



The Missing Link for SLPs Podcast

What I Didn't Learn in Grad School Series

freshslp.com

Episode 90: Part 1: How to embrace evolution and revolution with Mai Ling Chan

The exceptional Mai Ling Chan takes us through the personal and professional evolutionary process of her career in this episode.

A connector of people, Mai reflects on the importance of connecting and building relationships with people both inside and outside of the field of SLP. As an author, Mai speaks about how her response to criticism and critical feedback has changed over time and with experience.

An advocate for working as a whole person, Mai encourages us all to bring to the profession other things that we love and are good at, and to explore, explore, explore!

About Mai Ling Chan, MS, CCC-SLP



Mai Ling is a speech-language pathologist, industry historian, global connector, and technology entrepreneur. Building on 16 years of clinical experience, she focuses on supporting disability-focused thought leaders and creating digital

products that make a difference in the special education ecosystem.

In her role as co-founder and Chief of Partnerships of Xceptional Learning, she facilitates national and international partnerships with disability experts to support the creation of professional development courses, digital services, and virtual therapy. In addition, after publishing 3 Amazon best-selling books in 18 months, Mai Ling continues to spotlight industry leaders on her Xceptional Leaders podcast, now in its 4th year reaching over 25K global listeners.

Mai Ling is passionate about helping parents, educators, therapists, and people with disabilities to expand on their creative ideas and achieve success in their disability-focused offerings.

Discussion & Reflection Questions

1. Have you ever considered the strengths and experience you have outside of SLP that you could also bring to your role?
2. Do you actively seek out fresh new thoughts and ideas in the field or your other interests?
3. How do you respond to rejection and/or criticism?
4. Has how you respond to feedback and/or criticism changed over time?
5. Have you joined any professional networking sites such as LinkedIn? If so, have you followed any thought leaders and found their posted content helpful or valuable?

Mattie Murrey Tegels, MA, CCC-SLP, L, CPC, CLSC

Medical Speech-Language Pathologist and
Founder of Fresh SLP & Badass SLP



Mattie Murrey-Tegels is the founder and SLP behind Fresh SLP, Badass SLP, and The Missing Link for SLPs Podcast. She's been "in-the-trenches" as a medical SLP around the world for over 25 years and now an Assistant Professor for 3 years. She is thrilled to be adding this dream of a podcast

because paying her experiences forward is something she is very passionate about. If you ask her patients and students, one thing they will remember is how much she loves her job!

She may not look like it but she is a huge introvert and when she is not actively working as an SLP, she is almost always reading, writing (writing over 1,000,000 words a year), or listening to amazing Chicago Blues bands. She also loves being outdoors and definitely enjoys soaking up the sun at her home in Minnesota, where warm and sunny days can be limited. She's ridden motorcycles for many years, raced sled dogs, hiked huge mountains yet she cherishes the quiet moments of climbing into a hammock to nap or timeless conversations with friends and family.

The Missing Link for SLPs podcast and Fresh SLP is her legacy, giving back to a career that has so richly rewarded her.

*Do you have a question you'd like answered on the show?
Interested in sharing your experience as an SLP with our audience?
Send a message to Mattie@FreshSLP.com!*

Not a substitute for a formal SLP education or medical advice for patients/caregivers

Quote from the Conversation

"We need to stay with the people who are leading the industry. So, professionally, we use the words like thought leaders, and it's essential because these are people who are plugging into all other industries and saying, "Hey, could that work here?" And we need that because our field has become a little stale, a little archaic."

- Mai Ling Chan

Quote from the Conversation

"When you're an SLP who is stepping out into different things, or branching out into private practice, or creating a website, it's being able to dynamically respond to what you have coming in."

- Mattie Murrey-Tegels

Keep the Conversation Going

Thank you for listening to *The Missing Link for SLPs* podcast! **If you enjoyed the show, I'd love you to subscribe, rate it and leave a short review.** Also, please share an episode with a friend. Together we can raise awareness and help more SLPs find and connect those missing links to help them feel confident in their patient care every step of the way.

Follow me on [Instagram](#), join the Fresh SLP community on [Facebook](#) or learn more at FreshSLP.com or badassslp.com.

Let's make those connections. You got this!

The Missing Link for SLPs Podcast Show Notes

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The Missing Link for SLPs Podcast Full Transcript

Mattie Murrey 00:03

Welcome to The Missing Link for SLPs Podcast. Have you ever wished you could go back and tell your younger self a way to do something better, or something that you've learned, or, gosh, just those words of wisdom that you would have loved to have known when you first started? That's what this series is all about. I am interviewing guests, and we reflect back on their words of wisdom, and what they didn't learn in grad school. And you'll be surprised by each one of these episodes. So, sit back, listen, and enjoy.

