

Episode 39: Second MI Practitioner forum with Antonio

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CASAT: Lions and Tigers and Bears MI is brought to you through a collaboration between The Mountain Plains ATTC and NFARtec. In episode 39, Paul and Amy welcomed their second guest in the MI Practitioners Forum series. For Episode resources, links to episodes, contact us and other information, please visit the Lions and Tigers Bears MI website at mtplainsattc.org/podcast.

Paul Warren: Lions and Tigers and Bears MI is an interactive podcast focused on the evidence based practice of motivational interviewing, a method of communication that guides toward behavior change while honoring autonomy.

Amy Shanahan: I'm Amy Shanahan.

Paul Warren: And I'm Paul Warren.

Amy Shanahan: And we've worked together over the past 10 years. We've been facilitating MI learning collaboratives and providing trainings and coaching sessions focused on the adoption and refinement of MI. We're also members of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers. Join us in this adventure into the forest where we explore and get curious about what lies behind the curtain of MI.

Paul Warren: Hello, Amy.

Amy Shanahan: Hello, Paul. How are you?

Paul Warren: I'm well, thank you. And I'm broadcasting from the Connecticut studio.

Amy Shanahan: Well, I'm at my, I'm in my Pittsburgh studio today. Sometimes I'm in Chautauqua, New York. yeah, we have a special guest, I think, all the way across the United, States today.

Paul Warren: We do. And before I, I turn it over to let him introduce himself, I have to say that, our guest, Antonio Ramirez, is a colleague of mine whom I've had the great opportunity to be in a number of learning communities with. And I have to admit, when we came up with this idea to speak to practitioners, Antonio was one of the first people I thought of, that I wanted to invite, as a guest to join our conversation. and I have to say, you know, given my experience being in learning communities with Antonio, some, of the most thoughtful and insightful observations. And again, Antonio, we're really, really delighted to have you join the podcast. And, I'm going to turn it over to you to introduce yourself and, tell us a little bit about where you're working right now and, and then we'll get into what we're going to focus on today.

Antonio Ramirez: Okay? first of all, Grand Rising or Good morning, Top of the morning. my name is Antonio Edward Ramirez. I'm a substance abuse counselor, drug court liaison for a nonprofit by the name of Asian American Drug and Alcohol Program, located in Inglewood, California. I've been doing this for a little over four, almost five years. I started off as a, volunteer From a volunteer I went to a internship. From an internship I went from a peer support specialist and from a peer support specialist I became, I promoted to a substance abuse counselor. and they transfer me over from just substance abuse to drug, court. So that's what I do on a consistent basis now I also

facilitate groups, like life skills, domestic violence, relapse prevention, and anger management. I also, in my community, I also take lead and secretary a 12 step group, for my agency to help my clients outside of the agency just find out who they are and what the community can offer. So I try to give back as much as I can. Somebody helped me. So I don't, I don't, I feel like it's the best thing for me to do in my life. Help someone else.

Paul Warren: Like they say, the only way to keep it is to give it away.

Antonio Ramirez: Exactly, exactly, exactly. And I feel better about myself at the end of the day. You know, they say if you love what you do, you never work a day in your life. So.

Amy Shanahan: Well, welcome to the podcast. I'm just getting to know you, Antonio, just like the listeners are. So I look forward to learning more and know that you're giving away to the mi, community your experience with motivational interviewing and how you've used it in your various beautiful roles helping people.

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Amy Shanahan: I do have to take a personal note here. Listeners cannot see any of us, but I noticed that you and Paul have complementary colors on like Buffalo Bills colors. Because I'm from Buffalo, New York, but hey, you know, and I have black. I don't know what, why I felt the need to point that out, but go, go Bills.

Paul Warren: Well, okay, yeah, if that works for you, Annie, that's, that's great.

Antonio Ramirez: Keep working it.

Amy Shanahan: Keep working. I don't know that I mentioned the bills once on our, 38 or nine episodes of Lions, Tigers and Bears.

Paul Warren: I think you have not. I think you have not.

Amy Shanahan: So there you have it.

Paul Warren: Antonio, would it be okay if I asked you a follow up question?

Antonio Ramirez: Sure, go ahead.

Paul Warren: So this podcast and this particular,

Paul Warren: group of episodes of the podcast is really focusing on practitioners using motivational interviewing and you know, given our prior experience together in learning communities, I'm just wondering if you would say a little bit by way of introduction about your use of motivational interviewing in the actual work that you're doing.

Antonio Ramirez: Oh, in the beginning I, wasn't a big fan of it because I didn't understand. Was advised by my director of my program that gave me an opportunity at this Agency. she told me I may need to start attending these trainings. Right. from a facilitator by the name of Dr. Freeze. Yeah. And, it was an in person training. I kind of personalized the way he spoke to me. but when I look back at it, he was only trying to teach me. He was trying to show me what MI is all about. See, I came in already with a whole bunch of expectations. And that's why I say I don't do that. in the past when you

guys asked me that question, because he really enlightened me on the style of the conversation of MI M and how to build rapport before addressing the problem. And I remember he told me, early on, when the clients come in, spend a few minutes just connecting with the client. Don't, don't talk about the substance abuse. You know, don't. Don't come in and say, well, why'd you relapse? You know, that. And, and I took that personal like, well, what? And, you know, I was so robotic. I was so robotic with my approach. And then this. I was just free flowing and facilitating a group. And it was people from different agencies and, and it just enlightened me. It opened my eyes, you know. And then he also told me about asking permission before giving advice. You know, so these were things that I learned early on with the motivational interviewing. And then after a while, it just became contagious. I wanted to continue any session or any, you know, I met Paul through mi. I met a few other people through mi. Then SAPSY has a MI session that they do every year. So any opportunity to be involved in motivational interviewing. I do my best to attend.

Amy Shanahan: I'm curious. Antonio. I love that story. because we hear that a lot. Folks are, sometimes voluntold to go to a training or encouraged, if you will, by their supervisors and have similar travels, as you. And I don't know if you use this word, but, I'll use my own interpretation of. You were skeptical when you walked in because you had preconceived notions or your own expectations about communicating because of your journey. I'm curious. Can you pinpoint when it shifted for you? Like you were a little defensive maybe when Dr. Freese was nudging, you along and offering you the MI stuff, what was it that made you go, okay, they might be onto something here? Do you have any notion of that?

Antonio Ramirez: I would say it was the second time I went to a training. The first time I really didn't I had to come to the training. And then when I came to the training, I had to

come to understand. And as I came to understand, I think, you know, it's like that Spider man movie, with Miles Morales. When, Miles Morales, I hate to

Amy Shanahan: say it, but that's just my, what they think analogies.

