



## Live with Michael Strawser: Embracing Rejection, Rediscovering Your Teaching Purpose, and Empower Students

### SPEAKERS

Tierney King, Michael Strawser

#### **Tierney King** 00:01

This is the Faculty Focus Live podcast sponsored by The Teaching Professor. I'm your host, Tierney King, and I'm here to bring you inspiration, energy, and creative strategies that you can utilize in your everyday teaching. All right, joining us today is Michael Strawser, associate professor at Nicholson School of Communication and Media. So before we kind of dive into our conversation today, just kind of let us know how long you've been teaching, what you teach, and something interesting about yourself that maybe most people don't know.

#### **Michael Strawser** 00:37

I have been teaching since 2008. So I graduated in spring of 2008, and then fall 2008, I started teaching right away. I had a lot of my classmates and people that I went to university with in my classes the following semester, which was a little bit funky. But my usual rotation is public speaking, advanced public speaking, business and professional communication, and then I teach a class called teaching communication, which is primarily for our graduate teaching assistants. And I'm, I always, I never know exactly how to answer the something that most people don't know about you. But I do I have five kids, my oldest kid is nine. So I feel like most people do not know that about me. And I also think that answer limits the other answers that I could possibly have, because I feel like a lot of time is devoted to that particular troop.

#### **Tierney King** 01:25

Perfect. So with so many years of teaching, you know, it can be really easy to kind of become complacent and to just kind of struggle with getting motivated and your teaching. So we're going to talk about today how you can stay motivated in your teaching career, and you have a ton of ideas. So we're going to kind of break it into sections, and we're going to start with how you use professional development communities and engage in public teaching to help motivate your teaching.

#### **Michael Strawser** 01:52

Yeah, Tierney, I think it is really easy to get complacent, not even necessarily in the negative sense, just in the sense of, we just kind of, we're all guilty of going through what I call that muscle memory,

right? And so we teach a class, it goes really well. And the next thing you know, you're four or five years in and you know, eight semesters into the same course. And you're going, I haven't really done a lot to change it because it worked. And I think that for a lot of faculty members, that's the complacency element. It's not that we're lazy. It's not that we're apathetic, it's that we kind of hit a little bit of a rhythm, and then we just kind of go, okay, we're good. And the reality is that things are changing so quickly that we have to kind of constantly be thinking about the courses that we teach. So you know, we hear a lot about faculty burnout, too, I think it's important to also kind of step back and really think about how can we keep ourselves energized. So you mentioned, you know, professional development communities. That's one thing that I love taking advantage of, I think that as I've gotten to this point, you know, 15 years into teaching college students, I really value and appreciate the perspectives and more. So the ideas of my colleagues, I don't necessarily feel as threatened by people who are doing cool things in the classroom, but I look at it and go, Oh, that's awesome. I'm gonna steal that. And I'm very vocal about the fact that I steal that. And so I love just kind of hearing what people are doing, even if it's in a discipline that's completely foreign to mine. And I try to take advantage of learning communities, professional development communities when I can and I also try to be silent so that I can kind of hear what other people were doing. And I think that can be really helpful. And then I know, you also kind of mentioned that, that public teaching and I think a lot of times we as university faculty members talk a lot about public scholarship. So how are we actually getting out there with our research and kind of engaging the public, but I've really tried to embrace this idea of public teaching, which for me, means I'm out doing corporate training and webinars and seminars and trying to facilitate different sessions with nonprofits. And it first of all, it gets me out of the classroom, I think that it helps keep me sane, to a certain extent. And then also, I think it helps keep me kind of conversant with a lot of different things that are happening in industries but but honestly, it's also fun for me, and I think it gives me energy beyond just kind of that monotony of being in the same classroom to three days a week, or even virtually.

**Tierney King 04:04**

Going back to the stealing ideas, because I think a lot of teachers think, you know, stealing ideas, is this, this bad concept. And it's really not, so just kind of expand on when people steal ideas from you, how do you feel or when you steal from other people, how do they feel?

