

## Episode 407: 3 Truths to Equip You In Your Calling

### 00:00 Introduction to Teaching Challenges

Linda Kardamis (00:00)

Teaching can be really challenging sometimes. And today we're gonna talk about three truths that can help equip and encourage you in your calling. Well, welcome back to the Teach for the Heart podcast, where we tackle teaching challenges from a biblical perspective. This episode is brought to you in partnership with the Herzog Foundation. Well,

Julie today is joining me, and we are so excited about our upcoming Rise Up Summit. And Julie, I know you've picked some.

Amazing clips from some of our favorite sessions that are gonna have some key truths that we think teachers wanna hear. So thank you so much for joining us. Thank you so much for all the work you've done getting this summit ready.

Julie Gouthier (00:39)

Yeah, of course. I'm excited. I really hope it's gonna be beneficial for all of our teachers and we're just really excited.

Linda Kardamis (00:45)

Yeah. And so the summit is actually starting today. So if you haven't signed up yet, go to [riseupchristianeducators.com](https://riseupchristianeducators.com). Sign up. It's completely free to attend all week long. We have amazing topics on classroom management, on avoiding burnout, and on reaching today's students. So you're not gonna want to miss it. Hop on over there and join us this week. But today we're gonna be, as I said, listening to a few clips from some of our favorite sessions. and we're gonna kind of be talking about them. So Julie's prepared some.

Clips and she's gonna kind of play them for us and then we're gonna kind of discuss them here together. Julie, anything teachers should kind of be aware of before we dive into these clips?

Julie Gouthier (01:24)

Yeah, I'm just excited because this is the first time I think we've ever done like a sneak peek before the summit. So we may have a different audience today. So if this is your first time ever being here, welcome. We're so excited you're here. and we know that teaching is harder than ever. We've all been through it ourselves and we've been in the trenches. We know the world is very loud and has a lot of opinions about us and our jobs. And so we've picked these three little nuggets of wisdom that we hope will just really encourage you in your calling.

Linda Kardamis (01:53)

Yeah, so I can't wait to dive into these. Julie, tell us what we're gonna hear. What do we need to know as we look at this first clip?

Julie Gouthier (02:00)

Yeah, so this first one comes from Dr. John Delony. Yes, the Dr. John Delony is gonna be at our summit. It comes from his session, which is Building a Non-Anxious Life. So in this clip, Linda and John were discussing how teaching is very self-sacrificing. We get so caught up in trying to be perfect and we spend all day caring for others that at the end of the day we just have no room for ourselves or for our families, which we know are the most important things.

## **02:27 Teacher Truth #1: Teaching is Part of Who You Are**

so we just get so consumed in our work and our teacher life that we're gonna be failing elsewhere. So this first teacher truth is teaching is part of who you are, not all of who you are.

Linda Kardamis (02:40)

All right, so let's listen to that together and then we'll see what we take away from it.

Dr. John Delony (02:44)

I'll take myself back. My wife was a teacher, like a third grade teacher was her very first job. And when we got married, I had no understanding of what it meant to be married to a teacher. She left before I got up and she was not done until 7 p.m. And this is this is 20 years ago, right? This is not this year. And she took teaching very seriously. And so

just her coming home. I didn't I didn't create a hospitable home for her because I didn't understand what her job demands were. And man, in the last twenty years it's just gotten infinitely worse. And so I think I think any of us with any job at any time, I think it's important for us to declare an identity of who we are. And that has to be separate from the thing we do every day. And it's so easy in our current culture, what are you gonna be when you grow up? What do you do? who are like

That's how we define ourselves. I'm a teacher. I'm a counselor. I'm a psychologist. I'm a whatever. And I always want people to disassociate their identity from that. If you're a person of faith, that's your identity. If you're a spouse, that's your identity. If you're a parent, that's your identity. And then all this other stuff we do, and that sounds trite, but so many people that I meet, I shake their hand and I say, Hey, I'm John, and they say, Hi, I'm so and so. I'm a teacher at such and such elementary school or such and such high school.

And that tells me right away, that's how you define yourself. And when you define yourself with a with an identity that is constantly getting picked apart in the media by every parent, by the kids, by your administrators, by if you're a person of faith, if you're teaching in faith based education, I've spent mi

most of my career there. My goodness, the stakes are so much higher. If if I teach you wrong, not only do you not know math.

