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Hello, I'm Michael Rendon, your host of Beyond the Bell, a podcast produced by Animas High School of Durango, Colorado.

Greg: And I'm your co-host, Greg Phillips. This podcast series asks the question, what must our education system do to best prepare the next generation of students, Gen Zers, to lead meaningful, fulfilling, impactful, purposeful, and satisfying lives? No small task.

We'll begin each episode speaking with a local high schooler, college student, or recent addition to the nine to five workforce to hear about their educational experience, their lives, and their visions and hopes for the future. Next, we'll talk with local experts about how we can ensure that education is meaningful, challenging, and engaging. We'll look at what's working and what isn't. So join us as we rethink education for a new generation, because we believe preparing for the future means more than just passing tests. It means empowering young people to thrive, lead and shape a better world.

Greg: Today we're talking to Bernie, a recent graduate from Durango High School. Welcome Bernie. Thanks for joining us today. Tell me about what it was like being a Durango High School four-year student.

Bernie: I enjoyed my time at DHS. I thought that the teachers, thought most pretty much all of the experience was pretty great. I think I might have been a little more blessed than others overall but...

Greg: Why is that? me why you say that.

Bernie: I had a really good group of friends. I excelled pretty well in the academic side of things. I know that other students struggle more with some academics and then also finding a good group of friends can be tough sometimes.

Greg: The classes that you were in, I'm sure you didn't know everybody, but you got to know a lot of your fellow students. Were there situations where you saw other kids struggling or having a difficult time where you felt like you wanted to step up and help them out?

Bernie: Yeah, definitely. was quite a few times throughout my high school experience where when I understood the content and someone else around me didn't, I had to help them out a little bit. I gotta say though, the teachers at DHS are pretty good at explaining things in a different way and telling the students and helping them learn.

Greg: What sort of activities were you involved with?

Bernie: So in my first two years of high school, I did baseball and golf. I didn't really do any clubs the first two years, but then junior and senior year, I kind of switched it and I was involved in quite a few clubs. So I did the SAVE committee at the high school, is, it stands for Student Advocacy in Voice and Education. So basically that, you met with the principal every two weeks or so and you talked to him and we'd give him little recommendations and that sort of thing, feedback about the administration. And then I was also part of Interact Club which is a Community Service Club with high school and National Honor Society and then I also did a little stint in green team.

Greg: Let's go back to the community service. Tell me about that. I know that DHS has a community service graduation requirement. Tell me about what you did and if or how that interacted with that group you're involved with.

Bernie: I'm really passionate about community service. was president of Interact senior year, vice president, junior year, just a member, sophomore year. But through Interact Club, which is a partner with Rotary Club in town, we did a ton of different activities. We'd volunteer at Manna Soup Kitchen. We would do different fundraisers for different groups. And then after senior year, after this summer, we went to Puerto Rico on a service trip. Puerto Rico was awesome.

Greg: Tell me about that.

Bernie: There were 11 of us, 11 students and one our sponsor teacher for the club that went. And we would do a different service project each day. And so, like the first day we did trail work. Another day we planted a bunch of trees. Between the 11 of us and one day we planted 600 trees, I believe.

My favorite part about the whole Puerto Rico experience was just, it was kind of hands off. We'd go to a different location to do community service and they'd give us little task and then we'd all work together to figure out how to do it and get it done most efficiently.

Greg: And I'm assuming that covered your community service requirement. What was it, 60 hours for graduation?

Bernie: Yeah, so at DHS, it's 60 hours of real-world experience. That can be either a job, AP, and college classes can count for a portion of that. There's like CAP and then also community service. So it's not strictly community service, it's just getting out there and doing actual things.

Greg: And how do you, how do they measure the impact of it? Are there specific learning objectives for your project? What's the process from an academic standpoint for them looking at what you've learned from it all?

Bernie: So from what I can recall, as far as the 60 hours go, all you had to do was fill out the sheet. And you had to get signatures from, like I got a signature from my boss, and then I got a signature from the Interact Club sponsor and an AP teacher, so I was able to get all my hours. I know that there are tie-ins. All students at DHS now, I think, have to do a POG presentation. And so you have to talk about different things throughout your high school career that represented the different POG skills.

Greg: What does POG stand for?

Bernie: Portrait of a graduate.

Greg: That sounds like a positive experience and something that hopefully prepares you to want to do more later on. How are you feeling about that? How do you visualize yourself being involved in civic or community service in the future?

