sit and talk. And that there's ... It's whatever works for them. Like it's really, if someone wants to spend the full session just talking through their experiences, I wouldn't interrupt them.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Majella Greene:**

If that feels- , how they are feeling is most useful to them. So yeah, it's a full range but it's informed by lots of different practices. And I think also that's through my own experience of therapy and therapeutic interventions and practicing different elements. And I find it very difficult when people are dictating or suggesting things to clients when they haven't looked at their own shit. I think it's really important that we need to recognize that we are humans and we have shitty experiences and we can be really nasty people and we could be really lovely people and we can be all the things in between. And that will depend on the circumstances and various other elements and strands. So, I think it's really important not to pretend to be this kind of icon guru, untouchable, my life is perfect. When I'd really be interested in meeting someone whose life is perfect, my life is perfect for me, even with all the shit. So, it's thinking differently.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

And so some of the links to MI again, that seemed to resonate they are the shared expertise so Glenn, you seem to be referencing that as well, that the honoring the other person's experience in their own sense of what would work best for them and you're willing to share and feel probably the responsibility to share what you know about what's been helpful to other people or different ideas about how the brain chemistry works. And



then these suggestions are offered though support with an element of in the MI world we would say autonomy support, right? It's just an offering. It's not a forced idea or a have to it's ... Here's something that's been helpful or here's an idea that might be interesting to you. What's your sense of that and how does that fit with your experience? And also, yeah, go.

**Majella Greene:**

Sorry. I know obviously not unsolicited.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Sure right.

**Majella Greene:**

Would it be helpful for you if I shared some things that have may or may not be useful to you but have been helpful to some other people?

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Right.

**Majella Greene:**

And I wouldn't really do masters of self-disclosure necessarily. It wouldn't be about me referencing my experiences per se.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Right, right. I'm wondering too about the idea of change talk, which obviously is a big deal in MI, and we heard from Terri Moyers not long ago about that. Is that part of the work that you do, do you see that sort of ... Because you've been talking about language in other circumstances and this is just another way of focusing on particular kind of language. Any thoughts on that?

**Majella Greene:**

Not overly really, I think there's more to people's nonverbals around change and potential for change as well. So, we focus on change talk or dialogue to the exclusivity of the nonverbal indicators when we look at some of the coding around MI. And personally I think we miss out, we know we narrowed down to looking at certain indicators and we've missed really fundamental things that no one's looking out for. And I think that we have to consider what we're bringing into that helping relationship too. And we're practicing on a conscious level. It's not just laissez faire, it's like okay being present with someone is probably one of the most powerful things that you can do for anyone. I mean, when you can really feel it when someone's present with you. And I think that's a big support to people for them to make change. And I don't necessarily ... I mean definitely I would reflect back things, but I think it becomes, it's so integrated. It's hard to unpick. Yeah. It's hard to unpick.



**Glenn Hinds:**

Yeah. And when you're describing that sense of being with someone it sounds like in some ways that when you're being with someone, you don't have to think about what you're going to do next, it will simply show itself from your capacity to be helpful. Is that your experience of that? Is that your sense of it?

**Majella Greene:**

I think I would say I'm strategically thinking all the time alongside with being present. I mean, it's a conscious active listening process. But it doesn't just focus on what the verbals are.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Majella Greene:**

And it's definitely about sitting and being present with the whole person. And I think that there are indicators as you build a relationship with someone, you get a better idea of the kind of things that suit them where they're at, at different stages. And some people really appreciate and experience big shifts when it's just talking. Other people experience more where they're (?)really discovering themselves. they've never really been listened to before about who they are in the world. Not in the way that you do when you're working with someone therapeutically. So, I think, yeah, things do show themselves, but it's the client that shows it to you, isn't it? But your training and your experiences and your practices and everything else that bring probably really, it's that nurturing propagating stuff within the client. But really the client chooses which things will flourish and which don't.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Right. Yeah. I really appreciate you mentioning the nonverbals that just struck me throughout this experience of doing the podcast. We've been very much focused on the verbals and the language. And for good reason I mean, that's a big part of communication and human dialogue and a big part of motivational interviewing. But you seem to suggest that a lot of what you're responding to is body posture and facial expression and these things that are difficult to code, maybe impossible to code if you're using a recording or an audio recording. But in the work that you do, it's as important if not more sometimes than where a choice or whether this is somebody saying that they're going to quit or they're committing to quit something it's all the other stuff around it too.

**Majella Greene:**

I think that for me it's even more than that as well, it's the verbals, the nonverbals, but the nonverbals, there's also something about energy. What energy is someone bringing in with them. And that might be very different from what's coming out of their mouth. So, it's kind of reflecting back the discrepancy between your feeling from them. And I think this is very much underrated and not talked about. Because through years and years of



experience, you pick up energetically what's going on with people and it's like, is that person ready, willing or able to really look at this right now? And it's working with them to get them into a position where they feel able because that might be the very thing that triggers the turnover into change.