Antonio Ramirez: Yes. And he asked Spider Man, Peter Parker, when do I become Spider Man? And he said, I don't know. You'll know when you get it. So I really don't know.

Amy Shanahan: I love it.

Antonio Ramirez: I just knew when I got it, it started to flow. And my director and my, my coordinators, a couple of my supervisors, they asked me that too. You know, they was like, you know, when did you get that? You know, like, how did do that? I know, I just go. They say you go to a lot of ML trainings. I said, I try my best. You know, I don't know it all, you know, but, I think every time I leave a training or a session,

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Antonio Ramirez: I learned something new that I can incorporate within my toolbox. so, you know, I think that's key. this, this, this industry that I'm in continues to evolve.

Amy Shanahan: Yeah.

Antonio Ramirez: You know, so I could never have it all figured out. There's always something that I could put in my pocket that I can say that's a gem or something I could put on the shelf for later purposes, if that makes sense.

Amy Shanahan: The beautiful Spider man analogy. I love you. Yeah.

Paul Warren: Yeah.

Paul Warren: And you know, Antonio, you really reminded me in telling that story, because I didn't know that, but telling that story really reminded me. I think they're early on in my relationship with motivational interviewing. There was definitely a period of time when I only knew the outside of it. I didn't know it from the inside. And I can't really, I can't pinpoint for myself when that changed for me. but it's definitely been an evolution, that it's just gotten deeper and deeper and, and I share your experience. And that's why I'm glad you and I have been in so many learning communities together. Because anytime I'm with folks talking about motivational interviewing or practicing motivational interviewing, I get something my understanding or my practice gets deeper.

Antonio Ramirez: Absolutely. And I'll say that about you too. Also. All of the sessions that I've had with you, as far as facilitating and listening to you do your, your groups, I've always been able to identify with something. It's like watching a. Ah, good. That's where you watch the movie but every time you watch the movie, you're able to play the tape back and you're able to pick up something that you missed the last time or that you might not have taken into consideration. So now you are able to absorb it because you already got the other stuff figured out that, you know that's coming. But I said, oh, okay, that's something I need to. I need to capture that. Do you understand? So I'm able to pepper. Pepper those little things in when I meet with my clients.

Amy Shanahan: You know, it reminds me of going through my process and I still am learning. I'm always learning. Am I? Just like you, Antonio. I go. I even have the. Have these podcast episodes, and I take a morsel away that there's something that I'm

hearing for the first time or relearning it or hearing it for the hundredth time, and it sticks a different way, that it's an ongoing practice because I have said not. Not about the Buffalo Bills, but about playing a musical instrument, that, you know, it's. It's always practicing, always practicing, always sharpening our skills and. And picking up something new or different.

Antonio Ramirez: And I believe repetition is key. So, I say that a lot. you know, there's a certain requirement for my agency for certain sessions and that we have to attend throughout the year. That's just part of the business. But I put it to a next level because I believe, by interacting and, you know, school I look at is research and training sessions. I look at it as, just a collage of networking people to be able to bounce ideas off of each other. I discovered that with the case conferences that I go to, and then I also have, a, meeting that I go to with a bunch of counselors and, you know, lphas and you know, social workers, and we're able to have conversation about the things that we, interact with on a daily basis at work. So, I believe iron sharp is iron, and it works for me that way. I don't know what works for the next person, but I know it works for me.

Paul Warren: Yeah. And I have to tell you again, and I think this is, you know, why I've benefited so much from our collaboration. Repetition also really works for me, and it helps me to get sort of a, deeper and deeper, and I'm kind of repeating myself, but it does help me to get a deeper understanding of something that, you know, I understood part of it, but then there's this whole other. It's almost like the tip of the iceberg, sort of. You know, when I first started my experience with motivational interviewing, I had kind of an understand. I'm getting a thumbs up in regard to that. I had, like, I understood a little bit of the. The top of the iceberg, which for me was. Or. And then, you know, it just started to get bigger and bigger and bigger. And, you know, mi spirit is probably. It's funny because it can be the most natural thing in the world, and

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Paul Warren: yet it can also be one of the most absent things in a conversation.

Amy Shanahan: Elusive.

Paul Warren: Yes, that's even a better word. Elusive. It's almost as good as the word morsel, which I appreciated that you used, Amy. It made me think of chocolate chip cookies and taking something delicious away from every conversation.

Antonio Ramirez: Yeah, true. But what I've also learned is, How should I put this? I've learned to reflect more than ask questions. Does that make sense?

Paul Warren: Yes.

Antonio Ramirez: In the beginning. In the beginning, I would ask a million and one questions. Right. And they become a little overwhelming for the client sometimes. Some people can adapt to it, and some people, like, look, you know, it's time for me to go. you know, it was a great, you know, no disrespect. And some people would just immediately shut down.

Paul Warren: Right.

Antonio Ramirez: So. So I found out in this process that, you know, I always go back to these two movies that I. I watched. Goodwill, Hunting, and, Searching for Antoine Fisher, where these. These. These. These, clinicians, Denzel Washington and Robin Williams were dealing with clients, but they barely said anything.

Amy Shanahan: Yeah.

Antonio Ramirez: You ever watched the movie? It really didn't say anything. Yeah, until Will. Until, what's, Matt Damon and. And Derek Luke, the other two actors opened up and said, when are you gonna say something? But they were listening the whole time.

Amy Shanahan: I love it. So.

Antonio Ramirez: So I've learned from that. You know, I use life experiences and things that I go through in my life to be able to look at that and say, well, how can I utilize that in my life? And what I found out in this process, it's not about me. You know, we've spoke about this a lot, Paul. When some people. Some people believe that I have to share about me, I don't have to share about me, and I don't want to. And, you know, I don't think this is necessary. I think what it is, is I keep it on, you know, because it's not about my story. It's about your story. And. And, you know, I believe empathy also. I want to Say this, and I'm gonna drop the mic. And, Empathy is like entering someone else's world. Right? You're on a trip, you're experiencing what they've been through. So I have no right to tell them when to stop, you know, when, you know, slow down. No, I just need to take in was what I'm experiencing. And through that process, don't get me wrong, I'll figure out some things along the way. And I'm, I'm also. I'm also collecting information. You know, I'm. I'm playing. I'm playing detective. I'm observing, and I'm reporting because I need to know the pros, the cons, the good, the bad, the ugly, the indifferent. I need to see everything. Right? that's my process. and I'm still learning this. This is not something I've perfected, but through trial and error, I found that this works in that other process that I came in with, if that makes sense.