**Michael Strawser 04:19**

I've started making it pretty easy for people to steal my ideas. Like I've just started to do a lot more in the realm of popular press pieces and doing different things that are outside of even scholarly journals just about teaching ideas, because I'm, I'm cool with it. Like I think it's great if we're learning from each other. And the reality is, is that we need to this is part of how we try to be consistently student centered. And so it's not a matter of academic freedom for me like there's there's rarely completely new ideas like usually it's there's nothing new under the sun, right? And so we have to kind of think about that a little bit. I've started even putting award winning full courses of mine online and just going hey, you know what, you know, take like, do whatever you want to do. It's totally great. I think that that there's a level where we're in an environment right now where where we need to keep students front and center. And I think that there's an older mentality, not necessarily from people who have been in the industry for a long time, but like, an older mentality of, you know, we have to be faculty members, we have kind of be siloed. And that's just not, that's just not the truth, we need to we need to always be thinking about our

students. And part of how we can do that is by learning from others who are doing really cool things in their classrooms, and not necessarily being ashamed that we're going wow, it's a great idea. I didn't think of that. That's okay. Like, I'm alright with that.

**Tierney King 05:31**

Yeah, absolutely. A few other tools that you use to kind of, you know, stay enthusiastic about your teaching include reaching out to former students, seeking out awards and recognition, remembering your why - kind of your reason - and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. So let's kind of dive into those one by one.

**Michael Strawser 05:50**

Yeah, let's let's start with former students. So I unashamedly love to hear updates from former students. Now, keep in mind, as I mentioned earlier, one thing that not a lot of people know about me, I don't have a ton of time for social media, I just don't. I'm not on a lot of different things, I don't have a Tik Tok. I'm pretty sure my MySpace is still active. And I just never check it. But I have LinkedIn, and I'm very active on LinkedIn. And I purposely kind of connect with students that have that because I want to stay connected with their new positions and different things that they're doing. And I'll even I'll reach out, hey, not even just saying congratulations, but hey, we'd love to hear like, you know, what are some different things that you feel like the industry is happening in industry that you would love for current students to know, and I love to hear those updates. It's, it's not selfish, in my opinion, like, I'm not necessarily reaching out to say, hey, tell me how great your college experience was, and how how, you know, we collectively changed your life, it really is like, Hey, you're doing some really cool stuff. I want to hear about what's going on with you. And I just noticed that you got this new promotion or noticed that you took a new job, let's let's help our current students, what advice do you have for them, and I'll even I'm, you know, I try to be purposeful about bringing former students back into the fold as guest speakers and just allowing them to participate and be a little bit more empowered and have some agency and learning process. So I love to do that. And I primarily do that through LinkedIn,

**Tierney King 07:08**

How do the students, when you reach out to them, kind of what is their response? Because tyou know, if a teacher reached out to me, I'd be like, Wow, this is amazing, you know, this is awesome. So what is their kind of response?

**Michael Strawser 07:19**

So, it depends. I usually preface. So one thing that I tried to do is that in my in my classes, I basically make it an option that you can connect with me on LinkedIn. And I usually give them a little bit of a heads up and say, I'm not necessarily going to go out and like check the, you know, suggested contacts list and start reaching out to all the students. I usually do it while they're in my classes, say, Hey, if you want to connect with me, that's great. And most do, to be honest with you, most that have a LinkedIn account do and then I also preface it during class to to say, Hey, listen, you know, I want to follow your career. I want to see what's going on with you. So if I reach out in a couple years, you know, it's, don't think it's weird. And I really want to figure out kind of what's going on. So I think a lot of it is setting expectations ahead of time, because I do think there's a there's a really interesting power dynamic there to where you're connected specifically, with your professor or former professor in a

social media capacity. But that's also why I kind of stick solely to LinkedIn too, because I feel like that's a professional network. And so we're not blurring any social lines, in my opinion. And it's that's the point of, you know, what LinkedIn is supposed to do. So I think it's a matter of just setting expectations, letting them know kind of opt-in to that and be, you know, voluntarily part of that, and then kind of letting them know, Hey, I might, I might check in on you, and would love to kind of hear how you're doing. But I think most like it, to be honest with you. And I think, especially when I asked the Hey, what should I tell my current students right now about, you know, advertising and PR, or about marketing, they are very quick to give me a lot of different ideas.

