

Dear Friend,

From our beginnings as a podcast focusing on the culture wars threatening America's public schools, we're evolving into something broader and, we hope, more helpful to those concerned about the future of education in this country.

Since [our first episode about indoctrination](#), we have published [18 more episodes](#) on a broad range of issues, including [book banning](#), how students learn about [race and racism](#), [sexual and gender identity](#), and [balancing parent rights with student rights](#). We have interviewed distinguished writers like [Amanda Ripley](#), [Monica Guzman](#), and [Peter Coleman](#) about the culture wars and the strategies school leaders can use to bridge divides and minimize the harm caused by toxic polarization.

While producing our podcast, we've formed partnerships with like-minded organizations such as [Living Room Conversations](#), [Braver Angels](#), and the [Listen First Coalition](#) that strengthen our voice and expand our reach. We are also conducting on-the-ground and virtual workshops with education leaders, and facilitating "Schoolhouse Conversations" with parents, board members, and educators; on our website, we're sharing relevant books, articles, videos, and podcasts and keeping our followers informed about the latest newsworthy events; and, we've added this blog "[Ken's Reflections](#)," where I will share my thoughts about all of the above.

From now on, we will send out newsletters with more information about the culture wars and the work being done by others (and, sometimes, my efforts, including in-person workshops and speaking engagements) to defuse them.



Courageous Conversations

ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS

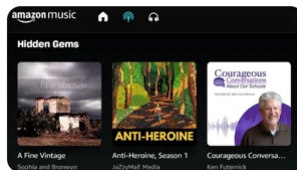
Finally, another change you may have noticed is the fresh new look to our logo. In the coming weeks, you will see additional changes to our podcast art and website design to better capture our new, broader mission.

We welcome your comments and suggestions on items we might include in our newsletter, our website, and on podcast episodes you'd like to see us produce. [Please email us with your thoughts.](#)

Best,

Ken Futernick
Host & Founder

Recent Accolades ★★★★★



We're honored to have been named by Goodpods as one of the top 100 political podcasts, featured in the Hidden Gems collection of

Amazon Music, and mentioned by PlayPodcast.net as a "[Must-Listen Podcast for Educators in 2023.](#)"

Tune into our latest podcast episodes

We are delighted with the feedback we are getting about our podcast. New York Times bestselling author and journalist, [Amanda Ripley](#) writes that [Episode 11](#) is “... a fantastic example of how powerful it can be to get underneath the usual talking points of a culture war and start to glimpse the personal fears and worries at the heart of these debates.”

Political Opposites Square Off on Schools, Gender, and Sexuality (Ep. 11)

Listen to one of our most popular episodes (mentioned just above) where Willie Carver, Kentucky Teacher of the Year in 2022 (who happens to be gay), has a fascinating conversation with Dov Fischer, a conservative rabbi from Orange County, California, and an outspoken opponent of policies allowing students to choose their gender identities.

LISTEN TO EPISODE 11

In the News Current Stories of Polarization Affecting Schools Nationwide

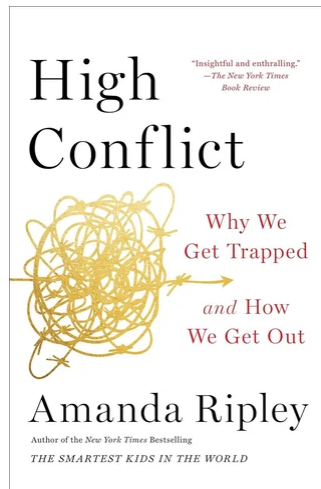
- We've lost our advantage on education': Democrats grasp for wins on public schools: GOP wins and a crisis in schooling has convinced some Democrats that the Biden administration needs to promote a liberal version of public school choice. [Read in POLITICO >](#)
- PragerU's Right-Wing Playbook for Infiltrating Public Education Is Working: New Hampshire's school board just voted to make one of the right-wing organization's courses count toward graduation

credits, despite vocal opposition. [Read in Rolling Stone >](#)

- Why DEI Training Doesn't Work—and How to Fix It: There's no question that bias exists. There's also no question that the way organizations deal with it is more likely to hurt than help.

[Read in The Wall Street Journal >](#)

Tools & Resources to Combat Polarization

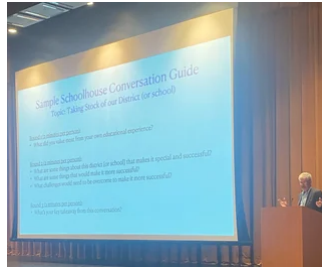


When we are baffled by the insanity of the “other side”—in our politics, at work, or at home—it’s because we aren’t seeing how the conflict itself has taken over.

That’s what “high conflict” does. It’s the invisible hand of our time. And it’s different from the useful friction of healthy conflict. That’s good conflict, and it’s a necessary force that pushes us to be better people.

[ADD THIS BOOK TO YOUR LIBRARY](#)

[Courageous Conversations in Action](#) 



Ken was the keynote speaker at Irvine Unified's *Administrator Advance*. His presentation, which included opportunities to practice bridging strategies, was titled "Polarization and its Impact on School Systems and Communities."



Ken teamed up with Columbia University Professor Peter Coleman for the Roger Dahl Compassionate Education Speaker Series at CSU Monterey Bay.



In Spreckles (near Salinas), Ken led a workshop for parents, educators, and board members. The presentation was titled "Bridging Divides in our Schools and Communities - The Why and the How."



At the Google Community Space San Francisco, Ken moderated a politically diverse panel discussion organized by [Braver Angels](#). The

topic: “Does Wokeism Have a Place in Schools?”

➡️ **Let's amplify the conversation!**

Follow us on social media and forward this message to bring your colleagues into the fold.



Courageous Conversations About Our Schools, Carson Rd., Placerville, CA

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