Paul Warren: Yeah.

Amy Shanahan: You know, you mentioned three movies already, Antonio. So listeners might be watching Spider Man, Good Will Hunting, and Antoine Fisher because they're great connections to things. And I wonder if it was intentional that you talked about shifting from lots of questioning to using reflections and then identifying the notion of empathy and walking in someone's world, which I love that visual. We're walking in their world. We're walking alongside them in their journey. I wonder if that's really something that you did intentionally, because I know some people think questions are good and there's a place for them, and certainly there are. but you just tied in that really good listening, Antoine Fisher movie and Good Will Hunting and reflecting instead of questioning is really a big part of our expression of empathy. I'm here with you. I'm listening. I don't need to be doing the talking.

Antonio Ramirez: Right. But also, we have to look at the instance that the listening or the active listening is. I'm listening for the change talk. I'm listening for the change talk. I'm listening for the reason why this person really, you know, because ambivalence is key when it comes in. It's not a bad thing. It's not a good thing. It's just we're people, you know, and they want to know about themselves, and I'm here to help them. My job is not to tell them what to do. My job is to give them suggestions. Right. I'm a guide in this process. But they make the final decision. I tell them that all the time. You make the final decision. I'm just here to support your decisions. I'm not here. I struggle with that. And it would be a tug of war early on. I don't do that anymore. You know, even when I facilitate groups with mi, I let the clients take over. You know, I know how to keep it on the topic, and I know how to redirect them back to the topic. But I'm not trying to fix manager control. Those days are over with. that was a. That was a crash and burn syndrome. It didn't work, so we threw it away. And now I'm incorporating different approaches through this in my practice. and it's been encouraged by my, director and m. My supervisor that it works, you know, because they see

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Antonio Ramirez: the numbers have improved, not just through my facilitation, but with my caseload. And another thing about MI That I learned is that it's not just about the clients that are on my caseload. It's about the clients that interact with me when they walk through my door at my agency. They don't have to be on my caseload.

Paul Warren: Beautiful.

Paul Warren: Yeah. You know, Antonio, you prompt me to want to. And I don't want us to get too far away from kind of the practice focus, but I cannot resist to sort of throw this idea out to you and Amy, because you've identified, I think, very accurately the really critical role of listening and how the. And the connection that Amy made that you. You drew so clearly the connection between listening attentive, present listening as an expression of empathy and as an expression of respect to that person. And the thing I want to bounce off you and Amy is that. Because I think there can be a misconception with some folks that motivational interviewing is exclusively about listening. And, of course, if you think about the overall whole practice, there's also intentional talking that we do do at particular times when we are working with somebody in practicing motivational interviewing. So. So I. I cannot underline enough the importance that you made between the listening and empathy. And I want to open it up to you and Amy about where the intentional talking comes in and what your thoughts are about that. Because, you know, knowing you as I know you, Antonio, there are, of course, times when you do intentionally, probably talk with your consumers, your. Your patients, or your clients. So I just want to put that on the floor, too, before we kind of maybe move into the. The practice part of what we'll talk about.

Antonio Ramirez: I mean, well, to be honest with you, what I've learned also, too, is how to explore that ambivalence that I talked about earlier without trying to eliminate it, you know, I don't need to focus on that. My job is not to change you overnight, you know, and it may. It's a slow cook. I say it all the time. Some of the things that I've seen. Paul has heard me say it before. It's a slow cook. Things taste better in the oven than they do in a microwave. you know, them external issues are so cosmetic. It's the internal issues that my clients struggle with. You know, you know, for example, I had a client that, he told me I had 150,000, you know, put away and I want to use. And I said, okay, okay, I understand that. He said, but I don't want to. He said, I would rather come see you. And I had to respect that. He has money in the bank from his parents passing away. He know he's going to do something with it. So I gave him the option of, what do you think would be the best thing for you to do in this point? Not me telling him, you need to do this. No, I don't need to hit him across the head with the hammer. Because one of the things that I've learned is when you come back to rolling with that resistance, is they'll find the answers. The clients have the keys. They just got to find it. Once they find the key and they unlock the situation, it's a, it's a new, it's a new opportunity for them to explore. Right. And I found that within myself. When they push back or when they argue or when they, become, resistant or rebellious. That's okay. That's okay. I've had clients come back and apologize to me, oh, I'm sorry about yesterday. I didn't mean. And I'm like, man, I'm not even thinking about that anymore. You know, how are you doing today? That's more important, you know? And I've learned these, these MI skills, too, from dealing with people in domestic violence and dealing with people in anger management, because the sessions become a little intense based on the topics. So I, I, I have to know how to navigate myself. You know, I've worked in a lot of situations, where it's 25 to 30 people in a class, you know, and, that took time, man. It took time. So that's why I lean more to motivational, interviewing, because it helps me identify with the clients as opposed to me trying to tell them what to do, if that makes sense.

Amy Shanahan: You know, One of my, one of Our colleagues, I'll, name her because she said Hillary. Hillary Logan says, what parts of MI are you using when you're doing that? When you were talking, Antonio, to Paul's question about listening. Well, and reflective listening. And then the when is the talking piece, you just actually showcased it, really having a conversation with somebody about they got some money and where are they at with it. Instead of making assumptions that they're going to return

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Amy Shanahan: to use or return to some of their symptoms or habits now that they got money in their pocket or all those things that we might diagnostically think, I've had to put my thoughts about those things in the back burner and be curious. And when I'm curious about someone's ambivalence, that's when I'm exploring together or asking maybe more evocative questions or, asking them to brainstorm together. So we are doing talking, we are talking with each other like you would a conversation with anybody you're curious about. I don't know if that answers your question, Paul, but that's what I was thinking about this notion of. And Antonio, you're mentioning ambivalence. Like I want to explore what that means to the person. So yes, I'm really listening. Well, and then there's times when I'm exploring and then I'm not just barreling a whole bunch of questions at them. And at the same time, I might be asking more evocative questions, I might be exploring a little bit more than just expressing empathy to churn up the dirt, if you will, in the garden, to, bring out about some more change talk. One thing that stands out to me with that is, and I loved what you said, and I can't quote it because I don't remember, you're sharing some beautiful quips, but it reminded me that even when I turn up the dirt, I might not see the plants grow. And yet I know that something's happening in that soil. That people walk away from our curiosity and our kindness and our non judgment, that they walk away thinking about that very thing

on their own. And like you said, making their own choices and doing their own thing, doing it their own way and figuring it out.