**Tierney King** 08:48

Perfect, and then we'll kind of move to the you know, how you use seeking out awards and recognition - dive into that a little bit.

**Michael Strawser** 08:55

Yeah, the awards and recognition thing makes me sound really vain in terms of an idea to keep myself motivated. But I like I self nominate, and I'm cool with it. And the reason why I think that this is one way that we can stay motivated in terms of teaching, especially as we hit that mid career is because usually, with most awards, they force you to put together some sort of a packet where you have to explain your teaching. And that's the part that I think is most valuable for me. It's not, you know, applying for all of these different things and trying to figure out, you know, how I can just spend more time applying for awards, it really is stepping back and saying, Alright, why do I make the decisions that I do? And I think that that's the deeper thinking for instructors that we really need to latch on to is we've got all of these things that are happening consistently in our classrooms, how often do we actually step back and say, All right, why am I doing that? And and I think the awards and recognition process usually allows us to think a little bit deeper about our teaching. And so that's, that's part of why I seek them out is because it just is really good. It's just a good habit for me to kind of constantly be asking myself different questions about my own teaching and then I have to rationalize that to my peers or to other colleagues in the industry, it forces you to kind of reconcile decisions that you make. And I think that that's really helpful in terms of staying motivated.

**Tierney King** 10:10

Is there a certain kind of path that you would recommend, you know, people starting out who are looking into this? Where do you even start?

**Michael Strawser** 10:17

I would recommend that people start internally, so at their own institutions, and here's the deal. This is, you know, I think university faculty members should be resilient, like higher ed has a lot of embedded rejection. So think about, you know, how often, if you are a researcher, and you submit a research article to a journal, and they rejected you, like, it happens all the time, all the time. So we need to be okay, with not always winning, and not always getting the answer that we think we deserve. And even like grant applications are the same thing, you know, get get ready for a lot of rejection in the grant world. Same thing, I think, recognize that you're not going to win every time, you're probably not going to win most of the time. But I think it's good practice big picture to think deeply about your teaching. But I do think the best place to start is internally, and start thinking practically about those different

opportunities that are available at your own institutions. And usually those might not come with like a stipend or, you know, if something major in terms of the award, it might be a gift card, it might be lunch, it might be, you know, a course release. Who knows. But I think starting internally at your own institutions, and seeing if there are different opportunities for awards and recognition is probably the first place to start.

**Tierney King 11:32**

Yeah, and you've got to start somewhere, right? And then you kind of touched on, a little bit is, you know, when you seek out these awards and recognition, you remember your why during this. So just kind of expand on the remembering your why. Yeah, absolutely. I think that's so important. And just, you know, something to remind yourself, as you're teaching, even just having a sticky note to remember why you do what you do is important. And then the last kind of thing, in this topic area was the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and how you kind of use that to help your enthusiasm during teaching.