Bernie: I definitely grew out the different experiences of doing community service in Interact Club and talking to different people in the club and interacting with people who, like adults who do community service just on the regular. It was definitely very inspirational and I will definitely pursue community service or some sort of community service element in my life no matter what I do at all stages.

Greg: Why is that? I mean, why do you think it's important for young people to develop an appreciation or responsibility to others? Where's the motivation coming from?

Bernie: I think a lot of people can agree that if we look around at the world we're in today, there's a lot of issues that people and lot of changes that people would like to be seen. It doesn't do much to just talk about it and just observe. Getting out there and actually doing something, even if it's like a small community service event, doesn't have that great of a scale on the global scale or there's a lot of these big issues that are difficult to tackle. For me, it was really nice to be able to see actual progress happen. So something that I did have a noticeable effect on something around me. I think that's really important in this day and age for especially young people to get into is just getting out there and doing something. Just starting. That's the only thing you can do.

Greg: How's your outlook for the future? You mentioned the world and some of the challenges. When you think about what's up ahead for you, how do you feel?

Bernie: I'm pretty hopeful as far as the world goes. I think there's a lot of strife and difficulty at this time. We don't really have any other option than to keep trying. I think anyone that sees issues in the world just need to work together to help fix them.

Greg: Tell me about what's next, what's your plan?

Bernie: So I am going to University of Utah next year. I will be studying biomedical engineering. They have a good program out there and I talked about community service and that kind of effect on the world, but I think that also within one's career, it's pretty important that someone chooses something that does something that honors what they think should be happening in the world. So for biomedical engineering, it's designing stuff that helps with healthcare, prosthetics, that sort of thing. I think that'll have a good effect on the world and that's what I want to do.

Greg: Where do you think the education system is lacking or where is there room for improvement?

Bernie: I'd say that one of the main issues with the education system is that each individual student learns differently and is going to excel at different rates, at different subjects, and different tasks than any other student. It's really difficult though to target a school where you teach over a thousand students and make sure that's uniquely individual teaching every one of them. But definitely as throughout my high school career, I saw some students, they didn't excel at certain thing. And if you fall behind on one thing, then it's really hard to catch up. It's kind of a brutal game.

Greg: I imagine learning how to advocate for yourself is important too, if you're having difficulties or challenges, having the confidence to ask for help.

Bernie: Yeah, definitely. I think that as students come into the age of like a high school age, maybe not so much as freshmen or even sophomore, but once you get into junior year, like you're starting to become an adult, you're able to recognize when you're falling behind or when there needs to be a change made. There is a certain amount of responsibility that falls upon the students in order to advocate for themselves and realize that they aren't understanding the content or they're not in a class that's advanced enough or the class they're in is too advanced.

I think there's definitely some responsibility that falls onto the student to advocate for themselves, but it's also those skills need to be taught to students early on. I think that the

encouragement to ask questions and talk to your teachers a lot and be comfortable around them is super important earlier and that'll help them in the future.

Greg: It sounds like you develop some social-emotional intelligence in your years there. How did you learn some of those soft skills? Things like empathy and consideration for others and communication and conflict resolution. Things that don't necessarily show up in a book.

Bernie: I enjoyed school overall. A lot of people don't like it as much, but I thought it was a really good experience. One of my favorite things though is if you put 20 people of the same age with similar things going on in their lives in a room together and force them to interact, force them to do some kind of task, then they're going to have to learn how to interact, how to solve problems. There's going to be natural leaders and there's going to be people who follow and develop ideas. I think that school is a really good setting for people to learn how to work together.

Greg: How is your family's support?

Bernie: Very good. I'm very blessed. I have an amazing family. I have a brother and a sister. They're both older than me, so they both already went through the school system. So they had a lot of advice for me about different things I should pursue and not pursue. I also have two amazing parents. They're both very supportive of everything that I choose to do.

Greg: Your family all sit down for dinner together every night most nights.

Bernie: When we were younger, I think that was something that my parents really strived to do is have us all sit down around a table and talk about things. I would say that we sit down around the table less now. Maybe we sit on like the couch, but we still talk about things and communication, talking about different stuff is something that is like emphasized and there's importance put on it in my house.

Greg: I can tell that that was the case for you growing up. I mean, it's usually when kids come from families that have a strong emphasis on working together and sharing and talking and, you know, it just helps develop some of that emotional intelligence that we were just alluding to. When you think about your life now, how do you feel about how meaningful and fulfilling your life currently is?