Paul Warren: Yeah, yeah. And you know, Antonio, the thing I really want to underline, and I took away from what you just said, and it's interesting because you clearly answered the question and you also illuminated, I think, two other things that, you know, letting a person have their ambivalence and our role is to try and understand their ambivalence. Not to assume that, okay, well, this person's ambivalent. So my job is to get rid of that ambivalence. No, actually that's not my job. My job is to understand that person's ambivalence. And I think you described that beautifully. The other thing that I really appreciate that you described, and I don't, I don't. You, you did it quite quickly. So I don't want to let it slip away unacknowledged, which is when you said, you know, want to hit them in the head with the hammer by telling them, you know, what to do. And, and clearly, and I'm, I could, you know, you both may disagree with me on this, but some folks carry the conception that their job is to tell people what to do. And and I'm thinking about the image that you shared, Antonio, which is that crash and burn image, because telling people what to do can often have really disastrous results to the connection that you have with that person. And, and you're acknowledging like I've moved away from being directive, I've moved away from telling people what to do to asking that beautiful open ended question, you know, well, what do you think is the best way to proceed here?

Amy Shanahan: You know, I was thinking that a, little thing in my head that when you said crash and burn and then you repeated it, Paul, there was going to be another movie analogy, but maybe the listeners can write in, they have an idea for a, crash and burn scenario.

Paul Warren: Yeah.

Amy Shanahan: And I would like to be transparent in my journey in working in the addiction field is that I did come in thinking that it was my job to fix things, to solve the problem, to tell people in a helpful way. Of course, and I came in, ah, my journey, that, that was commonplace, that we were recommending, telling, directing, giving all advice unsolicited a lot of times, forewarning them that if they didn't do certain things, and that was a journey that I went on that I, had to change and did change through my travel and practice of motivational interviewing. And I think that, you know, one of the quotes that I often use is culture eats strategy for breakfast. That it's still insidious in our culture. And I think that's what I'm passionate about, that some of us do fall into that habit of giving advice without thinking about it. And I know for me I've slowed myself down, practiced, not doing it,

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Amy Shanahan: taken a breath. And if I mistakenly give somebody unsolicited advice, I remember to honor their autonomy afterwards. And say, oops, that was my idea. I wonder what you think about that. but I just thought I'd throw that in because we're talking about. You shifted gears from that mental model of telling people what to do and slowing it down. And I was trained to do that, I think. Or at least that was my interpretation of my training that I was here to prescribe. And, boy, did that make me feel good. Even though. And I love that you said, Antonio, that your leadership is supporting you and telling you they notice the changes in you and in what's happening in the outcomes of the people that you're serving. And that's so beautiful, because oftentimes in our field, we don't talk about that. If I'm practicing MI M, I want to know that people are hearing the beautiful music. If I'm practicing my craft, how is it impacting

the people that I'm serving?

Antonio Ramirez: so I, meet with my supervisor every week. yeah, I know. And, he talks a lot about that. and he, has a lot of confidence in me. And sometimes I have to step, in and lead. But what I've learned, too, in this process is that when the clients are talking to me, I have to learn how to. The four talk. You, have the sustained talk, you have the change talk, the. The discord. Right. And then you also have the commitment talk. Right. But what I've learned is just listen. Don't be so quick to ask why. I need to stop asking why. Because when I. Sometimes when I cut them off and they're talking and they're sharing something, you know, those quiet moments can be the moment where we connect. I. I don't need to say anything. You know, they. That's them. They're giving me their spill. You know, and one of the things I learned, to come to my offices, some of them have never been heard. Yeah, they've always had. Telling them what to do. Yeah, right. As opposed to giving them the floor and letting them do what they have to do. So in that process, you know, like, I was talking earlier to you guys about my, my senior colleague. she was. She was just blown away because I used to shadow her groups, and she's a big MI fan. And she said, I always see you in trainings, and I always see you in MI sessions. And she said, I would like. I would love to come and sit in on one of your groups. And I. And I. And I felt, you know, like, okay, why you want to sit in my group and shoes like, because I've seen so much growth, in you, Antonio. And she was like, I. I want to know what it is they do. I was like, I don't do anything. I just do. It just comes natural. Right? I. I don't have, like, a secret sauce or a special gift. I just keep it simple, man. I try my best to keep it simple and let people be people, man. I believe respect and autonomy and, just being open with others, man. and taking a page from. From Paul's book. page book or playbook, he always talks about, you know, you can cut me off. Just don't cut off the people that share, you know, and I've learned that, too, in that process that, giving people enough room to be themselves goes a long way. It goes

a long way. As opposed to me trying to always control, fix, and manage and tell them what to do and how to do it. It just doesn't work for me anymore. So I. I've thrown that out, like I said, I just don't utilize that anymore. You know, I think this approach is, is the best way to deal with. When you're dealing with this industry of people that I'm dealing with.

Amy Shanahan: Antonio, I'm wondering if, I could ask this or if you don't mind answering this question. You won't know till I ask it. Feel free to say, no, I don't want to answer that. You have been getting feedback from not just your direct supervisor, from other leaders. I'm wondering what you've noticed or if you have any specifics, of what the folks you're serving have noticed, because you used to do things differently, and now you're really practicing motivational interviewing, and you said something really important that they're not used to people, helpers, listening to them and hearing them. What have you noticed in the outcome when you watch the people you're serving?

Antonio Ramirez: That they have a voice, too. They have a voice, too. They have feelings, they have goals, they have aspirations. They have things that they would like to accomplish. Right. And some don't know what it is to accomplish anything. You know, that's what I'm there for. I believe that using the 80/20 rule, I give them 80 and I take 20 provides a little more. I'm building someone's self worth, someone's self confidence within themselves. Right. And that takes time. I'm pouring into you slowly but surely. Right. And it's. It's contagious because as my clients see me working with one client, they talk to one another. They are the eyes of the program. So when I work with one individual and it works and the other

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Antonio Ramirez: clients see it, the laws of attraction just kick in. They want a piece of it too. Right? That's how I do it in my groups, and that's how I do it in my sessions. The only difference in my sessions, I keep with whatever we talk about right here in my office. You know, I have a lot of conversation pieces in here that we could talk about also. And I have a lot of room to where they can be themselves. Sometimes I give my clients books to read. I think this book is good for you. They may not reading it in the beginning. So what? I'm not here to force that down their throat. But eventually what happens is it works for some. Some come back and tell me what they read in the book. Right? Or I've, had clients come and tell me, well, this is what I'm utilizing today. A lot of times I use recovery quotes. I'll have a quote on my wall or a quote that I write every day on my chalkboard, and they'll read it and tell me, what do I think? I say, well, what do you think about it? And that's just a discussion we can have with each other. and now I have a client that comes in and gives me recovery quotes. Oh, I need you to. I need you to read this. Just read this. And I'm like, okay, I'll read it. I'll read it. And it just blows me away. How effective it could be to someone else, the effect that it puts on someone else to get involved. And I think that's what's key with this. These clients, they, have this thing called, the radical 95. I don't. Hospital Radical hospitality, where we're trying to reach the other 95 of the people, as opposed to the 5% of the people that's coming in. Well, motivational interviewing helps with that. Right? Because if you're able to tone it down and. And meet people where they're at, they're gonna come back, you know, oh, I got a guy. I got.