**Michael Strawser 11:44**

I think this is the hardest thing for me honestly to do. And I didn't use to struggle with remembering why I got into teaching in the first place. Like I mentioned, I started teaching in 2008. very literally, the reason why I started teaching college courses was because I was in need of money, like I was broke, and my advisor from my undergrad came to me and said, Hey, I need somebody to teach public speaking, you did a decent job at public speaking, you know, the students might like you, would you like to do that? And I said, How much does it pay? And he answered, and I said, Well, that's not a lot. But I mean, I'll take anything. So let's do it. And I fell in love right away. And so, you know, what I fell in love with was the idea of mentorship and impact, like I genuinely believed, and still believe that I can have an impact on my students. Now, in all honesty, like the pandemic kind of threw that for a loop a little bit, because I think most of us don't necessarily get into teaching to do it virtually. And we don't necessarily get into teaching to kind of figure out how to survive, you know, a global pandemic. And so, I do think that since 2020, I've had to remind myself of my why pretty consistently, I've started taking more opportunities with graduate students to be more in line with mentorship, I've now started to kind of step back and say, Okay, I need, you know, because I get assigned a lot of online courses, because I enjoy it. But being back in the classroom gives me energy. And so when I can request that I tend to do that. But really, the reality is, I'm trying to remember the fact that I didn't get into this, because of me in the first place. And I need to always be reminding myself of that. But if I'm going to be a student-centered instructor, that should penetrate my teaching decisions. And if it doesn't, and we kind of have to go back and go, Okay, well, how do we need to reevaluate and what what can we change? You know, I think I think that Soto Scholarship of Teaching and Learning gets a little bit of a bad rap. And I hate that it does, I really do hate that it does, because I believe firmly that it should be more valued at institutions and what it is, and usually a lot of times when people see SoTL as is kind of JV level research, and that you know, you're not varsity yet. All you're doing is just looking at what you're doing in the classroom. And I think SoTL done well should be in-depth critical analysis of student learning, and of, you know, actions of the instructor. And if it's, you know, subtle is not just, I observed something in my class, and I'm gonna talk about a best practice SoTL is very much, it's critical inquiry, like we're asking questions, collecting data about those questions, and then, you know, not just relying on our gut feeling or not just relying on observations but actually saying, Okay, this is this is what actually happened in the process.

So again, if you're thinking about your teaching as a whole and thinking about your teaching in terms of the decisions that you make and why wouldn't we want to have data to back up what we do. And I think that SoTL allows us, there's a, you know, a carrot to it, right? Like, you can get conference presentations and publications. And so that's part of why I think, you know, holistically people like it is because there's some extrinsic reward. But intrinsically, it allows you to step back and go, Alright, I've made this particular decision, this is interesting that we're having these results, according to grades or exams, I want to look at that a little bit a little bit deeper, and figure out kind of what's going on there. And then hopefully, that motivates you to get a little bit better and try other things. And so I think that it, it sadly, does kind of get a bad rep. And I hate that it does. But But honestly, I've found it to be extremely motivating, and kind of helps keep me focused on making good decisions in my classroom, not just decisions that I think are best, you know, based on a gut reaction, but based on data, and I think that can be really helpful.

**Tierney King 15:54**

I think there's also just so much, you know, data out there, that sometimes it's hard to dwindle down on to what's right or wrong. And that's not the right word for it, but you know, how do you kind of dive into that and find what's right or wrong?

**Michael Strawser 16:08**

That's the beauty, I think, of SoTL done well is that you can you can look at these different projects, at whatever scale and capacity you want. But usually, when I do a SoTL based project, like when I'm actually looking at what's happening in my own classroom, that's the thing, like I'm looking at what's happening in my own classroom with my own students. And so there are certain things that I can extrapolate out, and I can, you know, apply the bigger picture, but it's, it's my classroom. And you know, everybody has a little bit of a different teaching style. So it's like, no matter what type of project I'm doing, you can't replicate certain elements of the instructor and all of these different things. So I think it is hard because we're, I call what we're in right now in info demic. Like, we are just surrounded by information at all times. And so I think the best that we can do in terms of siphoning it down looking at our own world and looking at our own sphere of influence, and saying, Alright, what's happening here, not all this other periphery stuff that I don't have control over what's happening, you know, in my sphere of influence, but I think that can be really helpful. And it should motivate us to make decisions that might seem minor, in terms of our teaching, but it's, it's directly impacting our sphere of influence. And so they're no longer minor decisions, because there's legitimate impact. So it's not that we have to look at all these studies that are looking at 1,000 students across three different universities. I've got 30 students in my classroom, I did this, the student learning result was this. All right, that's interesting, let's adjust and figure out how to either incorporate more of what I did or less and kind of move on. So it is it's, it's overwhelming to think about the amount of stuff that just is available to us right now. And that's part of actually why like, so it was because I can kind of shrink my world a little bit and really think about it in terms of what's going on just in my classroom with my students. And