Bernie: It's kind of interesting, right after you graduate, you're in this weird between stage where you have a lot of potential, but you haven't really done anything with it yet. Sure, there's been things I've done and I can look back and I can be like, I did community service and that was very fulfilling and I'm very glad I did that. But looking forward, I'm at this point where I could stop pursuing things and just hang out. Like, no matter how good you were in school before this or even if you weren't very good, this is kind of a point in your life where you can shift or just continue on the path you're going. I'm looking forward into college and into getting going into a career and I think I can have a very fulfilling life. But at this point I'm looking around, I feel fulfilled but mostly just potential. Like I know I can do something with it but right now I don't feel like I've done that much.

Greg: So what do you think of a meaningful, impactful, purposeful life looks like when you're out of college and into the work world?

Bernie: For me, ideally I would pursue a degree in school. I'm still unsure whether or not I would like to pursue a postgraduate degree, get a master's in something, or if I just want to go right into the career force after getting my undergrad. Either way, once I enter into my career,

fulfilling for me would be doing a job where I feel like I'm accomplishing something, no matter what that be, just where I'm getting something done every day and I feel like I have an effect on the world. I've had some jobs over the past few years just making odds and end jobs where it doesn't feel like I'm accomplishing anything. I'm just hanging out and I can't see myself doing that for the rest of my life.

So I would say finding a job where I feel like I'm accomplishing something and then just doing whatever I can to help people through community service and on the daily whenever I can find something to help other people. And then having friends. I like talking to people, like hanging out. I'd love to have some friends.

Greg: That sounds like a pretty good life to me. That's great. I think you're going to succeed, Bernie. I get the sense that you're a purposeful, thoughtful young man and that you've got a great upbringing and you're on your way.

Bernie: Thank you.

Greg: Thanks for taking the time to talk with us.

Bernie: Yeah, totally.

Greg: Welcome to today's episode of Beyond the Bell, Parenting: raising children to thrive. Today we're going to have a fun one. Our guests are Rachel Turial and her daughter Rose. Rachel is a consultant specializing in nonviolent communication, mediation, facilitation, and coaching. Rose is a 2025 graduate of Animas High School and will be attending Colorado Mesa University in the fall. Welcome both of you.

Rachel: Thank you, happy to be here.

Rose: Thank you, Greg.

Greg: Let's start with some introductions. Rose, tell us about yourself and what you're doing next.

Rose: As you said, Greg, I graduated in the spring from Animas and I'm heading to Colorado Mesa in the fall. I'm undecided in my major, but I'm interested in taking classes in psych and exploring all different types of classes before committing to one specific field.

Greg: Good for you. Good for you. That's a good strategy. Rachel?

Rachel: I am, as you said, a communication consultant and coach and mediator and facilitator, and I'm really passionate about helping people dialogue, helping people hear each other. I believe there are always solutions when we can speak our truth and hear what matters to each other.

Greg: This should be good. We're going to see a pro in action here. Rose, as you look back on growing up, what do you think your mom got right in raising you?

Rose: So many things and one thing that specifically comes to mind is a non-materialistic lifestyle and a lifestyle focused on adventures, experiences, exploring and freedom, less on getting a new car or having the most toys growing up. And I didn't always have the most appreciation for this. And at times in my life when I was really struggling on the inside, I didn't

always look at this lifestyle as benefiting me and I thought that materialistic things would make me happy when really it was the relationships and the experiences that I had with my family and friends growing up. Mom, what was your biggest fear when I was growing up?

Rachel: I think that when you and your brother were younger and we were homeschooling you and we were spending a lot of time together, kind of curated what we exposed you to. And so I knew that there would be a day when we were no longer able to do that and that you and Cole would be more exposed to the world. And I think what worried me about that was I think a lot of the sort of harmful messages of society and how those messages interact with vulnerable young undeveloped brains. For example, I think there's a message, a sort of implicit message for girls that their worth is tied to their appearance. And then there's so much that comes from that and that now you need to buy all the products and et cetera, et cetera.

And I think there's other societal messages that are aimed at boys that are harmful. And I also think that society offers so many substances on which to numb ourselves. And that was another worry I had, that there were so many things out there that were packaged very attractively, very effectively, and that you and your brother would, like so many of us, find it easy to numb your feelings and sense of boredom, loneliness, sadness with any number of things. In a nutshell, what worried me the most was this idea that I couldn't protect you and sort of guide you through life forever.