**Glenn Hinds:**

So you're inviting the audience to consider the possibility that we don't just listen with our ears, we listen with our eyes and various-/ very significantly we listen with our heart. What can we hear in those three dimensions to help us understand the experience this client is having, this other person is having in our company. And simply to notice that to them in itself can be very healing.

**Majella Greene:**

Yes. And I think even adding to that is what you feel with your skin.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Wow, okay.

**Majella Greene:**

The senses that you pick up because it's all looking at how important platonic touches and all those things and elements of when you feel, you get that gut feeling that's come, that's been dictated to through your skin. If the people use us (?) in making my skin crawl or there's something that's making me uncomfortable all these things. So, yeah. So I think you're right. Definitely the heart, you've made me think of the children's song.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Which one is that?

**Majella Greene:**

This, I've got, I can't believe I'm going to do this.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Okay you've tuned in.

**Majella Greene:**

(Singing)

**Majella Greene:**

You can edit that out now but ...

**Glenn Hinds:**

No, they're notes. We're just interrupted but I think our radio signal connected to a commercial radio station just now.



**Majella Greene:**

I think it was Madonna.

**Glenn Hinds:**

So again, what's the words there? Listen with your eyes.

**Majella Greene:**

Yeah. And sing everything you see. And it's the rainbow song. I Can See a Rainbow.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Majella Greene:**

Yeah. Can you sing with me?

**Glenn Hinds:**

Quite the invitation.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

The theme song for the session. Maybe for this episode.

**Majella Greene:**

I'll be interested to know what your theme tunes would be if you had to pick a theme tune that could take you out of a shitty mood.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Right. I was wondering what ... When you brought up theme tunes as a way of helping somebody, I was wondering a bit more about that. So, it's exploring songs that exist, I suppose, songs that connect to somebody in a meaningful way and helps to move them.

**Majella Greene:**

It could be the cheesiest mean, probably the cheesier the better. I mean, did you ever watch Ally McBeal?

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Uh-huh (affirmative). Yes.

**Majella Greene:**

So, she had theme tunes.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Oh, right, right. Wow that was long time ago. But yeah, uh-huh (affirmative).





**Majella Greene:**

I was 10 when that came out.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Uh-huh (affirmative). Wow.

**Majella Greene:**

So, what would your theme tune be?

**Glenn Hinds:**

I'm just thinking that I'm trying to remember who- I was taking my youngest daughter to school this morning and she had, who did she have? Adele. Adele was playing. And Adele was singing about, "Don't be coming back here, I don't love you anymore." And then the next song was, Where Have you Gone. And beautifully sung, beautifully structured songs, but and I could see how they would resonate with someone who was experienced difficulties in an intimate relationship and how that could almost comfort them. I'm thinking about when I was younger when, and I did lose in relationships that I went to that place. I love that song, Happy, that's certainly a song that just lifts me right up.

**Majella Greene:**

How does that one go then Glenn?

**Glenn Hinds:**

Oh yeah, that, I like the invitation. The words slipped my ... But it's certainly all about ... Let me see if I can remember some of it. Happy anyway, it's, I can see, I think what it is, is when I hear that song, I see something in my mind. It's a lightness, it's a skipping movement, it's a ... So no, I'm not going to sing it for you. If you gave me fore warning I would have got the words.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

So as we begin to wind things down here, sadly, we like to invite our guests to share a bit about what they've been thinking about lately, whether it's related to MI, if there's something related specific to MI that you've been working on lately or thinking about lately or perhaps something connected to positive psychology or the work that you do. So, what's you've been thinking about lately, Majella?

**Majella Greene:**

Well, I've been actually thinking a lot about trauma informed practice. And that's one of the things and also working towards thinking about how we as helpers improve our wellbeing and increase our connection with colleagues and clients so that we don't burn out really. So probably a lot around that amongst other things.

**Glenn Hinds:**



It's interesting that you mentioned trauma, trauma informed practice. We've spoken to Dee-Dee Scout in California and that was what she was telling us about. And I think it's potentially something that's a lot of the audience are going to start hearing more and more about I know that here in Northern Ireland they're talking about it in childcare, they're talking about it in addictions , they are talking about it in mental health at an early stage about how to understand why people behave the way they do. And again, it's that crossover between what informs motivational interviewing practice is that idea that this individual's behavior makes perfect sense in motivational interviewing it's simple but do I understand why it makes sense? But the trauma informed practice is inviting us to see it, is it an indication of an earlier trauma in the person's life?

**Glenn Hinds:**

That's where they're drinking, that's where they're presented with this mental health related difficulty. That's where they're living in this domestic violence situation. But the invitation is to try and understand without judgment, and I think that's the bit, that's maybe continuing to be repeated in our podcast here. There is something at the center of all of our conversations, which is try and be curious without judgment, try and understand, and if you do that, chances are you're going to be helpful at some level. You might not see an awful lot of change, but the likelihood is that the person's left feeling a bit better. Even if it was just for the 25 minutes, they were sitting with you, it wasn't getting worse.