Amy Shanahan: So I'm hearing that what you've noticed since practicing more and more MI in your work, you've noticed that you get to know the person's story even deeper. They start sharing more, not just with you, but with other peers, with other folks that are maybe on their journey in recovery, at some level, and they start doing things that seem to be recovery oriented and share it back with you. and I'm Wondering if

that's. Did I miss anything with that? It seems like that. That's what I heard as your observation of what's shifted with them.

Antonio Ramirez: Well, it's just human nature. If I see something working for you, and I know you, I want to see, why is it not working for me? So what I need to do is start hanging with Amy more. I need to start hanging with Paul Moore because Paul is illuminating, Amy's illuminating. They're glowing. I want to know what it is that they're doing in this process. If I'm always seeing you happy, joyous, and free, I want to know what's going on with you. I want a piece of that. Because what you have, I can't buy.

Amy Shanahan: Right.

Antonio Ramirez: It's free. But I need to figure out. I need to tap into that. So what I try to do with the people that I interact with is constantly. One of the things, too, that I got to add this to. I, always ask for permission. Constantly. I, always give them the room to be themselves and don't feel like, you know, I don't want to be this authority figure. You know, I don't want to be this parole officer. I don't want to be this probation officer. That was my approach early on. You know, that. That. That therapeutic TC model that used. That used to work. I don't know if you guys understand what I'm saying, but, yes, completely.

Amy Shanahan: That's part of the old culture. Yeah.

Antonio Ramirez: Yes. Yes. And it. I'm not saying that it doesn't work. It does work, but just not in this setting. Yeah, it doesn't work in this setting.

Paul Warren: You know, Antonio, you said something a moment ago that I actually want

to push back against because you said, you know, I don't know, there's no secret sauce here. you know, this just comes naturally to me, and I want to push back on that, because in our connection, in terms of the learning communities that we've been in together, you continue to immerse yourself in conversation about motivational interviewing and in practice of motivational interviewing. And you. You, at least in the interactions that we've had, you reflect constantly on, you know, what my spirit is, how you can manifest mi spirit. So that kind of intentional immersion, that kind of intentional reflection, I believe that is part of perhaps your secret sauce to how you are kind of refining, deepening your practice of an mi. Spirited, mi. Consistent approach, and your intentional use of the core skills of motivational interviewing. And I could understand, given

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Paul Warren: your commitment, as to why that may just feel natural to you, but I do want to underline that you are making conscious and intentional efforts to continue to grow your practice. And. And I'm just wondering if you have any thought or any reaction to that. But. But at least in. I mean, you and I have known each other for, I think, over a year now, and I, At least that's what I have witnessed being in learning communities with you. So any thoughts or reactions to my kind of pushing back against. You know, there's no secret sauce here. There's, you know, it just comes naturally. I'm just curious as to what your thought might be about that.

Antonio Ramirez: well, I mean, you know, I. I, Mean, you got me. You got me feeling all squizzy and soft and fuzzy about your compliment. It sounds like a compliment to me. But really, Paul, the people that I interact with, like you and the facilitators and, you know, my colleagues and, even Amy today, you know, I take something from every one

of you guys. You know, when, I came to this process, I thought it was all about me. But what I found out, ah, it takes a village to raise a child, and it takes good people to raise a person. so, you know, I always incorporate tools from other people. I believe, you know, I don't want to get all religious, but I believe God put people in my life for a reason, you know, And I believe God works through people. Yeah. And. And as I listen, that's the question, am I listening? You know, because if I'm listening carefully, then I discover the answers, you know, but if I'm just talking and you just talking, then it's not a conversation. And that's how I build these conversations with my clients. I'm having the ability to listen, and then that's when that confidence scaling comes in and that important scaling comes in, and then I'm able to draw back and see what it is that. That they're motivated. Like, one of my questions is, what's the very here today? You know, tell me. You know, and. And some people come with the court, or I'm trying to get my kids back, or yada, yada, yada. And that's where I take that piece and I put that in the back. I'm not going to talk about that right now, but I know that is the factor. That is why you're here. But I want to. I want to find out other things about you, because then I'm gonna bring that from the back and put it back in the front to remind you. This is why you're here. But I don't need to do it now. I don't need to. You know, I'm not trying to change you right now. I want to know the good, the bad, the ugly, the indifferent. I want to see everything that you like about what it is you're doing. And then I want to know why you're here. Why are you here? Once I figure that out, then that's when everything starts to come together. But, you know, and, and. And that's. That may not be the second session. That may not be the third session. You know, I've had clients that come back even after they've completed treatment. I just had a client come the other day to come see me. I'm like, oh, okay, but down there and see him. And I said, look, you can't. You can't. You know, you. You can come on the weekends as an alumni, but you can't come during the week, you know, and, and, but I didn't want to downplay it because I'm really in awe that he would just take a day out of his work to come see me. And I said,

look, I appreciate it, but that's the effect that motivational interviewer has on people. When you do it correctly, they never forget it. Anybody that treats you better than that. Sorry, I didn't mean to cut you off.

Amy Shanahan: No, no, that's okay.

Antonio Ramirez: Anytime you treat someone with respect and dignity. Right. They never forget that.

Amy Shanahan: Right. You know, so that, I mean, I'm getting excited because you're sharing so many beautiful pieces of, a puzzle of mi That I think Paul's alluding to. Is it. Is it a secret sauce, or is it just your ability to navigate what, like you said, what you take out of your toolbox at the time that that person needs it or that you feel like it's the right time? Because sometimes our other colleague, Billie Jo Smith, who's been, I don't know, six time, five, six time guest on the podcast, will call it her Spidey sense. So to go back to Spider Man.

Paul Warren: Yeah.