Greg: Rose, anything you want to respond to on that?

Rose: Yeah, well, thank you for mentioning that we were homeschooled. I didn't mention that. And I think that kind of brings it a little more full circle with the things that you taught us and the alternative lessons that we did instead of spending an hour every day for five days a week learning about specific math things and instead learning more life skills and more useful things that I feel like have benefited me positively in my early adult life.

Speaking to the societal messages, thank you for expressing that to me and I've definitely heard you talk about that before, but it's a good reminder that that was a fear of yours and probably still is in some sense. And now like me being 18 and you kind of looking back on me as a young kid and you know, experiencing the substances as numbing and buying those products in order to fit in with the beauty standards or feeling accepted by people who have a more focus on appearance. I wonder how like that makes you feel looking at me today.

Rachel: You know, I have, there's like two different ways my mind can go and sometimes it goes into fear and it can run away with fear. And then I've noticed that being with you brings me back to this girl is solid and yes, you are in the world where you are bombarded with messages, all sorts of messages about not being good enough. And if you just buy this product, you will be and on and on.

And at my core, Rose, I have so much trust that you have what you need to navigate all of that.

Greg: It sounds, just listening to the two of you, that you've developed a trust and you've developed a way of communicating with each other. know, Rose, for you to be able to reflect back what you're hearing your mom say. Here's a question for you, Rose. Having established that approach to communicating, which not every young person your age necessarily has, how has that impacted your ability to develop relationships with friends and other people in the community?

Rose: I think growing up with my mom from a very young age and seeing the way that she communicates with my dad and with me and with my brothers and the way that she

approaches conflicts and helped us navigate conflicts with honesty and a non-judgmental listening style and an emphasis on the listening, truly listening and putting, hearing my perspective and putting herself in my shoes to understand where I'm coming from has really helped me in my relationships and developing deeper relationships with people. Because I've seen when you can positively communicate, you can really navigate your struggles more. And it's not an avoidance of the struggles. It's not how can we completely avoid conflict and how can we always have the most seamless and most polished relationship. It's not necessarily that. How can we positively communicate with each other so everyone's needs are getting met?

And just seeing my mom do that from a very young age embedded that mindset in me and has really helped me in my current relationships and even past relationships.

Greg: Rachel, some parents struggle with being a friend versus being a parent. And I know this changes throughout the life of your child. As they get older, you tend to be less of a parent and more of a friend. But how did you navigate that during the teenage years?

Rachel: I'd say I started with getting clear, discerning my own values and discerning how far I'm willing to stretch towards my kids and what they want and kind of recognizing what is non-negotiable. And there were some things that were non-negotiable around screens and around substances. know, as soon as my kids started becoming interested in screens, that there were non-negotiables and that continued. And these non-negotiables were for their well-being. They were to support their well-being.

When I recognized that if I had non-negotiables, if I had limits, that I needed to be willing for my kids to be mad at me, for my kids to really not like the limits that I set and to stand in the values that I, in my own integrity around being a parent and what I believed was best for them, whether that was right or wrong or the best possible decision, it's going to be different for every household, but this is what worked for me. This is where I could sleep at night.

And so that meant, yeah, being really clear about this is the limit, this is the why, and then being available to hear how pissed they were or how unfair it was or how everybody else gets to do X, Y, Z except them. And to hold space for that, to let them be angry and to not be defensive or not try and convince them that, not try and convince them at all to understand where they're coming from.

Of course this is hard. I remember when Rose was in seventh grade and she was playing soccer and her whole soccer team was walking from one place to another after school and Rose came home and told me that everybody was on their phones and she felt so left out and lonely.

Did that mean I was going to get her a phone? No. At seventh grade, no. That was not within my integrity, but I was totally available to empathize with her about how that feels, how it feels to be lonely, how it feels to be the only one that doesn't have a phone, what that's like. So that, you know, I think it wasn't like an either or, like either I'm the authoritative parent or I'm your friend, but I can stand in my authority as a parent and we can also maintain connection.

And I will be willing for my kids to be mad at me even for days, which really sucks as a parent. And of course, I wanted to be in a sweet, warm relationship with them all the time.

Rose, can you think of a time when we disagreed about something and how did we work through it?