**Majella Greene:**

And that's made me think of something else I'm thinking of is, is that she's sitting with the discomfort supporting people to be in an uncomfortable place and to not create resistance with it as well. So, it's like actually it's okay, this is being human.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right.

**Majella Greene:**

It sucks.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right. And that should bring us back to the bit at the beginning, which is, it's not just all good, there are difficult times in our life. And I suppose there is the ... It's not just for the client to be able to do it, the challenge is for us practitioners to be able to sit in the discomfort of a client's pain, and for us to be able to tolerate that too, to contain that in a way that doesn't harm us. Yeah.

**Majella Greene:**

And ultimately at the heart of all of it is love. That's it. You know. This is it. It's like all that exists is love really, everything else is just made up crap.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**



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It reminds me of another theme tune, but yeah, we'll discuss that offline, I guess.

**Majella Greene:**

No! what's your theme tune Sebastian?

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Well, it's, boy, that we could be on here for a while. There's lots of them. But I guess for me it's the things that I resonate with the most are which I promise you I won't sing any, but it's the things that kind of bring me to a time, a memory with people that I care about or places that I really feel connected to. There's an old rap song by a guy named Kurtis Blow, and it's a rap about basketball. And it was when I was a kid, preteen living in New York. And I just, I heard that song the other day on the radio I couldn't believe it. And I cranked it up in my car and pulled into my garage. And it was wonderful because it brought me back to this wonderful time of childhood where ... That's what I was most focused on, was hanging out with my friends and playing basketball.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Okay. Well, I'm going to endeavor to do is if you're listening to this podcast, hopefully below this conversation, there are two links, one to Happy and one to Kurtis Blow and then a third one from Majella.

**Majella Greene:**

Which would be The Darkness, I Believe In a Thing Called Love.

**Glenn Hinds:**

There we go, beautiful. And you know what, just as we're finishing ], what strikes me is, what you asked us to do there was to come, to think about our theme tunes, but also to consider singing them. And it sounds like that's the sort of thing that you do in practice. That you would invite, if I was your client you would have genuinely invited me to think about that. And to allow me to go to wherever that took me and I may have been comfortable enough to sing it. And then just to look at, well how can you use that in a way that's going to be useful for you and times when you are struggling?

**Majella Greene:**

God bless you. I would never ask anyone to sing unless they were singers because that would be horrendous. But having said that, if someone did want to practice it, generally, it's like, it's thinking about using those theme tunes when you're walking down the road and you're going to work. It's listening to the music instead of listening to talk radio, it's doing things that will take you away from your comfort.

**Glenn Hinds:**

It's wherever you're attending.

**Majella Greene:**



Yeah.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Right. Lovely.

**Majella Greene:**

But I might try it now that you've come up with that and I'll let you know the results.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Yeah. Great. Fantastic.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Well, Majella you just mentioned something about the take ... People, practitioners or professionals taking care of themselves and the importance of connection with that and that it made me think of our time right now and this conversation that we're having. And it's great to reconnect with you and to have this conversation with you and we very much appreciate your time and your wisdom and the ideas that you've shared with us today. Thank you so much.

**Majella Greene:**

Oh, thank you. It's been a lot of fun.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Good.

**Majella Greene:**

Really has.

**Glenn Hinds:**

And I have no doubt that people are going to be, have some questions perhaps after this. If you were willing, if people were to reach out to you, would you be willing for people who are listening to this podcast to reach out to you and what are the venues or the avenues that they can follow to connect with Majella?

**Majella Greene:**

Well, I'm on Twitter at @MotivationalMaj, I think, @MotivationalMaj. And I have a website which is [www.majellagreene.co.uk](http://www.majellagreene.co.uk). Had to think about the name then for a minute.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Yeah. You got them. Good.

**Majella Greene:**



And they can certainly contact me via those means.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Fantastic. And again, if people are looking to comment on this or pass this podcast on to other people on Twitter, it's ChangeTalking on Twitter, @ChangeTalking, on Facebook it's Talking To Change. And for people who want to ask us questions is podcast@glennhinds.com. We've had one comment in the last few days, asking us questions about the links between, what links we think that are between motivation interviewing and the transtheoretical model of change. And that has stimulated us to think about maybe reaching out to a few people we know about who have expertise in that area as well as relationships with motivation interviewing. So, we really appreciate that, Kathleen for your question.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Great. Well, Glenn, once again, it's been great talking with you and like we said, Majella it's been a pleasure to have our chat today. So, thank you so much.

**Majella Greene:**

Thank you. Take care.

**Glenn Hinds:**

Take care. Bye.

**Majella Greene:**

Bye.

**Sebastian Kaplan:**

Okay. Bye everyone.