Amy Shanahan: But I'm curious, Antonio. just for, maybe some listeners who are wondering, gosh, how do you get to this point where you have all the ingredients on the counter, you're making the sauce, how do you know how much of this goes in? How much of that goes in? So my practical application question is, when you have gone through your journey of MI M, and maybe you still do this when you're noticing maybe some habits of old are coming in, or maybe you're like, oh, I now get this part of mi. How do you know that it's something that you want to pay attention to, that it might spice up the recipe? What do you

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Amy Shanahan: do to notice that and maybe even practice it? What are some things that, you've experienced in your journey?

Antonio Ramirez: Well, for one, I listen more. For two, I reflect more than the question. Then I guide rather than trying to direct. and I don't think it's, in a group. I think everyone that I deal with, I deal with them differently. Sort of like a parent. I can't use what I use on my daughter that I used on my son, you know, because my daughter might be confrontational, my son might be non confrontational, you know, So I can't use the same approach with everybody. And I think that what happens with that is I always give myself some time in between sessions. I don't rush into sessions. I give myself time, you know, in jazz, you know, I have this guy, Thelonious Monk on the back of my screensaver. You know, I listen to a lot of jazz when I'm doing my notes or when I'm documenting. Because they say if you don't document, it never happens. And I understand that part of the process too. But in between my sessions, I give myself time to reflect on the previous client, right, and get ready for the next client. And I don't try to overwhelm myself anymore. There was a time when I was taking, you know, I'm still in school, I was taking like nine classes in one semester. Oh, and I introduced thing, and, you know, committing to my personal life also. And my, my, my supervisor, asked me, he said, are you okay? I said, I'm fine. He said, he said, I think you're taking too much on right now. I said, I understand, but it was something that I learned. Now, I failed a couple classes, of course, you know, because you got, you know, you know, what I'm talking about is balance. Learning how to deposit in all my accounts, you know, even with my clients, you know, giving them space and time too. you know, even with my phone, I, I put it in my drawer and I don't want to be bothered. I'll deal with that at lunchtime. and even with myself, I leave myself in the car, you know, when I'm at work, I

got to give my undivided attention to my clients, you know, I think that works for me, you know, and then I'm able to draw patience rather than always trying to Supply it. Always trying to give it to them. No, no, no, let them figure it out for themselves. Because I did that early on. I would always try to give them the answers. And a colleague of mine was like, you do great work, but stop giving. Because they would go back in her, her clients, on her caseload would. She would ask them about me and they say, oh, he's a great yada, yada, yada. And then she would hear it and she'd say, Antonio, look, here's the thing that I want you to understand. Don't give them the answers all the time. M. Let them, let them figure it out. You know, I know you're trying to help them, but there's another way to do that. And that's another thing that I've learned in this process too. Be a little more open minded because, you know, I came in with a football helmet on, you know, so I couldn't see, you know, seriously, I couldn't see every around me. Learn to step back, take the helmet off, and see a more broader perspective of what this approach is all about. And I believe motivational interviewing, you don't just have to use it in, in substance, abuse counseling, you can use this in it, in any walk of your life, you know, if that makes sense.

Paul Warren: Yeah, yeah. You know, Antonio, I'm very curious, given you continue to invest in your practice of motivational interviewing in your am I consistent? Approach, and earlier, you know, you underlined, you know, four very specific things that, that you do differently now than perhaps what you did before you started your journey with motivational interviewing. When you think about where you are now in terms of, you know, you're, you're in this process of reflecting on motivational interviewing, practicing motivational interviewing, immersing yourself in environments where you can, you know, soak in more about this evidence based practice, what do you, what do you identify as a growth opportunity or an area that you see as something maybe that you want to refine or develop further than sort of where you are currently?

Antonio Ramirez: I would like to also enhance the way I develop discrepancy, being able to let the clients look and notice the gaps between their values and their current behavior without shaming them, without tearing them down. That was one of the things that I learned early on and I still don't have it perfected. But I think if I continue to hone in on that skill, it's a, it's a great conversation piece. It's a great way for them to look at themselves as opposed to me. Telling them what they need to do or, making them feel uncomfortable. You know, my

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Antonio Ramirez: role as a skillful helper in this process is to give them the tool of empowerment. You know, I'm building their character. I don't want to break their spirit. I'm trying to build their spirit. Right. and that takes time. You know, I even taking it personal sometimes when certain, clients get, transferred to someone else. But I understand that's part of the nature of the business. You know, some clients get transferred not because of the counselor. It's just because they might connect with Amy or Paul, you know, and they still connect with me. It's just that they, you know, and, and I would personalize it because I thought I wasn't doing my job, but I was doing my job. I was doing my job. It's just that the way they work it now, it's a collectiveness. It's not just me. Right. Together. Right.

Amy Shanahan: Right.

Antonio Ramirez: I feed off of you, you feed off of me. but I think also another thing that I like to work on is also being able to, what I'm trying to. Not perfect, but just, continue to craft. Is rolling with that resistance.

Paul Warren: Yeah.

Antonio Ramirez: When they come in and you know, they have an attitude of indifference towards why they have to be here or why they have to do this. And that's fine. I understand. You know, I understand completely. Or even when I have to go to court sometimes and talk, to them about enrolling in a drug court. You know, a lot of times motivational interviewing has to come into play because first of all, they're incarcerated. Second of all, I might have been the first person they've seen in a few weeks or a few months. And you trying to, you know, they look at it as you're playing with my life. No, I'm just, I'm here to give you the best deal in the world, man.

Amy Shanahan: Man.

Antonio Ramirez: It's entirely up to you, though. If you don't want it, it's still on the table. You just let me know what you want to do, you know, and I, and I found out in this process, when you let people just be their authentic selves, that report, it just grows organically. Right. I heard you speak on that earlier, Amy, about turning the dirt. Well, I like to call it cultivating. The more I cultivate that relationship, it won't start. You know, you don't see the flowers in the beginning, but the more I turn the dirt and cultivate, you start to see that relationship grow within my Clients and me.

Paul Warren: You know, it's funny that you say that, Antonio, and that you go back to the reference that Amy made about turning the dirt, because developing discrepancy is now referred to in the fourth edition of Miller and Rolnick's book as planting seeds. And your point is so well taken. And Amy alluded to this too, that because of our approach, because of the depth of our listening, it's possible we may not quote, unquote, technically practice motivational interviewing with that person in terms of evoking

change. Talk about a behavioral change goal. And the fact that we're simply providing them, holding that space for them to be heard, to let their autonomy be that sometimes plant seeds for people that we may never see the growth. It still plant seeds. And again, it's not the quote, unquote, technical practice of motivational interviewing because maybe in that conversation there isn't an identified behavioral change goal that they feel ambivalent about. And to that, a couple of times you've mentioned the phrase from m. The third edition of Miller and Ralnick's book Rolling with Resistance. And it is an incredibly popular phrase that has, like, hung on. And yet every time you've talked about ambivalence, you've talked about honoring somebody's ambivalence, letting them have both sides of their ambivalence, the change talk and the sustained talk. And I think the reason we don't use that phrase in the 4th edition of Miller and Ralnick's book is because we don't want to judge that person. And clearly you're not doing that. You're not judging the person as resistant. But there could be a slippery slope for somebody to actually do that.