Rose: You just talking about the phones is definitely something that we disagreed on for a long time. And I don't remember that exact situation that you were talking about, but I remember many other times before I got a phone. And even after I got a phone before I had social media on that phone where I felt so left out and different and lonely and like sitting on the bus when everyone's just scrolling on their phones. It's like they're together, but they're really not together. And then I felt completely alone in that moment. And even team dinners, when people would like be on their phones at dinners. And that was something I never experienced. And it sucked because I felt left out, but I also felt embarrassed because this is not how my family is. We never have our phones on at dinner. We're not present with each other. But I still like really wanted a phone. And I don't remember how old I was. Maybe I was a freshman in high school when I first got a phone.

Rachel: You were in eighth grade.

Rose: In eighth grade, okay. It was a lot of talking, it was a lot of like agreements and negotiating and figuring out how we can make it work for both of us.

Rachel: Yeah, I actually remember we spent almost an entire summer, the summer before you were in eighth grade and Cole went into ninth grade discussing what it would be like for you and Cole to get phones and how that was gonna work for all, like the entire summer.

Rose: Yeah.

Greg: It sounds like you, your family, really emphasize not only communication, but self-responsibility, learning how to understand yourself and the reasons why you're feeling what you're feeling. Not every family necessarily has that emphasis in their parenting and their upbringing. And so I'm back to you, Rose, again, and this goes back to my question from earlier. When you have friends or you have people in your lives that haven't been raised like you've been raised and haven't had that same experience and that same priority in terms of how you communicate and how you express needs and wants and frustrations. How do you connect with folks that are just different than you are like that? Have you experienced that as being a struggle in your life?

Rose: One specific thing that comes to mind, I guess it's still on the same vein as phones, but I had this group of three friends who all live really close in the same neighborhood and we would hang out all the time. And they all had phones really early and they didn't have screen time limits when they first got their phones. I guess the main thing is I just felt really left.

Like I could be with them and I would still feel lonely because I just wasn't into the same things as they were at that time, which revolved mostly around the phone. We all played sports together and that was fun. We would go to the park and that was fun. But when we would all come back and there would just be like TikTok making and like talking to boys on Snapchat, that wasn't important to me at that time. And it wasn't within my values to be so involved with something that wasn't really reality at that.

I wanted to hang out with people in person and meet people in person and create relationships with genuine common interests instead of just trying to make yourself look more appealing with a filter or something. And that was definitely a challenge with that group of friends.

Greg: So for you and the way you were brought up, connection was something that you strived for, something that was important to you. And you found that in some cases it was difficult to make those connections. Rachel, looking back through Rose's schooling, not just high school but even before, how did you feel about how the schools helped support you as a parent?

Rachel: I felt very supported as a parent because I developed relationships with both of my kids' teachers at Animas through going to exhibitions and TPOLs. They just felt very, the teachers felt very available and accessible. For my son as well, a couple teachers that, for Rose and Cole, who really took interest in them and really showed up in their lives in a way that I think made a big difference, made a big difference because it is, it's hard to be a teenager.

There's a lot of different reasons why it's hard to be a teenager. And just having a couple adults that know you and see you and take interest in you and are caring and also honest. You know, I think about Lori Fisher, Cole, Rose's brother, who's a little less organized than Rose, didn't show up for one of his paneling sessions for a, for a senior, was it a TED Talk? I can't remember. But it was a big deal. And Lori was pissed. And she was able to communicate that with Cole. Like, you didn't show up. I'm really, I think she said, I've just been grouchy for the rest of the day. And it mattered to Cole because he loved Lori and respected her. And it was just like she didn't shame him, but she let him know, your actions affect me. And that was meaningful for him.

And I just, I so appreciate that both kids got that experience of being seen and known and cared for and also held high standards.

Rose, when you were struggling with something at school, how did you want me to handle it? And did I get it right?

Rose: Even since middle school, I always felt like I could come to you and get support or help or inspiration from someone who knows a lot more than me and who has been alive a lot longer than me and seen so much more of the world and has been college educated that I feel that there was a lot of support you could give me when I had questions about things in school. And I definitely feel like you got it right without helping me too much and also giving me the space to be challenged in the space to like not have the best work all the time or like not always get it right I guess.

You always encouraged me to have the best work and like show up and put the most effort into something I could but not like getting the best grade like that was something I really appreciated about you and my dad is all throughout my school you guys were not focused on if I had all A's and I kind of took that into my own hands wanting to have good grades for myself not necessarily to impress you guys but just for my own just confidence in myself that if I do hard work and put an effort then that'll be reflected in my grades.

