

The Courageous Conversations About Our Schools Newsletter | Issue No. 2



Dear Friend,

Welcome to our second Newsletter! As noted in our first one, our work extends beyond [our podcast](#) and includes links to current news stories and events, tools for bridging divides, and [my latest blog posts](#).

My latest post is titled, *Empathy is the key to depolarization. Four reasons it's so hard*. I've included an excerpt below.

*If we want to de-fuse the culture wars in education, if we are exhausted by toxic polarization and saddened by fractured relationships among our friends and family, the one thing we must become better at is **empathy**.*

Empathy is transformative. It cuts through differences, outrage, and mistrust. It enables us to collaborate and become more successful, even when we disagree.

But it's also hard. It's counterintuitive, and it takes time, practice, and commitment to do it well. In my latest blog post, I talk about the benefits of empathy and the challenges that must be overcome in acquiring this vital skill. [Continue reading](#) →

Thanks for following our work, and please let us know about items for us to consider including in future Newsletters.

My best,

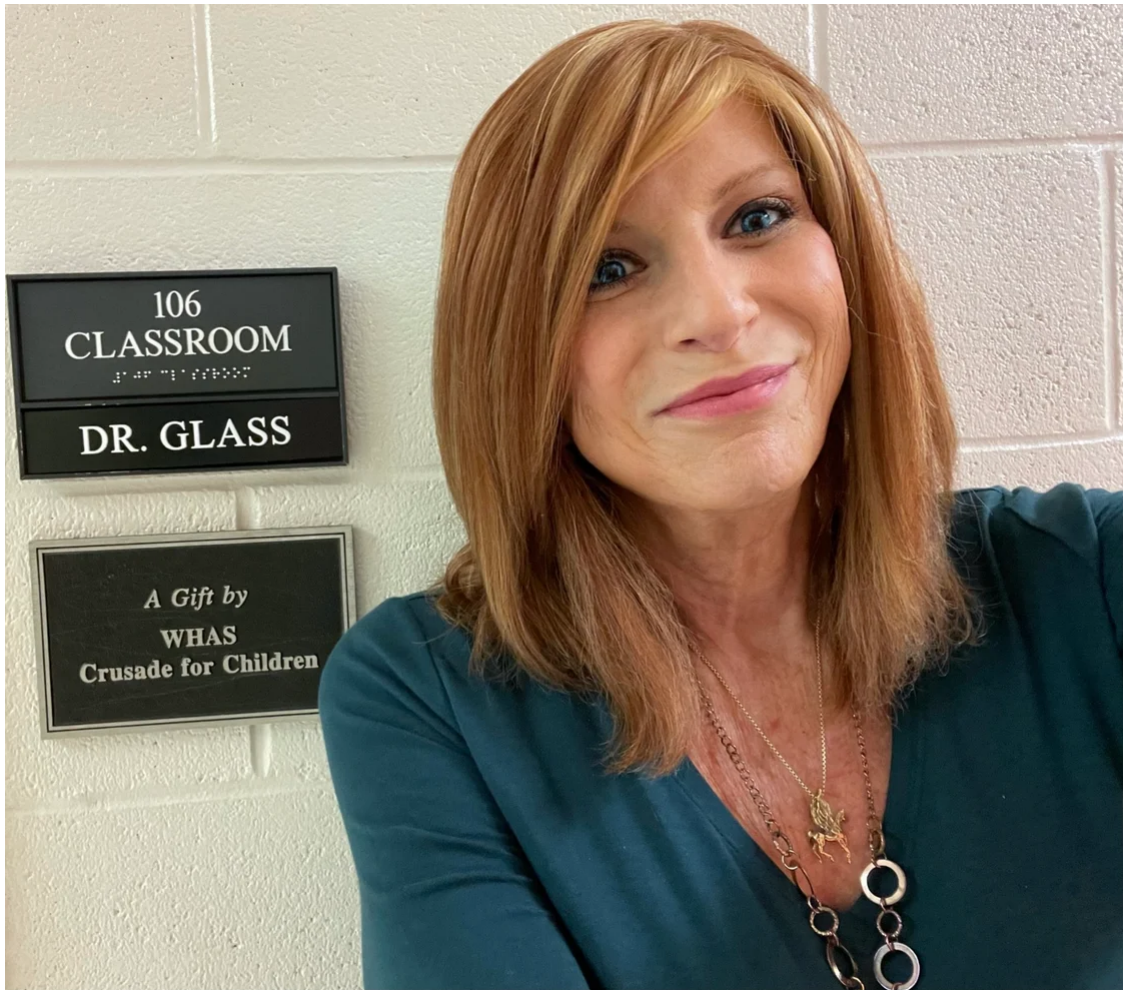
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Futernick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ken Futernick
Host & Founder

Tune into our latest podcast episodes

My latest interview is with Bobbie Glass, a 72-year-old transgender woman and veteran educator from Kentucky. I invited Bobbie to be part of this podcast because most of us, including myself, have never had an in-depth conversation with a transgender person, despite the fact that most of us have opinions on transgenderism and school policies that affect their lives. I think you will be moved and surprised by what you hear.