Your eternal salvation may be on the block, right? That's so much for an identity to carry, right? And so I want people to kind of clear the deck and say, ask themselves, who am I? And what roles come first? And if you're a person of faith, that comes first. If you're a spouse, that comes a close second. If you're a parent, that comes after being a spouse. And then what you do, we'll figure that stuff out later. And I know that sounds trite, but I had to flip.

the script in my head. I'm not a teacher. I'm not a coach. In fact, I was a coach before I was a teacher, right? I'm not a coach. I'm not a teacher. I'm not a professor. I'm a husband. I'm a Christian guy. I'm a dad. And I'm gonna focus my am I doing this really great energy there. And then I'm gonna work really hard with excellence at my job. But man, that's not gonna define me.

Linda Kardamis (05:22)

Wow, Julie, that was a great clip. I feel like that I remember that was such a great part of that interview. And you guys are not gonna want to miss that whole session with Dr. John Delony But I I know I personally went through like a an identity crisis with teaching, particularly when I was having my first child and I was stepping away. I was like kind of like, who am I without teaching? And I do think that when we tie so much of our identity to teaching, not only is that not good for our soul and our family and all those aspects, but it also makes us so

susceptible to just defeat and discouragement, right? Because if anything attacks that identity, if anyone says something or, you know, then then it's not just, you know, so and so thought this or here's an area I need to improve. It's my identity is being attacked. And so I think that's I think that was a a wonderful clip.

Julie Gouthier (06:09)

Mm-hmm. And I know like I teach Sunday school, so I'm dealing with high school girls every week and we tell them, you don't define yourself by sports or grades or what other people say about you. But a lot of times as adults, we do the same thing. We tell our kids, you know, you're you're more than that grade you made on that test, or the fact that you didn't win this football game. But we do the same thing. We tend to judge ourselves based on our evaluations or how well our students did in our tests.

Or if we struggle with certain areas of classroom management, but when your identity is in Christ, that doesn't change day to day, right? And so focusing on who you are and teaching is part of us, but it's not all of who we are. And so I love that he brought that up and y'all dove into that topic. And so like I say, we could put a lot of expectations on ourselves as teachers.

**07:01 Teacher Truth #2: Never Assume Students Just Know**

And sometimes we can put a lot of expectations on our students too, which brings us to our second teacher truth, which comes from Michelle Holliday's session, five common classroom management mistakes. So let's jump right into this clip.

Linda Kardamis (07:14)

All right, another mistake you talk about is assuming that students just know what to do. can you talk a little bit more about that?

Michele Holiday (07:22)

Right. this revelation came to me early in the gosh, early in my teaching, where I just assumed I started teaching

great the grade level I started teaching was high school, believe it or not. So I'm I went like backwards. So I started teaching high school, then I went to middle and then elementary. but what I thought was that, well, they're like high school, they're older, they should know. And what I realized after having an authentic conversation about why they're doing what they're doing or what's going on, is like they really had no idea.

They had no idea of how to respond when things are challenging or when they're embarrassed or when they think they should know something but they don't, or when a peer says something that annoys them or frustrates them or you know makes them feel isolated. And so what happens is the negative behaviors were showing up, but they had no idea of how to use appropriate positive behaviors in response. And so what I learned and is that if we teach our students

how to respond, then you will see better behavior. So I stopped assuming because they're a certain grade level, because they're a certain size, because they're in school that they know. And this also again goes back to our culture. back in the day we we could kind of rely on, you know, families and and parents teaching certain basic how to follow direction behavior. I I I know it sounds weird, you know, but

We could rely on that. That is just not the case anymore for a vast amount of our students. So the key is for me is I when I come into a classroom, or when I start a year, I never assume they know how to do the things I expect them to do. I just don't assume it. What I do is I teach it in a fun, engaging, relative way. So they're like, hmm.

Okay, I can do this. Hmm. I know what she's looking for. Hmm. I know how to be successful in this classroom this year. So I would say don't assume they know. Regardless of like I had one student, he was like 6'4 in middle school. I can't assume 6'4 knows how to act. I have at least not everything. I have to teach it.