Welcome to this episode. I am here with Mai Ling Chan, who is another SLP podcaster. It's really fun when somebody else podcasts, that loves podcasting comes on. So, welcome Mai Ling.

Mai Ling Chan 00:53

Thank you for having me, Mattie.

Mattie Murrey 00:55

Great, you're here. Tell us a little bit about yourself. You have a beautiful website, a podcast, and books. Very, very – lots of offerings. Tell me what you do, and where you come from.

Mai Ling Chan 00:53

Thanks so much. It's a really big question.

Having my own website is a huge feat for me. I don't know if you guys know, or your listeners know, but Mai Ling Chan is a very popular name in China, kind of like Tom Smith in the US. And so, getting mailingchan.com as the URL was just amazing. And once I landed it, you purchase it for \$12.99, and I was like, "Hmm, what am I going to do with this?". And there was an evolution there, and that's only been in the last like five years.

So, I think having me as a guest, first of all, thank you for having me join you, and being able to talk with you and your listeners, because I wish that we had access to people like us when we were first starting out. I was a returning student, and so I had years of being home with my children, and I had other home-based companies, and I decided to go back for my Masters. And when I did start getting my feet wet and really going, okay, I could do more, than the one-on-one clinician services, that was in about 2012.

So, here we are in 2022, and it's been this evolution, Mattie, of what do I like to do? What are my skills? What are my talents? And what can I bring to the profession? And, ultimately, that person that I'm sitting across from and delivering services to. So, it's been growing as an adult in a profession, also as a professional speech language pathologist, and then bringing in all of these things that I love to do. And that's what I really want to talk about with you today. And so, people get their mind thinking. So, I will say, if I – gosh, if I can sum it up, I like to say that I am an industry historian, and the website that you're talking about, mailingchan.com, represents the three books that I have recently published.

So, I published three anthologies in 18 months, and that was all during the pandemic. And it was the most gratifying, beautiful, amazing experience of my life, Mattie. I connected with the co-authors, and the intro writers, the foreword writers, and reviewers, all over the world during the most stressful and just crazy time of our lives. And together, we've shared our stories of loving what we do in our professions. And I have had the absolute gift of being able to work not only with speech language pathologists – and they are mostly focused, of course, in the third book in the series, which is *Becoming an Exceptional SLP Leader*, but I've also had the opportunity to work with people who are experts in augmentative, and alternative communication, and that are – those are people who use AAC daily. And so, I say they are experts, of course.

Mattie Murray 03:58

Right.

Mai Ling Chan 03:58

And then, also people who have been part of the evolution of this whole field, and building community. And then, just with people who are involved in special needs and disabilities as a whole, and that was actually the first book that I did. So, we're dealing with people who are actors and actresses with disabilities, and changing the culture in the face of what that looks like. Working with people who have had personal strife, whether it's having a disability, or being a parent of someone with a disability, and sharing that story and how moving through that whole experience brought them to another side of how they can be a giver, and create something that they can share. And so, that was all encompassed in *Becoming an Exceptional Leader*.

Mattie Murrey 04:40

So you're a connector. Your books are connecting people with their stories, with us in our field. Your three books are: *Becoming an Exceptional Leader*, *Becoming an Exceptional AAC Leader*, and *Becoming an Exceptional SLP Leader*.

Mai Ling Chan 5:00

Correct. Exactly.

Mattie Murray 5:01

Wonderful. A wonderful trio, like the holy trinity of becoming an exceptional leader for SLPs. And all three of these came out during the pandemic?

Mai Ling Chan 05:13

Yes. Yeah, I'd like to say we are at the endemic stage now, but I don't think that that's official. So, I think we can – we're still using “pandemic”.

Mattie Murrey 05:22

Yes. Yes, I – no, I don't think we're out. I don't think we're out. It needs to be going on for a little while yet, and I honestly don't know when we're going to get away from masks in the hospital setting. I think those will be a long time. We'll have those for a long time yet.

One thing that strikes me is the entrepreneurial, the building, the sky's the limit attitude that you have. Have you always been this way?

Mai Ling Chan 05:57

This definitely comes from my upbringing. My father is an immigrant from Hong Kong who came to the United States, and he served in the Vietnam War and ultimately earned his US citizenship. And then my mom, I like to say, was made in Colombia but born on US soil. So, she is first-generation Colombian. And these two kids, who started with nothing, Matti, have created an amazing life built on real estate, and hard work. So, they both had jobs while they were doing real estate on the side, and they're now independently wealthy. And they are just such givers and community people. So, I grew up in a very entrepreneurial environment. Whatever needed to be done, I was there. I went out with my dad, we fixed things. I actually have, like, a lot of experience with DIY. Just bring some duct tape, and some gum, and we can fix it!