**Tierney King 17:56**

Then lastly, you focus on building relationships with students, and then kind of preparing them, you know, for what comes next. So how does this help you stay motivated as a teacher, but also help your students stay motivated in the classroom?

**Michael Strawser 18:09**

I believe, and this is not going to be a popular answer in terms of teaching strategies, because I don't want to minimize teaching strategies, but honestly, a lot of bad teaching can be overcome by clarity and rapport. So what I mean by that is if you are clear in your classrooms, especially online classrooms, if you're clear, and your students know what to expect, then a lot of times there will be some semblance of increased learning, because they know what's going on, and they're not confused. I think the same thing about building relationships with your students is that you know, we all have that instructor that we look back and go Well, I did not like that content. I really liked that professor. And, you know, I'm even thinking in my undergrad, you know, my game plan before the world took a different turn for me, I wanted to go to law school, and I took American constitutional law as a junior and the professor stood up day one and gave the look to your left look to your right. One of you will fail, one of you will get a C, and one of you will get an A and I remember hearing that and I thought that only happened in the movies. And I was laughing. Well he ended up being by far my favorite professor that I had. And part of the motivation honestly for quote, unquote, wanting to go to law school was because I just loved what he did. And it was awesome. And it was old school, and I learned how to think in that class. And it's tough to replicate that. And I still keep in contact with that professor, even though I went drastically different routes. So you know, I think that we need to remember, and this is really hard today, as we hear so much about faculty burnout, our students are human. Like they just they're just they're human. They're people. And when we sit there and we look at enrollment just as numbers, then we lose that humanity. And we lose the fact that all of these students to a certain extent are searching and trying to figure out what's going on. On and trying to figure out what they want to do big picture. And most of them are looking for some sort of an advocate. Like you don't have to be, you know, this, this earth shattering, world breaking counselor, like, a lot of times you need to be an advocate. And I genuinely believe that our students will work harder for us when they like us, and when we feel like or when they feel like we are for them. So if we're not trying to really build those positive relationships, and I think we, I think we've missed the mark in terms of part of part of not all, but part of what we're trying to do and thinking of my students, as people try to remind myself that they are humans with needs, and trying to just remember to be their advocate, I think, in part keeps me motivated.

**Tierney King 20:42**

And so, you know, going off of that, you know, supporting your students and kind of preparing them for what's next, how do you kind of keep students motivated and engaged? And how do you help them prepare for their future careers? In your class you had mentioned, you know, you learned about thinking in your class from a class that you didn't think you were going to learn about thinking. So, you know, they might be surprised that in your class, of whether it's public speaking, or you know, communications or anything like that, that they learn these real-life skills that they eventually bring into them with their future career. So how do you do that?

**Michael Strawser 21:18**

Alright, so I'm gonna give you another unpopular opinion. So historically, higher ed, and education in general was to prepare the individual for the next station of life. And I think I think we've we need to be careful in terms of thinking about everything we do is career building. And I think that this is part of the trap that higher education falls into is that everything has to be a skill. And so then what happens, you