Antonio Ramirez: Absolutely. Absolutely. you know, one of the things that I had to change was, to resist the urge to work harder than the client. I would always wanna. That was one of my biggest mistakes early on when I'm carrying a session. but I found out that the counselor, the client decides. I. I didn't get that at first. When I first heard that, I was like, what? No, no, no, no, this is not. No, that's not what it. And then I don't chase the drug. I don't spend

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Antonio Ramirez: too much time talking about their substance abuse. I, gotta let people be themselves because they were someone before they interacted with that. And. And that relationship was built. What I'm trying to do is see them from a different

perspective, from a different lens. So there's going to be pain, there's going to be fear. There's going to be loneliness. I understand that, but I don't want to put too much emphasis on just the drug. Right. That's not what we're here to talk about. That. That'll come down the line, but I don't think that's the initial process. motivation. Go ahead.

Amy Shanahan: Oh, I was just wondering, going back to the planting the seeds phrasing, which I love the gardening analogy as well as the music one, when you think about. And Paul, this is for you too, around planting seeds, because developing discrepancy, the terminology that we've used in the past and currently to this day, would be, like you said, Antonio, mirroring the client. See that, oh, you're saying this, but you're doing that, which can be, like you said, it could be confrontational or it could be judgmental, or it could be hurtful at times. And how do we use MI to create the safe environment to have that conversation? And now we're using planting the seeds. I'm just wondering, for the sake of, of offering seeds to the listeners, what ideas to do you both have around practically applying planting the seed? So, for example, if I notice someone I'm working with says, my gosh, I need to save money, I need to save money. And then they keep shopping, shopping, shopping. How do I plant? I'm just going to make a generic example like that. How would you plant the seed for, that type of, what we used to call, refer to it, discrepancy. They're saying one thing but doing another. What, what are some ideas you would throw out for the listeners to consider and maybe for your own practice, Antonio, because you said that's one thing that you want to work on.

Antonio Ramirez: Well, one thing I've learned is learning the difference between listening and hunting. You know, one thing to listen is another thing. When I'm searching and hunting for something and it may sound like bad counseling or interrogation, they already know they made a mistake. I don't need to keep hitting them across the head

with the mistake. We need to find solutions. I don't focus on the problem. You know, if we focus more so on the problem, all we're looking at is becoming a bigger problem. And then I also tell them a lot of times that the loss, the loss is not a loss anymore. Today, the loss is a lesson. You know, if we keep looking at the loss as a, then that's be a problem. But if we look at the loss as a lesson, then we're able to grow from that. We're able to see the difference between what to do and what not to do. But I can't tell them that initially. I have to give them enough room to let them see that. And then last but not least, I listen for the values. Every person has values. The question is, am I listening for them?

Amy Shanahan: So you would focus on what they are doing, not the problem. You would focus on what they're thinking about doing instead of what they're not doing, as maybe some seed planting. What about you, Paul? What thoughts do you have about planting seeds? You're muted, Paul.

Paul Warren: I had to cough, so I. Muted.

Amy Shanahan: Yeah, sure.

Paul Warren: I didn't want to cough in the listener's ears. So, I guess I'm going to give a technical answer in regard to that question in a moment. There's something else that Antonio, that you said that I really want to underline, which again, I think speaks to

Antonio Ramirez: your

Paul Warren: insight and also the subtlety of your. Of your practice. And that is, that when you were saying, you know, I don't chase the drug, I don't focus on the. The drug

like a light bulb went off in my head. Because if you give somebody the space to talk about the full breadth of what's going on in their life, they are there. Clearly that's going to come up at some point. And it's going to come up perhaps in the timing, in the intensity or the quantity that's appropriate for that person as opposed to if I. I'm chasing or emphasizing that particular area, which means that I'm kind of inserting my judgment about, like, what's. What should be important to them. And I love that you said that, you know, you're listening for their values. Because when we're listening for somebody's values, we're listening for what's important to them. We're listening for

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Paul Warren: what, you know, is a. Going to motivate them is. Is, you know, we're kind of listening for their heart in some way. And, I really. I just really appreciate how you put that because it kind of made that light bulb go off in my head. And, what I would say in regard to your. Your question, Amy, about planting seeds, you know, and again, I think Antonio has. Has kind of alluded to this, but not maybe said it directly, but certainly, you know, described it beautifully, is that those two things, you know, the person spending the money, there's no judgment in regard to that. It's just that that's what the person's doing and, you know, you'd like to understand more. So there's no judgment and they're also trying to save money. And there's no judgment or over emphasis on that. And, and that can be really hard as a practitioner because of course I, Paul may think, you know, I really want to help this person save money. And that would be me chasing what I think has the greater value. So if I can position both of those things, the spending and I'm going to say it A n D and the desire to save money, if I can position both of those things without judgment, without over emphasis, like Antonio said, then I'm going to get a much better understanding of where those things play out for that person.

Amy Shanahan: You know, a, light bulb just went off for me right there. Paul, around even just thinking about throwing away the phraseology of developing discrepancies. Because even though I threw that example on the table and you just said what you said and you, you know, people in the listening mode can't see Paul's theatrics of putting his hands up and showing both sides, which, where the light bulb came up for me and Antonio gave like 10,000 thumbs up while Paul was talking. It just reminds me that the discrepancy. I want this, and I'm doing that, is ambivalence. So you saying being neutral to either side of the discrepancy, if you will, developing discrepancy in and of itself is a judgment, which it's just dawning on me in the semantics of it right now. Yeah, like, and this is my journey with my, my MI practice. Antonio, like you've shared, like we peel onion layers off and it's like, oh, wait a minute, this is coming to light in a different way for me. I understand that we're planting seeds now, but for me, I just made a big connection with. Wow. The why of why not developing discrepancy because the person's ambivalent and we stay neutral in their ambivalence. I love that. So thank you for this beautiful conversation and I'm taking that big light bulb moment of connecting the terminology to my practice.

Antonio Ramirez: Also, I want to add, you know, one of the things that I've learned too. It's okay for me to be vulnerable with my clients. It's okay for me to be comfortable with saying I don't know.