Mattie Murrey 06:48

Everything's figure-outable.



Mai Ling Chan 6:50

Exactly, exactly.

Mattie Murray 6:51

Everything's fixable.

So three things that – as we've gotten to know each other just a little bit, three themes that run through you, and who you are, is you love what you do as an SLP, you follow your passion, and you really work on relationships. Can you talk about why you love so much, what you do?

Mai Ling Chan 07:19

Absolutely. And in coming onto your show, specifically, we're talking about the missing link, and what are things that we could share now with people who are just coming into the profession.

I didn't know this early enough, Mattie, that being a new speech language pathologist did not mean burying all of the things that are Mai. And so, I got to my first assignment, and I was gung-ho and trying to follow the rules, and do all these things, but then this other side of Mai started to come out as I started to have more competencies with the foundational skills, right?

And so early on, the iPad had come out. And I'm saying this because you're asking me where the passion comes from, and that's because I am someone who just adores technology. Anything new, I had it. I had the CrackBerry. I had the beeper, even going back that far. So, it's not kind of showing my age a little bit, but I am a new adopter to all of these things. And how can this – how can I use it? How can I make my life better?

And so I got the iPad, and I immediately started saying, "Ooh. This is great for therapy. How can we use it?". And I went out on the internet, and I found all these amazing therapists who were already using it, and they had these blog posts. And I was learning from them and bringing it back to my sessions, and I found that connection for myself going, "Ooh, now all of a sudden, I'm doing what I love and loving what I do". And that's – those are just words. And I think your entire life, you're looking for that, do what you love ...

Mattie Murrey 8:46

Okay.

Mai Ling Chan 08:47

... and it's so hard.

And so, I really, really offer this to my readers, to people who listen to our podcast, to deep dive into what are those things that you're good at, and that you love, and bring that back into your profession. Your profession is how you make money because we have to do it. But all of us that are in this space of



therapy services, mental health, all of that, we are givers, and we are providing services. So, it isn't the typical, selling products.

Mattie Murrey 9:18

Right.

Mai Ling Chan 9:18

Just, it's a very different type of way to earn an income to have a good life. And that was also something that I found myself being very disconnected from, was feeling kind of like that guilt. Like, I want to make more money, right? I want to be able to retire early. And for me, actually, I don't even know what retirement is. I'm sure you too, Mattie. Like we're just – we go, go, go.

Mattie Murrey 9:40

Right.

Mai Ling Chan 9:40

I just don't want to have to have my butt in a chair at 8:00 o'clock in the morning until five o'clock at night, right?

Mattie Murrey 9:45

Right.

Mattie Ling Chan 9:45

Even though we will work around the clock. I work on the weekends. I love what I do. So, I have no problem with jumping in at all hours, but you want to be the boss of that. You want to be the – in control of that. And you can carve that out in this life, but you have to kind of free yourself a little bit, and that's the part that excites me, and I know you can hear it in my voice right now. And I'm sure our listeners are going, "Yes! I want to do that too", and it really starts with just deep diving into the things that you love.

And going back to the books, I mean, I have 43 authors in all different areas who share unique stories of how they connected their passion with their purpose. If this doesn't turn your lights on, if this doesn't spark a fire inside of you, I don't know what will, honestly. And the way that we launched these books, Mattie, was we gave them away for free on launch day as a digital download.

And so, I've had so many people who had the opportunity on the first day to get access to it, start reading it, and give me the feedback that "Wow, Mai, this is amazing because I wouldn't have had access to these types of stories". We really don't have a quick way to say, "Hey, Mattie, what do you love about your job? And how did you get there?" And, yes, it's not always easy and fast, but I can learn from your experiences, and everybody's story is beautiful. I mean, obviously, afterwards, you can look back, and say, "Okay. Now I know why that was so challenging, or why that was so hard. And coming out of it, I can



see now the strength and the maturity that I have from it, or how that brings me to the next level". But I'm telling you, every one of these stories are page turners in their own right. And they're not the same, that's another great thing. Just like your life isn't like anybody else's, that's what these stories reflect.

Mattie Murrey 11:38

Right. And I can see that they would be beneficial both for the newer, fresh SLP, who is just stepping in to his or her – well, why. I always ask my students, "Why are you in this graduate program? What do you want to go do?" Some of them have definite answers, "I want to work with peds. This is where my – or ASD". And others are like, "I'm going to see what the field has to offer". And these stories would also be good for the SLP who is feeling burned out, overwhelmed, where does she or he want to go with their careers, things like that. And just really remembering that big why, and having that focus.