Linda Kardamis (09:29)

Yeah. Yeah, that makes so much sense. And I think that yeah, it's it helps us not to get frustrated, right? Because I mean we wish we wish, but wishing doesn't change anything. They're

Michele Holiday (09:41)

No.

Linda Kardamis (09:41)

just expecting it. And then right, they often don't. They don't realize even sometimes simple things like you know, your procedures or just what it what

Michele Holiday (09:47)

Yes. Yeah.

Linda Kardamis (09:50)

what kind of talking level you want. Even little things like that, it can change

Michele Holiday (09:53)

Yes.

Linda Kardamis (09:53)

from class into classroom. And so

if we are not clear with them, there's just just no way.

that we can expect them to know. So that's super helpful. don't assume that they know what to do. Teach it. Work with them. That's great.

Julie Gouthier (10:08)

So that was our teacher truth number two. Never assume students just know. So Linda, y'all had a great conversation. Did you have any takeaways from that?

Linda Kardamis (10:18)

Yeah, I mean, I think that's just a continually a reminder. I know when we work with teachers in Classroom Management 101, we are, you know, that's one of the things we start with is let's clarify our expectations. Cause I do think, especially as high school teachers, I think the older their students are, the more we do just assume they should know how to behave. But we have to take out that should and say if we want to expect a certain behavior, we have to make sure it's very clear. And that's helpful for us. It helps helpful for the students. And it's just, it's just worth that little extra effort. I I think that's make.

makes such a difference. And we've heard so many teachers that we've worked with. Yes. Getting that clarity for yourself and then for your students, it really does. And yeah, don't I encourage you guys once again, if if classroom management is at all a struggle for you guys, make sure you hop on over into the summit. we have a whole section on classroom management and Michelle's session was really, really amazing.

Julie Gouthier (11:48)

Yeah, and I love that you said to not get frustrated because we do. Like I taught eighth grade. So at that age, I'm like, okay, you know how to sit still in your chair, but not everyone was blessed with maybe a set of parents or caregivers who would teach them even basic life skills. And that does follow them all throughout the ages. And so I think just reminding ourselves, okay, take a deep breath, like give the kid grace, give yourself grace, just start over, teach from the beginning.

And it'll all be okay. So I think that it can be a lot of pressure for teachers to feel like we have to anticipate everything and get everything right, which brings us to our final and third truth, which comes from Dave Stuart's session, how to get your students to care about learning. So in this clip, Linda and Dave are discussing how there's a lot of pressure to be a perfect teacher or the favorite teacher or the cool teacher, but really it's more than that.

The kids don't need that from you. So our third teacher truth is you don't have to be a perfect teacher, just a credible one.

### **12:45 Teacher Truth #3: You Don't Have to Be a Perfect Teacher**

Dave Stuart Jr. (12:54)

whether a student is a judgmental kind of kid or not, whether they're doing it consciously or unconsciously, they're always sort of curious about is do I have a good teacher right now? So the way I tell teachers to think about this is you have to imagine yourself as a being who's constantly emitting signals to your students that pertain to your credibility. You're constantly sending these signals.

And they are often unconsciously receiving these signals and using them to come to a care, a determination of credibility. A determination of credibility.

So so this is the this is what I call the CCP of credibility. So when, yeah, picture your kid coming home from school and complaining about a teacher. they're usually going to complain in one of these three areas. They're going to complain that maybe the teacher is mean or standoffish or unapproachable. So that's going to be related to care.

Like the teacher's care for the student? Does the teacher signal care to the student? oftentimes, my own kids when they complain about a teacher, it has to do with competence. Like the teacher's just really confusing. They go too fast, they go too slow, or you know, classroom behavior is all over the place. All this comes down to the teacher's competence as perceived by the student.

And the last one would be passion. Like, is there urgency? Is there a zeal? Is there a fire in the belly of this teacher? Is there a sense that today's lesson really matters? So those three things I

really think is all a teacher needs to start thinking about improving the degree to which just their presence, what they do with students, is increasing their credibility with students. This is not about manipulation.