Rachel: Well, I remember something that you taught me that I sort of learned through you. I remember picking you up most days after middle school and you'd get in the car and you would unleash this torrent of everything that had gone wrong that day. And just sort of like, there was this person and they were annoying. And then I had this conflict with his friend and all this stuff. And I was like, my God, my daughter is struggling and suffering and I wanted to help you and support you.

And then often by the time we got home, you know, it was like a seven minute drive. By the time we got home, you were like, okay, bye. And jumping out of the car and onto the next thing. I started to realize like, you just need to unload. Don't need my advice. You don't need me to give you a script to use with this friend that you're challenged with. Like you just need to unload and I just need to hear you. And then you're gonna skip off and onto the next thing.

Greg: Someone told us this, can't remember where we or maybe where my wife read it. When our kids call and they've got something they need to talk about, we'll ask them, do you want to

be heard? Do you want to be helped? Or do you want to be hugged? It's basically asking them for what is going to be most helpful for them. What do you need right now? You don't need advice? Great. You just want to dump. And they'll tell us, you know, when they're calling, they'll say, I don't want any feedback. I just need to get this out. Do you have that experience, Rose, with your mom?

Rose: Yeah, I think sometimes I'll tell my mom, just want you to listen to me, I just want you to hear me and reflect back to me. And then when the dialogue between us will go back, there's been many situations, especially in conflicts and challenging times where we'll both express how we feel and then allow each other to reflect, just to really show that we're listening and understanding how they feel and then maybe offering a solution or a suggestion if that is the right time and place to do that.

Greg: Let me switch a little bit from wonderful communication and support and let's go to discipline. Rachel, I'm interested in hearing how you and your husband dealt with discipline issues. What was your approach? You mentioned setting limits earlier, but tell me what happened when Rose or Cole didn't do what they needed to do. How do you enforce consequences?

Rachel: I think we had a bit of an unorthodox style around this. I decided when the kids were pretty young, maybe two and four, that I wasn't going to punish them because I didn't think it was effective, not because I was like, I'm holier than thou and that's the right thing to do. I just didn't think it was effective. The more I thought about it and the more I read about it, it became clear to me that punishing a kid, the goal is often to teach a lesson and often what happens is the kid just gets angry and because you've taken their power away.

So making that internal vow became sort of a guidepost and I wanted to punish them many times and they would do something and the anger in me would arise and I could see that there was something in me that wanted to just, you know, like put the hammer down and say, hell no, and here's your consequence and you can't and I'm taking this away because I was so upset about what happened. But what I did instead is dialogue with them.

Greg: Rachel, how is your parenting style different than your parents' parenting style?

Rachel: My poor parents, I was a really challenging, rebellious teenager and constantly getting into trouble and I got grounded a lot. They wrote up this sort of plan of action, like if you violate this rule once, this happens. If you violate it twice, this happens. They tried to think of everything. And so, yeah, I was in trouble a lot and I don't think my parents trusted me very much.

Greg: How'd you learn to parent differently than them?

Rachel: Well, I actually credit Rose. My son is two years older. And when he was born, we did sort of the conventional timeouts. And that seemed to work, in quotes. Again, I think timeouts are just kind of a way for the parent to think they are instilling a lesson. And I think meanwhile, the kid is just like, her, know, burying it until the two minutes are up or whatever. So then Rose comes along and I try and give her a timeout. You know, maybe she's two and she is, she is howling, she is like rattling the door, holding the doorknob, pretty much saying, I don't accept this. And it actually led me to investigate what are some other ways that I can work with behavior that is not working for us. So that was sort of the impetus.

Greg: Rachel, let's pivot a little bit to building trust. How did you decide which battles to fight and which to let go? Maybe you didn't even pick battles. Maybe that's not even relevant.

Rachel: Well, I think as the kids got older, think what I told myself a lot and continue to when challenging things came up is this is their journey. I've done what I can. mean, Cole's 20 and Rose's 18, but even some years younger, I've done a lot of what I can do to instill them with values and logic and self-love and skills and tools and now it's their journey and it's really not my battle anymore.

Rose, was there ever a time when you broke my trust and how do you remember us rebuilding it?

Rose: I guess this example with the party and sneaking out and that definitely broke your trust. Not just that I didn't tell you that I was going, that I specifically told you I'm going to bed and that's what you believed. She's going to bed, I'm not worried about it. And then coming back the next morning and finding out that I did go to this party certainly broke your trust in that case.