Mai Ling Chan 12:18

Absolutely. And we also – we want to see ourselves in others. And there are several chapters in here where you might say, "Oh, yeah", just like you're saying, "This author focused on wanting to work with children, but now she's created an entire website that reaches people internationally". And it's just amazing how people build on their initial interests.

And so, that kind of brings me to Xceptional Learning. Xceptionallearning.com is a company that I am co-partnered with. We have a number of therapists that are in that company, and then a number of tech experts in that company. And we've created an online digital resource, where people can access it globally to provide therapy services. So, did I have that idea when I first started as a Speech Therapist? Definitely not. But over time, there were needs that I realized that were valuable, and geez, if I could just have somebody help me to code. And so, my team and I, we were able to create one section of it, which was the online professional development.

And we all know that we need that to keep our licensure, but also to keep us really on the cutting edge of the value of our services. If you graduated 20 years ago, and you're still providing the same therapy, the same type of therapy, and not keeping up with the evidence- based research, which is always coming, then the students that you're working with, or the clients that you're working with, are not getting the most up to date and quality services that they could be, right? And so, I know I don't have the time to sit there and read all the research. And so, I always found the value in doing conferences and learning from people. And over the years online, really started to inch its way in, and then of course, now with the pandemic, it's just ubiquitous. I went to ASHA this year, in 2021, and there were only 4,300 attendees in person there. Whereas, in 2019, there were 18,000 attendees. So, totally different.

And so, what we've done is we've said, "Okay, look, you can't go see your top presenters. That's okay. We have them online". And we're making this very, very different in that the people that are on our platform are people who have an audience. People know and love them. They see their courses as a product, as a service, as an offering, right? And they are sharing those also, and that goes into the gig economy.

And so, we're also in that very shared economy mindset, like Uber and Lyft, where people are being able to have a job, and then they can do these things on the side and earn income. And we're also expanding



now into content creation, and also we're going to be offering a therapy marketplace, which is so much different, Mattie. I don't know if you've looked for a job lately, but I don't have to do anything. I get texts all the time. I get LinkedIn messages. There are so many jobs out there, but they're not what I want. So, we're turning the tables on that, and the therapist is going to say, "This is when I'm available. These are my areas of expertise. And you can connect with me here". And so, it's just a different way of doing it, and I really think that this is going to be amazing for our industry because there are such – there's such a shortage.

So, for new people, coming into the field, thank you so much. We need you. But we also need you happy. And that's where I feel like we're leading the industry, again, in this new idea of you shape what it looks like when you're available. And if it's in person, great. If it's through teletherapy, we have everything you need to provide it.

Mattie Murrey 15:51

I love that because so many SLPs today feel that they have lost control. And so, they come to my websites, and this podcast, saying, "How do I get control back? How do I get the passion back?" We are in this field because we are givers, and we have a reason why we want to do what we want to do. And to be able to have these resources and that support, and just that – mainlining that passion, and that drive, that excitement back in, and with like-minded individuals is just really an incredible offering.

Mai Ling Chan 16:30

Exactly. And we need to stay with the people who are leading the industry. So, professionally, we use the words like thought leaders, and it's essential because these are people who are plugging into all other industries and saying, "Hey, could that work here?" And we need that because our field has become a little stale, a little archaic.

Mattie Murrey 16:47

Right.

Mai Ling Chan 16:47

And so, these fresh, new ideas is essential, and we're seeing that. We say the millennial group, but then there's also the group after that who are coming up, and just so exciting. The woke population. We're not going to accept these things anymore. It's the – we have transgender. We have Black Lives Matter. I mean, there's just so many things that has moved into our speech therapy realm.

One of the things I'm really proud of is the types of courses that we're offering, and we offer these conferences for free. So, please follow us at Xceptional Learning, because we have five conferences a year that each have five courses that are free, and they are collaborative. So, some of them might be a deep dive to a speech specific area, but most of them, we're trying to do where you work with your Occupational Therapist or your social service provider, and really bringing all team members to the table so, we're not so siloed in our offerings.



Matty Murrey 17:41

Yeah.

Mai Ling Chan 17:41

And one of the conferences we did in the fall, Mattie, was about stuttering redefined. And because we're very school based, this was essential because we were looking at what are the long term ramifications of stuttering therapy. And so, we had John Gomez on there, who is also an author in my books, and what he did was a documentary talking to adults who had had speech therapy. And they talked about the impact – positive and negative. And it was very, very interesting. And so, that helped to support this new culture that is coming out in stuttering therapy where we're looking at whole person, instead of just remediating, and changing ...

Matty Murrey 18:20

Yes.