It's not about convincing the kids of anything. It's about signaling to the kids that something is true. And what we're trying to signal to them is true is that we are good teachers.

and I just think that's such an important one for teachers to understand. Anything on that competence list that I showed, including classroom management, those are all just improvable domains of skill. And a lot of teachers just get in their head like, No, I can't get better at managing fifth hour because these kids or because of my personality. And that's gonna be a self-defeating mindset. You know, that's gonna

That's gonna diminish your ability to care and be motivated to work on your classroom management. So you gotta get those thoughts out of your head and just say it's an improvable domain of skill. There's no silver bullets. You're never you're never gonna get to a place, I don't think, where just every class is equally easy to manage perfectly. You gotta get that out of your head. But you can certainly gain a lot of sense and just a a knack for classroom management through working on it.

Linda Kardamis (15:36)

I love that clip, Julie. I mean, our conversation with Dave went really deep in a whole bunch of areas where we're talking about, you know, how do you get students to care about learning? And as you said in the truth, you don't have to be a perfect teacher. We we have to let go of that vision. We will never be perfect. That that cannot and should not be the goal. But this idea of credibility, I I think is something that we don't I don't know, we don't often think about it that way. but I think it's really, really powerful because just it it and it it

Dave teaches it as the baseline of student motivation. If they believe they have a credible teacher the more credible they see their teacher as, that it's good they're gonna be more motivated. Or if they don't feel like their teacher is credible, it's gonna be harder for them to learn and harder to be motivated. And I think that's something that's just really worth paying attention to.

because like none of us have arrived as teachers, right? Like there's always opportunity to become more competent, to make sure students know we care, to let our passion shine through. So kind of honestly looking at ourselves and saying, Yeah, like where do I fall on this? And are there areas where, like, yeah, I could be better at that? And also on the flip side, to be encouraged by the fact that like all the work I'm putting into just being a good teacher, like that is making a difference. It is over time helping students. and so, you know, not to feel like, you know, I

we shouldn't be crushed by that, but kind of excited by the fact that this I I can work on this, I can get better. And as I get better, all of that is gonna help students in so many areas, but particularly in that area that sometimes feels so elusive of student motivation.

Julie Gouthier (17:08)

Mm-hmm. And some of those areas too, like you talked about the, you know, the three areas, it's you're gonna naturally be stronger in some areas and weaker in others. That's just the way God designed us with strengths and weaknesses. So you can't expect to be a hundred percent perfect in all three spots. But like you say, it's good to know where you land, what areas you can work on. And I love that he said you can improve. It's you know, it's not that way for the rest of your life. Like you should know, be self-reflective. and we have a whole session on being self-reflective, by the way.

and yeah, just take those things, grow on them, improve and it's never gonna be perfect, but you just wanna be a credible teacher and show that you care and that you know your stuff. And so I absolutely love this session.

Linda Kardamis (17:49)

Yeah, there's so many, so many great sessions. Yeah, these three that you pulled are were our three of my favorites, but there's so many more in there too. So you guys are not gonna wanna miss all these sessions. we had principal Lamb with us to talk about student accountability. That was an amazing session. I I I if I start listing them, it's gonna be too many and I'm gonna miss some, but there's just I'm really excited about all the sessions. So

I realize depending on when you're I think we're releasing this episode a little early. So depending on if you're listening to this right when it released, we the summit opens Monday. So you might not quite be ready to hop over there. but definitely go sign up, be ready. And then yeah, so many exciting sessions releasing this coming week.

Julie Gouthier (18:28)

Well, we hope you guys really enjoyed these sneak peeks. I know I had fun digging through all of the sessions to pull out these clips. And remember, these are just little nuggets from the whole session. That's not even what the whole session was about. Those were just a few little truths we wanted you to take away. So if you want to get the full conversation, absolutely join us Monday, November 2nd and for the rest of the week. We really hope to see you there.

Linda Kardamis (18:50)

Well guys, thank you so much for being with us. This episode is brought to you in partnership with the Herzog Foundation. All views and opinions are our own and don't necessarily reflect those of the Herzog Foundation. We look forward to being with you again soon and we hope to see you at the summit. In the meantime, remember God is at work in you and through you, and He's using you to make a difference. Keep your eyes on him and teach for the heart.