A Courageous Conversation with a Transgender Educator



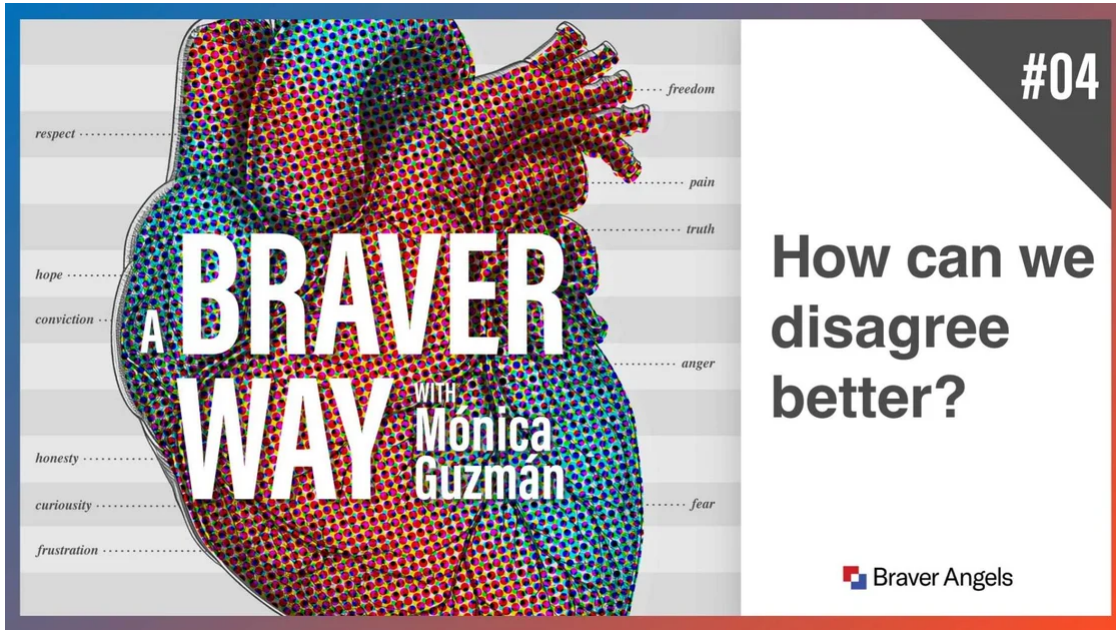
LISTEN TO EPISODE 20

In the News Current Stories of Polarization Affecting Schools Nationwide

- Oklahoma policy makers have limited what teachers can talk about in the classroom when it comes to race and racism. These Black teachers in Oklahoma stepped up. [Read in KOSU >](#)
- New York Times columnist David Brooks believes universities are failing at inclusion. [Read to Learn Why >](#)
- The Latest Target for California Conservatives? Local School Boards. Several California school districts have required parental notification when students seek to change their gender identity. Opponents say the policies have needlessly divided

communities. [Read about this controversy in this New York story >](#)

Tools & Resources to De-Polarize



Spencer Cox, the Republican governor of Utah, and Troy Williams, the activist at the head of Utah's most active LGBTQ rights organization, agree that attacking one's political opponents is counter-productive. Reflecting on their sometimes contentious relationship, the two talk with Mónica Guzman about how they've both been able to advance their sides through honest dialogue and good-faith engagement, resulting in some surprising win-win outcomes for the people in their state.

LISTEN TO THIS EPISODE

Courageous Conversations in Action 



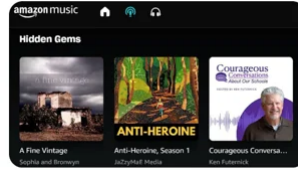
TUNE IN HERE

Ken was featured as a guest on Janna Coe's radio show, ["Transactional," on RadioLex](#) in Lexington, Kentucky. In this engaging interview, Ken explains the motivation for creating a platform that relies on empathy and dialogue to better understand complex and often opposing perspectives about today's education controversies.



Mismatch connects classrooms across the country via video conferencing and allows students to hear from someone different from themselves. It works like a dating service: you fill out some information about your school and area, and we send you your perfect (mis)match. After that, your students use a conversation guide to talk one-on-one with students in another classroom. Through these conversations, students learn about how to talk civilly with someone who is different than them as well as important digital literacy skills. Learn more at [Mismatch.org](#).

Recent Accolades ★★★★★



We're honored! Goodpods includes us in their the top 100 political podcasts; we've landed on Amazon Music's list of "Hidden Gems"; and PlayPodcast.net selected us as a ["Must-Listen Podcast for Educators in 2023."](#)

➡ **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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