Mai Ling Chan 18:20

... and pointing out stuttering incidences. We're talking about how do they feel? Do they want to remediate this? Or do they want to live with this in the best way possible? And it actually brought me to tears? There was a couple of the presentations that our chat was just blowing up because they were like, "Yes! Yes!" Because we're feeling this. We're sitting across from our client going they don't want to be here. They just want to be happy.

And I had a fifth grader who loved himself. He presented. He had no issues or anything, and he was like, "Do I have to be here?" And I was like, "No. I mean, why are you coming here? Because you like yourself, and you have no issues". So, I had to do most of my work with the parents. But I didn't have the research, and I didn't have the backup of what is going on now. So in my IDs, I was failing the system. I wasn't hitting his goals, which were so many stuttering incidences, and being less over time.

And so, it's really interesting what's going on. And I'm so proud to be at the epicenter of that, is being on the edge of change and progressive change. So, that's where my passion is,

Mattie Murrey 19:27

It's your legacy. I know with my work, this is my legacy. This is what I'm leaving to a career that has served me well, and I've served it well.

And being at the point in my career, this is just – it's just gives me goosebumps listening to your stories, and in feeling where the potential our careers – I mean, our field would be a better word, where our field has to go, and how we can be dynamic in meeting the needs of those we work with. Like I heard you say moving into the whole person, and moving into parent coping, and stepping away from the checkbox, checkbox, checkbox.

Mai Ling Chan 20:14

Yep.

Mattie Murrey 20:14

Pretty exciting to be thinking outside of the box on those.

Which brings me to a question. You are on the *What I Didn't Learn in Graduate School Series*. What is one thing that you did not realize when you graduated from grad school?

Mai Ling Chan 20:30

I really believed that I had learned everything I needed to know to get out there. And when I showed up for my first days, obviously, we had done our clinical rounds, but I'm in there the first day, and I'm a Speech Therapist. I really thought, "Okay, this is it. I have everything I need". And I struggled that whole first year, because I had to just really be humbled to realize, "Oh, my gosh. There is so much I don't know".

Mattie Murray 20:54

Yeah.

Mai Ling Chan 20:54

And I don't know – yeah, I mean, how can our professors let us know that in each class? I don't know. But I think if I was more prepared that would have been better. And I was a returning student. So, I was an older adult, and I didn't – I don't know, I still whole like glassy-eyed new professional look, I'm sure.

Mattie Murrey 21:15

I taught a class yesterday, and I told my students, somebody asked something about -- it's 4:50, so we're going over all of the ASHA, The Big Nine, and they said, "Is this everything that we need, are going to learn in graduate school?" And I'm like, "Yes. There is so much to know. And the smartest you will ever be, is when you graduate from graduate school because that's when you think you know everything...

Mai Ling Chan 21:41

Right.

Mattie Murray 21:41

... and then the more you get into your career, the more you realize you really don't know everything, and how much you have to learn".

Mai Ling Chan 21:48



Excellent. And it sounds like they're very blessed to have you, Mattie.

Mattie Murrey 21:52

I really enjoy teaching. It really is a transition piece for me, where I take my experience, I share my stories, and I teach. I teach the students and help them understand the field that they're stepping into, and the importance of what we do.

Mai Ling Chan 22:11

Excellent. And just to share, we've had a number of professors now who are including *Becoming an Exceptional SLP Leader* in their professional issues classes.

Mattie Murrey 22:21

Oh, excellent. We'll have to put that on our docket, and I'll bring that up at a faculty meeting.

I would encourage our listeners to really go check out your website. There's a lot there, and it's very neatly organized, and streamlined. It's easy to read where you want to go, and follow those links. It's just like opening a great gift on Christmas morning. It's like, look at all these things in here.

Mai Ling Chan 22:47

Great, thank you.

Mattie Murrey 22:48

I'm so excited.

How did you – one thing that strikes me about the stories that you've created with your books, and how have you been able to so successfully build relationships with other SLPs, and with some of the other human beings in the book?

Mai Ling Chan 23:11

That's a great question. LinkedIn has been amazing for me. And I know that we're not very strong in that social media outlet for our field, because we've done a lot of research there. Or there's a lot of Speech Language Pathologists who at least have a profile that they have like an egghead for their avatar.

So, for anyone who's new, I really invite you to get on LinkedIn. Fill it out as much as you can. I mean, obviously, if you're first starting you don't have a lot of experience, but put stuff up there. Connect with the people in your classes, with your professors. Use that as a professional – like kind of a job board, a connecting board.

That's where I started. And, again, it was back in 2012, so there weren't a lot of us on there. And so, it was kind of lonely. I was very active on Twitter, and that's actually another one that I highly recommend.