We rebuilt that by again sitting down and talking, why did you do that? How did that affect both of us? How did that affect you?

And then I think at that point we had decided that my curfew would be 10 on just the weekends and it was earlier on school nights, but that was what we had agreed to. And over time that changed as I grew older and we rebuilt more trust curfews and communicating where I was and what time I will be home.

Rachel: One way that I think we build trust is not always doing what I want you to do. It's by us being able to dialogue and you being able to hear the impact on me and dad. And then also for us to understand what was going on for you. I think that's been a value in our family that when somebody does something that is challenging for another person, which of course happens somewhat frequently and to be able to understand what was going on for you.

Rose, you were 16 years old and your older brother was going to this really fun party and you really wanted to go and you really, it was summer and you wanted to have a fun time and you knew that, you you thought we'd probably say no. So you snuck out. Like when we can see your perspective, we can see that this is not a deceitful child. This is not a lying, manipulative child. This is a child that was looking to have fun and didn't know how to have fun and also be honest at the same time. So let's make a plan so that it's more likely next time that you can have fun and be honest and we can all feel good about it.

Greg: Rachel, what do you say to parents that, you know, maybe listening to this and thinking, wow, this this really respect the way this parent has raised their child and the way she's emphasizing communication, but it's not working. Doesn't matter, seem to matter what I do. My child is not listening, is not responding, is not not playing the game the way I would like them to play. I'm trying to approach this from an honesty standpoint and a communication standpoint, but it's not working. I'm not getting through.

Rachel: Yeah, I am really guided by one of the principles of nonviolent communication, which is that everything we do is to meet a need. And so if there is a kid who is sort of shut down or not communicating with the parent, I would be really curious what need is this child trying to meet? Is this child trying to meet a need for autonomy? If I don't communicate with my parents, then I don't have to negotiate with them. I just sort of grab the power that I can. Or am I trying to protect myself because when I do communicate with my parents, I get a lot of lectures.

And sometimes I think we parents think that we're listening, and we might do a little listening, or we might do a little listening that sounds like this. I hear that you really want XYZ, but here's the parental lecture, blah, blah, blah, blah. And then we're not really listening.

For me, in my world, what listening sounds like is Rose said something earlier about trying to put ourselves in each other's shoes. And we just had a thorny conflict. Maybe last month, me, Rose, and my husband, and we were on a backpacking trip, and we were discussing something, and we just like, couldn't quite find each other. And so we decided to take a break from trying to talk about this and meet at this spring that was coming up on the trail. And then each of us try and say what we think matters to the other person. Like if we were to, if I was to stand in Rose's shoes, how would I explain this conflict from her perspective?

And so it was a really beautiful connecting moment. I remember actually my husband saying something about Rose's perspective and she said, yeah, I didn't even think about that, but that is true too.

And so I would say to this parent, are you able to really get inside your child's world and understand what matters to them and what's driving them and what wholesome, relatable human needs they're trying to meet, even if their strategies are really unwholesome or challenging or really prickly, what's behind that?

I don't see humans as manipulative or liars. I see them as trying to meet needs. And so that's kind of my driving question.

Greg: Well, thinking back to that moment at the spring on your backpacking trip, what's your recollection of that and how that impacted you?

Rose: Yeah, that was really good. Like my mom said, we were kind of just not finding any common ground between each other. I was just frustrated and didn't really want to talk anymore. Then first having that space to just walk alone for a little bit, take a break from that conversation was really helpful. So I could think about it without needing to communicate with them in that moment. So I could think more about what I wanted to say and how I wanted to present myself in my side of the issue to them and then coming back together with the practice of what do you think the other person values or wants you to understand was really meaningful and I think helped us come to a common agreement about what we were talking about.

Greg: Stepping out of their own shoes and looking back at it. You know, there's this concept of the amygdala being hijacked. Have you ever heard about that? That part of our brain that goes into fight or flight mode that when we're upset and we're reacting to something and we just lose it, when we're not capable of really thinking rationally, we're just too upset to deal with it. And going to that place of taking some breaths, leaving, coming back in 30 minutes kind of thing where you're able to step away gets you back in control so that you're not in such a fight or flight mode and able to now let's deal with this calmly and rationally and see what we can see what we can come up with. Rachel, for you, I'm sure you're aware of this concept. What approaches do you use personally and or in parenting to help get out of that hijack mode?