know, you've got, let's say, you have a, you know, 500 people graduating from your program, and they're going to, you know, 450 different different organizations, and the organizations are coming back to the institutions saying, Well, why didn't you train them to do X, Y, and Z. And so then, holistically, the university just becomes a mini onboarding for all of these different employee employees. And I think we need to be careful of that. And so I like to think about preparation, more holistically. So I recognize, you know, it's really hard to pinpoint a list of five to seven skills that every individual needs for any particular job. And even public speaking, public speaking is a great example of that. Because, you know, five years ago, when I taught public speaking, I did not spend a lot of time teaching my students how to speak on camera, and how to how to navigate zoom. And now I have to, so what I try to think about is holistically, what are those things that I can prepare them to do? That will never go out of style? Thankfully, communication skills just happens to be a really potent and pertinent one that will always be relevant. So how can I help them think about relationship building, and connecting, and clarity and messaging, and, and persuasion, all of these things that are transferable in my mind for any particular position? But I think also like, I'm glad you brought up the class that taught me how to think again, like that's a that's a wonderful illustration of what was the technical skill. I learned how to read, you know, court briefings. Well, really, though, I was learning how to think and how to read and how to reason. And so I just think we need to latch on to those things to where, you know, career fields are always going to be changing industries are always going to be changing, what are those holistic elements that we recognize that everyone needs to succeed professionally, but also to succeed personally? And how are we preparing our students for that next station, whatever that is for them, and kind of connecting back to those, quote unquote, human skills that I think will never go out of vogue?

**Tierney King 23:45**

Yeah, and so we're gonna kind of talk about, I guess, three different kinds of points here. So kind of how you help your students prepare for their future careers. We've got, internships, we have your handbook, and then we have exploring professional development - so kind of expand on all three of those.

**Michael Strawser 24:03**

Yeah, a lot going on with that one. So I think, you know, I, again, I gave maybe the potentially unpopular opinion of it's not my job to prepare my students for a quote unquote, specific career. However, you know, we've created a system in an environment where we want them to go and get jobs like college is expensive, life is expensive, I want my students to make good money and do something that they enjoy. Don't shy away from that. One of the mechanisms that we've done to create that is, you know, we, we like for students to have internships. And what happens a lot of times at a lot of different universities is that internships kind of become this. It's simultaneously a catch all and also simultaneously like this siloed course experience that, you know, you've got 30, 40, 50, 100 different independent studies that are kind of happening all at once, and it can be a little bit of a hodgepodge in terms of what's going on. So one thing that's really cool at UCF, we have about 10 years worth of data from interns have gone throughout our program and also from there Supervisors and evaluators out in the field. And we're combing through that 10 years worth of data just about their internships, what they learn different things that they wish they would have known. And we're using that data to create basically, what I'm calling an internship experience handbook, that allows any faculty member. Now granted, it's in part, kind of more so for communication faculty, but I would argue like, we don't explicitly



state that in the handbook, and I think any particular discipline any faculty member can use this particular handbook we're developing for an internship course. But what it does is, is it provides a little bit of structure and process and procedure to the internship course. So that it's not chaotic. It's not just havoc, and you kind of have this process that you can follow to help students kind of think big picture about how they're integrating into the world of work. And so a lot of it is human scale development that we're looking at and trying to develop it also a lot of it is just technical skill, as well, and how do you actually thrive in the internship? And how do you think about it, in big picture terms of potentially, you know, applying for a full time job. They are taking these skills and making the argument that they're transferable to other positions. So I think that we shouldn't do that. I'm a proponent of experiential learning. I'm a proponent of internships. And so, you know, at least in terms of current projects is one thing I'm doing to help, you know, keep me motivated in the classroom is thinking about internships, and kind of really preparing my students for what's next.

**Tierney King 26:27**

Is your handbook available for like everyone did us and kind of where would they find that?

**Michael Strawser 26:32**

Sure, so the publisher is Cognella, and I think it should be early 2024 when it's launched, but the title just going to be Internship Experience Handbook, and very literally, Tierney, like we developed in such a way that it is multidisciplinary, like almost any discipline, that doesn't internship course, I think could utilize the resource.

**Tierney King 26:53**

The last one was kind of, you know, exploring that professional development. I guess, kind of just expand on you know, what options are what you do specifically to help students implore like exploring professional development and kind of going back to to rooting for them and supporting them? How do you kind of support them on that journey so that they find something that they love to do?