In addition to – I know we love the Instagram photos, and the Facebook groups, but you definitely want to have a presence in these social media places because that's how I built my first company.

So, my first company was called Yapp Guru, Y-A-P-P, a play on talking, and we were reviewing the apps that were being used for speech therapy, and in classrooms, and also going into hospitals. And so, by being active in those social media channels, that's where I was able to connect with people who weren't just local to me, right, and who weren't just from my university.

And then, because of the podcast – and now you know this – because of the podcast, I needed to have guests, right. And so, the first one I did was 51 consecutive episodes, which was really hard. So, every week I dropped another episode, and that was a learning curve for myself being a podcast host. But then, also I had to find people that were valuable, and that somebody would want to listen to every week. And I actually did not want to do just a speech therapy podcast because I'm super curious. So, I had a lot of interesting people who were doing amazing things in the space of disability. So, I went a little broader. And that has just opened up my world, Mattie, just reaching out, watching the news, getting referrals from people. People were like, “Mai, you've got to talk to this person. They're amazing”. And then, of course, saying, “Yes, I would love to hear your story”. And shaping what parts of that story is valuable to share in your 45 minutes.

Mattie Murrey 25:25

Right.

Mai Ling Chan 25:25

And that's what you're doing now, is trying to figure out what is it that can really help your listener because that's why we do this program.

Mattie Murray 25:33

Exactly.

Mai Ling Chan 25:33

So, that's been amazing to me.

And then from that, then I was able to create the book. My first one was only with people who were guests on the podcast. That was incredible. The second one is – because I have just an amazing link to AAC, I love everything about it. And, of course, because it's technology also. And so, I was able to take some people who were podcast guests, and then other people that were through my circles, and so warm referrals. And then the SLP one, you used the word legacy, and that is close to my heart as I said. I'm going to do the SLP one, and that is my last book. I'm saying it's my last book because there's so much work. It really is. But I'm just – I'm really glad to have tried to have brought together a very eclectic group of people and their offerings.



But I could go on, and I actually have had some calls already where people are like, “Mai, we really want you to do something that possibly could be like mental health related, or actors in disability related”. That's a really big movement right now. And I know you've seen the change, where it used to be somebody like Forrest Gump, where the person playing the role of someone with a disability doesn't actually have the disability.

Mattie Murrey 26:42

Right.

Mai Ling Chan 26:42

So, now we need to see people like us, whether it's gender, or whether it's culture, or whether it's disability. So, there's a real push for that. But these – all these people are outside my little SLP bubble. And so, I just love that. I love having the connections with people.

A really interesting one is – for the *Becoming an Exceptional AAC Leader* book, I am so very honored that the person who wrote the foreword for that book is Alan Brightman. And he is the person who was hired to work with Apple, and talk about disability with them, disability accessibility way back when. And so, on my podcast interview with him he talks about how he sat down all of the exact same top people, and told them “Put your hands under your lap, and try to turn the computer in front of you on”. And they all like nervously laughed, and he's like, “I'm not kidding”. And that was the beginning of you need to look at this from a different lens, and he started everything for us. So, that's just – it's incredible for me, and I was referred to him through a warm referral.

Mattie Murrey 27:50

Again, goosebumps. I have – have you ever heard that TED Talk, I'm not sure who it was by, but it's the rejection challenge.

Mai Ling Chan 27:58

No.

Mattie Murrey 27:58

It's a wonderful TED Talk. It's about a gentleman – and I've developed something in my courses here on the SLP rejection challenge – but it's learning how to accept rejection. Not on a personal – I mean, people likely aren't rejecting you for personal reasons. They just – it's not the right time. It's not the right moment. It's whatever. And working, and moving, and expanding into the circles you've expanded in. And so many of the greats in your book, the greats that I know that have been on the podcast, requires a fair amount of putting yourself out there, and being okay with the rejection from some of the big names. It also – I don't really think I've had any rejections where somebody's said, “Nope”. I have had amazing people come on who are outside of my world. Because I work in the mental wellness world. I work a lot with suicide recovery. They're like, “We would love to support you”.



So, tell me, share with me how you developed the bravery, the fortitude to step forward into saying, "This is what I want to do and where I want to go". What crossed – what helped you take that first step across the threshold?

Mai Ling Chan 29:18

That's a great, great question. And I would say 15 years ago, I would not be able to answer it maturely, is a great way to put it. I was definitely the person who wanted to be liked by everyone, just kind of like that puppy dog, "What can I do? How can I make your life better? And what do you mean, you don't like me?" But Brené Brown has come into all of our lives...

Mattie Murray 29:38

Yes.

Mai Ling Chan 29:38

... and talking about mobility and leadership. And when I first started reading, I can say I really did not understand. But I definitely had the "What? What do you mean you say you don't know something?" But reading a lot of different books, and a lot of different thought leadership has helped me a lot.