Rachel: Yeah, for me personally, what I do is try and actually name my feelings. And there's been some really interesting studies showing that when people under MRIs, that when they are naming feelings, it links their amygdala with their prefrontal cortex, which is that place where we have executive function and empathy and logic and delayed gratification, decision making.

The first thing I do is just try and understand what is going on inside of me because if I listen to my thoughts, those are not reliable. They're usually about how wrong someone is and how

right I am. So I want to go underneath that and try and understand what am I feeling? What am I needing? What's really happening here? And that often takes the nervous system down, yeah, settles me and gives me information.

Greg: Clearly you and your husband have put a lot of focus on your parenting style and raising your two kids. What are you most proud of what you've accomplished so far?

Rachel: I'm so proud of their communication. I find it quite extraordinary how much they each share with us, how much they trust us, the way they advocate for themselves in the world. I can think of times that Rose has told me at 17 years old telling a friend, know, such and such really didn't work for me. I would like more of this in our relationship. Just like the courage to advocate for themselves and make requests and recognize what works and doesn't work. The way they know themselves and the way they can communicate who they are with us and other people is yeah, quite gratifying and beautiful to witness.

Greg: All right, let's move to closing this up. I'd love for each of you to ask each other a final question. Start with you, Rose.

Rose: Mom, what do you hope I remember most about how you raised me?

Rachel: I hope that you most remember to trust yourself and trust your experience and trust what's happening inside of you and to investigate what's happening inside of you and be curious about what's happening inside of you and to give some space around what's happening inside of you before you make decisions. Just really, really know yourself and trust yourself.

Call me every week.

Greg: Mom, how about you?

Rachel: Rose, what do you want me to know about the job I did as your parent?

Rose: First, I maybe don't tell you enough, but I love you, Mom, so much. And I'm so lucky to have had you as a parent and an inspiring and supportive person. I do truly look up to you in the work you've done and the work that you do do. And seeing how many lives that you've changed and how many people that you have really inspired and given support to has made me want to learn more about the brain and social work and do something in the field of helping others because I see how meaningful it is to you.

And I know that no matter how many challenges we've had or how we've like disagreed on things, you have always had my well-being and happiness in mind. Even if it's like all the way down at end of the tunnel, it's always there. And sometimes I didn't realize it, but looking back, I see and now and I'm not always going to see it even going forward, but deep down I do know that.

Rachel: Thanks, Rose. Love you too.

Greg: Beautiful. Thank you so much both of you for being so honest and and vulnerable and sharing so much. I hope it was fun for you and I hope it was it was good for our listeners. So I thank you both.

Rose: Thank you

Rachel: Thanks everyone.

Greg: After spending time talking about parenting and family life, I've been thinking about the transitions from home to further training and education, to ultimately the work world and whether we are preparing students for a world that is changing faster than ever.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers reports that both students and employers agree on the importance of things like communication and critical thinking. But when it comes to other skills, especially leadership and career development, there's this huge gap in how prepared employers think new graduates actually are.

And then there's this report from the Society for Human Resource Management that really caught my attention. Three quarters of organizations struggled to fill positions last year, three quarters. And over a third of HR professionals say it's because candidates just don't have the right skills.

But here's the kicker, and this is from the Springboard for Business survey of over 1,000 corporate professionals. 70% of business leaders say there's a skills gap that's actually limiting their company's growth and innovation. The World Economic Forum backs this up, saying nearly 40% of employers worldwide struggle to find entry-level workers who have what they need for today's economy.

So we've got this situation where we have students who've worked hard, gotten good grades, maybe even went to college, but they're still not quite ready for what employers need. And employers are struggling to find people to hire.

So the question is, how do we bridge this gap? How do we prepare students not just for the jobs that exist today, but for careers that are going to keep evolving throughout their working lives?

So for the final episode of Beyond the Bell, we'll be joined by two people who think about this every day. Erin Cummins-Roper works as the Dean of College and Career Counseling at Animas High School, where she guides students through comprehensive college and career preparation.

And Janae Hunderman is the Director of Fort Lewis College's Career and Life Design Center. She's passionate about helping people navigate our changing world of work, and she actually helped develop some innovative work-based learning programs right here in Durango.

So join us for Working 9 to 5: Post-Secondary Education, Training and Employment as we tackle the big question, how do we prepare young people for professional success in a world where the only constant is change?