**Michael Strawser 27:16**

So this is another like, this is a little bit of a catch 22, right, because theoretically, the university in many ways, functions as professional development. And I have students who look at me and they'll say, hey, I want to do you know, X, Y, or Z, and I'll go, hey, you know, what I know of a really good certification program that you should think about. They'll go certification? What am I paying you for? And I'm going, okay, well, let's, let's think big picture here, right? So I think a lot of it is helping students think about truly what is valuable in terms of their own professional development. So trying to help them think about the fact that not all content is good content. That's even, you know, like LinkedIn learning things that you can do. There's a sliding scale of some that I've done that have been really good. And other ones, I'm going Oh, my goodness gracious, I wouldn't want anybody to take this. So I think it's helping students, honestly, in some ways with information literacy, to say, look, if you want to upskill, if you want to do all these kind of things and do you better, here are a couple of different doorways that you might think about. But the reality is, is that, let's siphon it down. And let's think about technical skills. Like I've got a lot of students right now, obviously asking about AI and AI positions. I don't necessarily feel comfortable teaching them how to use AI. I use it, I'm familiar with it, but I'm not, you know, the guy to sit there and go, Hey, let me let me prepare you for using AI in the workplace. So how can I listen to

them, hear what's going on, and then really kind of point them in the right direction to say, hey, here's some different options that seem like they are credible options, that also will have some sort of a value added in terms of, you know, big picture career. But it is interesting that I think a lot of times, you know, we look at generational data, and Gen Zers especially, tell their employers like they love learning opportunities, they love professional development, and they do and so how can we help them find good opportunities that reinforce kind of that big picture career desire whenever that is.

**Tierney King 29:12**

I guess kind of lastly is you know, there anything else you want instructors to know and whether that's about staying motivated in their own careers, whether it's about student careers, or just anything else in general?

**Michael Strawser 29:22**

Yeah, I'm gonna give you four that I think are really helpful and not a cure all any of them. And I feel like these are not volcanic either. Like these are not earth shattering but you know, what helps me honestly, I love finding other creative outlets. I love kind of looking big picture. Like for me, I started you know, a training and consulting business and I like to think about how to market that and how to get different opportunities and that it's another, a creative outlet for me. I forced myself. I get that a lot of pure graphic designers look at Canva and say, Oh, I can't believe I had to teach myself Canva, I'm not creative when it comes to anything visual. I'm so bad at it, and I had to force myself to go back and teach myself some different things to kind of think about user experience all different types. So the other thing that I would say is, number one is find other creative outlets. The second I think, is I just would encourage my colleagues to read, and I'm not talking like reading the most recent academic journal that's come out in your field, I'm talking read fiction, like I just finished David Copperfield. And I mean, I just I've loved going back and reading the classics. Like I finished Les Miserables earlier this year. Read some fiction, like, we're okay, we can take a deep breath. And we don't always have to be sitting there thinking about what's current, quote, unquote, in our field, but we can go back and we can read good stories and good narratives that resonate, and that inspire and motivate. So that's number two. So number one, creative elements. Number two, read. I think, number three, is I just would encourage my colleagues to just take a deep breath and take a walk, like, it's okay to like you can get out and you can do some different things. You know, being a faculty member is unashamedly flexible. And so you can go out and you can kind of take a break during the day and you can go out and you can take a walk, and you can enjoy some vitamin D coming from that sun. So I think that's number three. And then number four, I would say that, that one of the things that's helped me in terms of a mantra, I like to think of my teaching as something entrepreneurial, and what do entrepreneurs do? They innovate, they make something their own, they recognize needs, and they try to develop elements to fit certain needs. And I think if we start thinking about our teaching, in terms of, you know, this big element that we can make our own to serve specific needs of a population be a little bit more entrepreneurial in our spirit, I think that will kind of have some different state of mind state of being changes for faculty members.

**Tierney King 32:00**

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