But I tell you, someone said to me the other day, just like you're saying, just "Mai, you're so courageous". And I said, "That's funny", because I don't get out of bed going, "I'm going to be courageous today". Like, it's just I have this idea, or I have something I have to do, and I just am driven to do it. But then the universe has given me the extra challenge that I've always needed, which is, you can't please everyone all the time.

So, the things that I do are very public. And I've posted things on Instagram, I've done an interview where I've asked a question, or I've responded a certain way. I put my books out. And people respond, and they give you feedback. And every time you get that, you get the opportunity to grow.

Mattie Murray 30:39

Right.

Mai Ling Chan 30:39

Whether it's you agree with them, you don't agree with them, you learn something. Or, Mattie, you learn to just say, "Thank you for sharing", and you don't let it eat at you. With the books, I have gotten wonderful feedback. I've gotten wonderful criticism, and they've helped me for each of the next books. So, I would say my third one is the best.

And just like when we practice, it's practice. You go out and it's your first swallow eval, you do your best. I put everybody on puree, because I was afraid that they would have aspiration pneumonia. Right? So, I apologized, but I was erring on the side of caution.



But with the books, I would say, there is definitely times when I'll get a criticism, and in the beginning it was like, "Ooh, what?" And I'm going to have a glass of wine and think about this, or I'm going to call my friends and talk to them about it. And they'll tell me, "You're a wonderful person, Mai. This is just someone's opinion". And then there's times that I learned...

Mattie Murrey 31:32

Yes.

Mai Ling Chan 31:32

... and I was like, "You know what, they're right, and I'm not going to do that the next time, and I'm going to shape that. I'm going to work on it".

But yeah, it's – the last book, I have to say, was the first time that I was like, you know what, I'm really, really proud of this. And I appreciate everyone's opinions, and I stick to all the decisions that I made. And I'll tell you, you might not be getting this on your podcast, but I have gotten this, is, "Why was this person in it? And why wasn't that person in it?" And I'd say, "Because I can only do 14 or 15? I'm not doing an encyclopedia!" But in the beginning, I'd be like, "Oh, gosh, you're right. I don't know". And after a while, I was like, no, I'm going to make my decisions, and I stand by them, and I know. I know why, and why not. I have good reasons, and sometimes it just didn't work out.

And you just have to stand by yourself, but that only comes with experience, and for any of us are going to have children or have children, you know this, Mattie. You can't just open the head of your child and put all of your experience in their head. Right?

Mattie Murrey 32:31

No!

Mai Ling Chan 32:32

And protect them from everything in the world. Right?

Mattie Murrey 32:36

Yeah.

Mai Ling Chan 32:36

Yeah. And they need to go through it.

And so, I can say that as an author of three published books that have all made Amazon Best Seller for at least a day, I have been through a lot to get to this point, and I'm very proud of it, and I have learned so much, and I thank everyone for their positive and negative feedback. It's helped me to grow as a person.



Mattie Murrey 32:56

I listened to a podcast by Amy Porterfield, and she had an episode where she talked about there's no such thing as bad decisions. Because we make the decisions that we make at the time with the information that we have, and then we evolve from that decision. We either say, "Yes, that was a good decision", or "I'm going to change it so it's a better decision in the long run".

And so, when you're an SLP who is stepping out into different things, or branching out into private practice, or creating a website, it's being able to dynamically respond to what you have coming in.

Mai Ling Chan 33:40

Mhm.

Mattie Murrey 33:41

Share with us the name of your podcast, please.

Mai Ling Chan 33:44

It's actually called Xceptional leaders.

And the reason why I have Xceptional on everything is because I saw years ago that the field was trying to change from special to exceptional. And so, special has always encompassed both sides of the bell curve, which is people who are needing support and people who are gifted. And we forget about our gifted students, that they're just – they also need support, but in a different way.

Mattie Murray 34:12

Right.

Mai Ling Chan 34:12

And so, I've always loved this exceptional piece, and I've seen more and more in different states they have like exceptional student services. Just changing that special needs, short bus type of mentality and lifting it, because vocabulary is so powerful.

Mattie Murrey 34:28

It is.

Mai Ling Chan 24:28

So, I love using Xceptional Leaders.

Mattie Murrey 34:30



It is. The last question, what words of advice would you give yourself? Actually, I have two questions. What words of advice would you give yourself as a new SLP?

Mai Ling Chan 34:43

Yeah, I'm really hard on myself. I've realized that, and I do a lot of yoga now! And I think just graduating, I would just be, like chill! Take it just a lot easier, or be easier on yourself. Enjoy it more, and not be so tense and worried about your own – how you're doing things.