Antonio Ramirez: You know, I, I don't have the answer. Yeah, let's figure it out together, you know, Ah. And meeting that resistance with respect, you know, I, I've found in this process that some of the best counselors listen for the story under the story, you know, the underneath situation that's going on. We already know the visible. When I talked about the external, well, that's the cosmetic part. The internal is what we're trying to get to. And some people are going to be resistant to that because I don't know you, and I

don't want to talk to you about what I'm dealing with, you know, that's normal. I have to normalize that. This person has some issues, you know, but we can iron it out together, you know, and that's where I try to give people the space to understand. I'm not here to tell you what to do. You know, I want to. I want to be the best version of you. And I say this, too, a lot. I don't want to walk in front of you. I don't want to walk behind you. You know, I say this in the beginning when I meet my clients. I would just love to walk with you side by side in this process. As we own. We know we, go on this journey. If you're willing to commit to that, then let's go. Let's just do the work. Let's do the work, you know, And I think that works best for them that way. I find them coming back. I find them coming back on days I don't even schedule,

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Antonio Ramirez: fix appointment, give them an appointment letter, and I tell them I'm here from this. From Tuesday to Saturday, I'm available what day works for you and what time works for you. And then we negotiate how we can work that out. Because of course, I have other clients that are committed at certain times, but I give them the freedom to pick and choose. Right? It's not about me telling them what to do. It's about me giving them a bunch of suggestions and they pick the one that works for them.

Paul Warren: You know, I want to make a disclaimer and then I want to underline two things that I'm really taking away from this conversation. And again, Antonio, I can't thank you enough for joining this conversation because I wouldn't have had these kind of light bulb moments and if you and Amy and I weren't having this conversation. So I thank you so much for that. The disclaimer that I want to make, just so our listeners understand, is that we have had a little bit of WI Fi dropout in some of this conversation. So I just want to acknowledge that because you may hear a little bit of gaps in what

people are saying, but stick with it because it's very infrequent. So I just want to acknowledge that. So the two. The two things that I'm really taking away from this training or the training, it feels like a training in some ways. I feel like.

Amy Shanahan: Because we're learning together. Exactly.

Paul Warren: I feel like I've just been. I've been in this fantastic learning community that's a training is this power of that, you know, the language behind developing discrepancy. And I totally understand why they got rid of it and they're focusing on planting seeds. Because my role as the practitioner is to understand their ambivalence. It's their discrepancy, not mine. So I'm not developing anything. What I'm doing is I'm providing the opportunity for that person to explore their discrepancy, if they even see it as a discrepancy. Because to call it a discrepancy is in some ways kind of a. Judgment.

Amy Shanahan: Judgmental. Yeah.

Paul Warren: Yeah. So. So I just feel such a deeper understanding of how I can use that approach, in a truly, am I spirited, am I consistent way. And the second thing that I really take away from this conversation is, Antonio, you've. You've emphasized so many times how important allowing that relationship to grow into whatever that relationship is going to grow in. And you know, when a person is quote, unquote, and I'm, you know, m doing air quotes, you can't see it, but I'll describe it. I'm doing air quotes is quote, unquote resistant. That's probably for a reason, because there's something they maybe don't want to focus on or explore at that moment. And that's not resistance, that's protection. And you know what? They have the right to make that choice. They don't have to focus on anything that they're not feeling. We have enough rapport yet for them to be able to do. And I just feel like my understanding of that has increased, like, tenfold based on

this conversation. So I really want to thank you both so much. And I'm wondering, just as we bring this conversation to a conclusion at this moment, and hopefully the three of us will get to talk sometime together again in the future. I'm just wondering if, Antonio, if you and Amy have any final thoughts that you might want to share before we kind of bring things to a conclusion.

Amy Shanahan: Well, I was thinking just to wrap up one of the things that you said. It's not, maybe not a conclusion of the, the whole, picture of the conversation, but some things jumped out at me about people coming to us with this level of maybe negative energy. I don't know what to call it without sounding judgmental about the word resistance or, but there's something to it. Like I think about, well, here I am in a court situation or in a situation that I have two choices that I don't want and it feels unjust, so I'm ticked off or I'm bothered by it. Maybe I'm not ready, willing, or able to see or understand my role in it because I feel sometimes that

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Amy Shanahan: something was thrust upon me and my freedom to choose has been taken away. And that's what I mean by unjust. and everything that you've said today, Antonio, really, you kept coming back to it over and over and over again. And it relates to listening, empathy, and just being in their world. So that's my takeaway with that. When people come to us already feeling like their choice has been removed, or their freedom to choose something has been limited to two unpalatable things. us being in that space that you offered here of listening and being with them and being in their world was such an important key takeaway for me.

Antonio Ramirez: for me, I just believe, you know, some of the principles behind MI is

like being heard, being understood, respected, safe enough to be honest and have the tool of empowerment to have a choice. You know, every day we wake up, we got a chance and a choice to change. You know, the three C's is what I always stand by. You know, that's an opportunity for growth, but, you know, I can't give it to you. You gotta want it, you know, but it's always available. I remember a friend of mine told me that this process of recovery is like a banquet. The food has always been available. In this process, we're just learning how to eat. You know, we gotta learn how to eat. Once we learn how to eat, then we start understanding how important it is for us. so I mean, my final thought, more so is just having that unconditional positive regard, you know, that I once heard is just so effective when you're dealing with clients. Just let them be themselves. If you let them be themselves, man, the flower can grow.

Paul Warren: And you know, your, your point is so well taken, Antonio, because without that all the other technical skill that you may have, all the other, all the other proficiency that you may have at being able to, quote, unquote, evoke, change, talk, you know, guide the conversation, all of that. If you don't have what you're describing, the am I spirited, am I consistent approach, that rapport that respect, that depth of listening, you'll never get to that other stuff. Yeah.

Amy Shanahan: What a beautiful exclamation point to this conversation. Yes. Thank you so much for joining us, Antonio. It's been such a pleasure. And I will never forget this light bulb moment. And it was because of this complete journey of us coming together.

Antonio Ramirez: Thank you both for your service and your time and your commitment to making me understand just another perspective of, of what motivational interviewing can do for you.

Paul Warren: Thank you so much, Antonio. And I'll look forward to our continued journey together in the learning communities that we are in. So, again, thank you so much for joining Amy and I.

Antonio Ramirez: Once again, peace and blessings.

Amy Shanahan: Thank you.

Paul Warren: Thanks for listening to episode 39 of Lions and Tigers and Bears MI. Be on the lookout for new episodes coming soon.

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