And I provide one chapter for each of the books, and in the last book I talk about my own experience in my clinical rounds. So, a Supervisor was watching me, and one of my professors, and I was doing it at the school, and there's a video that I could watch afterwards. And I talk about how I watched myself, and I was so critical. And looking back and reading that story, I decided to share that experience because I'm sure that we all have those moments of opportunity.

So, it's the opportunity to grow, but then also just being so hard on yourself. And so, like I look back, and I forgive myself for being so hard. So, I really offer this is, see all these things as opportunities, not criticisms.

Mattie Murrey 35:48

Are there any words of advice you were given that you are grateful you did not follow?

Mai Ling Chan 35:53

Yeah, okay. So, there is one. And that was, if I stay in the school system for like ever and ever, then I could retire, and I could have a pension and all of that. And I was like, "There's no way I'm doing that!" And I'm so glad, because financially, I am so much better off now than if I had stayed and done the step system of getting – incrementally. But then, just so our listeners know, I don't just do things that are speech therapy related. Obviously, we have investments. I have real estate, and I love doing that.

So, you definitely can be a whole person. You're not just that nine to five, what do I do for my day job? So, explore, expand. And if being at one place, and getting that retirement income is – feels good for you, then definitely. But specifically, for me, I'm glad that I didn't do that.

Mattie Murrey 36:43

Any words of action you can give listeners right now to when we're done, they can go and do?

Mai Ling Chan 36:48

Yeah. Read or listen to anybody who's doing leadership in the field, and also outside of the field. So, like you just talked about Amy Porterfield. She has her own company. Can you remind me what she does?

Mattie Murrey 37:02



Marketing Made Easy, I think.

Mai Ling Chan 37:05

Right.

Mattie Murray 37:07

Or Marketing Made Simple?

Mai Ling Chan 37:07

So, she's incredible.

Mattie Murray 37:10

She is.

Mai Ling Chan 37:10

She's been around a long time, yeah. And she's also referred to you now by Mattie. So, write that name down and go listen.

We all have our people, and they may or may not resonate with you, but start listening. Like, I love Oprah, and she has Super Soul Sunday podcasts, and fascinating how she deep dives into a deep conversation with different leaders of the world. So, I love doing that.

But just always be learning. Always have that mindset that whether you're listening to a podcast, reading a book, watching a TED talk, definitely give yourself that time to do it.

I can't help myself, Mattie. I'm sure you're like that. I'm always like, ooh, like Brené Brown's new book is out. It's called Atlas of the Heart. I already have it!

But yeah, go outside the field.

Mattie Murrey 37:54

I have that book as well, and I'm going to be launching a book club every month of thought leader books, just outside of our field but coming together as a common ground as SLPs. And I have just looked up Amy Porterfield, and it's Online Marketing Made Easy.

Mai Ling Chan 38:13

Perfect.



Mattie Murray 38:14

So – and I was referred to her by another SLP, who was a guest on the podcast. And it's linking all of those, this is why this is called The Missing Link, is we all – if we share, connect, learn from one another, are curious and support one another, it's just – it makes the world a better place. Not that life is all rosy and perfect, life can be hard. Life can be challenging. You'll have those 3AM thoughts, which is another good website. Lots of good things out there, and you don't have to do it alone.

So, I love your passion, and I love your drive. Tell us once again where to find you, please.

Mai Ling Chan 38:54

Great. So, you could find me on mailingchan.com. Mai Ling looks like mailing, like mailing a letter. And then Xceptional Learning, and we spell it X-C-E-P-T-I-O-N-A-Llearning.com. And that's where you'll find the professional development. Definitely sign up for the free memberships, and you'll get the free conferences. And then we do ASHA reporting. I know that's really important to a lot of people. And we also have AOTA approval. So, we're also doing occupational courses, occupational therapy courses. And then the teletherapy and digital content is also available. So, you can follow us over there. And the Xceptional Learning Podcast.

Mattie Murrey 39:33

That's lots, lots that you're offering. Thank you for everything. Thank you for coming on today.

Mai Ling Chan 39:39

Thank you, Mattie, for having me, and it's been great to hang out with you.

Mattie Murrey 39:50

I hope today's conversation has created some aha moments for you, and motivated you to become a better SLP, continuing to connect some of those missing links between what you know and how to use that knowledge.

Thank you for downloading The Missing Link for SLP's Podcast, and if you enjoyed the show, I'd love you to subscribe, rate it, and leave a short review. Also, please share an episode with a friend. Together, we can raise awareness and help more SLPs find and connect those missing links, and get the information needed to help them feel confident in their patient care every step of the way.

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