



# The Missing Link for SLPs Podcast

## What I Didn't Learn in Grad School Series

[freshslp.com](http://freshslp.com)

### Episode 93: Dedicated and Determined: Rose Griffin on Finding and Following Her Passion

A school-based placement in her final year of grad school led this week's guest, Rose Griffin, to a long and successful career dedicated to helping kids with autism communicate. Learn how she developed and honed her skills over the years in different roles. And how invaluable she found gaining practical experience to be.

Hear great examples of how Rose has laid the foundations, built rapport, and established baseline measures with kids she's worked with. She also has great advice for communicating with others involved in a child's wellbeing.

Rose also reminds us about the importance of professionalism and positivity as an SLP. And remembering to ensure you have a good work-life balance!

#### Discussion & Reflection Questions

1. Have you identified a niche you want to work in? Think about how you can get experience in that area in a variety of ways.
2. How do you stay focused on your "why" you're becoming an SLP? How do you bring it to the fore during challenging times?
3. Have you thought about different ways to build rapport with students you may work with?
4. Are there student success stories that have inspired you? Think about how you can give yourself a refresher on those moments.
5. How's your work-life balance and boundary setting? Do you make time for outside activities with friends and family?

#### About Rose Griffin



Rosemarie Griffin, MA, CCC/SLP BCBA, is an ASHA certified Speech-Language Pathologist and Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

She divides her time between a public school and her own private practice, ABA SPEECH.

She is the founder of ABA SPEECH. ABA SPEECH offers therapy services, courses, consultations

and products geared towards helping autistic students find their voice.

Rose is also the host of the Autism Outreach Podcast, a weekly show all about autism and communication. She is a sought after speaker who enjoys connecting with audiences at the local, state and national level.

Rose is passionate about the mission of ABA SPEECH, which is to help all students become more independent communicators.

In her free time she LOVES to spend time with her 3 little ones, hubby and doing ORANGE THEORY!

## 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.

### Quote from the Conversation

*"Get as much experience as you can. I think when I was a student, that's definitely what I did, is I tried to take it all in. Once I knew what I wanted to do was autism, I really just went for those opportunities that I knew were going to give me that experience, that were going to help me be immersed in helping autistic learners. Every single step in my career has always been about autism."*

- Rose Griffin

### Quote from the Conversation

*"I think if I had some words of wisdom on what I didn't learn in grad school, it was about how to be professional. They were never addressed. You don't talk badly about people, and you don't talk about people when they're not in the room. And if you have a conflict, you go to that person. Those are just ways to professionally handle yourself."*

-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](http://FreshSLP.com) or [badassslp.com](http://badassslp.com).

Let's make those connections. You got this!

*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](mailto:Mattie@FreshSLP.com)!*

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

# 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 of The Missing Link for SLPs. I am here with Rose Griffin, another Midwesterner, like I am. Welcome, Rose.

**Rose Griffin** 00:48

I'm happy to be here.

**Mattie Murrey** 00:50

So, tell us a little bit about yourself. You're coming in on the series for What I Didn't Learn in Grad School, and you're coming in with a very specific niche.

**Rose Griffin** 00:58

Yes. So, I am a Speech Language Pathologist, and I have been one for about 20 years, crazy to say. So. I call myself – instead of saying old, I like to say I'm seasoned.

**Mattie Murrey** 01:09

Yes.

**Rose Griffin** 1:00

That's my catchphrase!



**Mattie Murray 1:11**

Me too!

**Rose Griffin 1:11**

Yes, very seasoned, and I've been here a while. And I have been a SLP and Board Certified Behavior Analyst for the past 10 years, and there are less than 450 people worldwide with both those certifications. And it really allows me to specialize in helping autistic learners make meaningful progress, and I'm very passionate about helping all autistic individuals, and especially students who have behavioral barriers, students who are hard to engage – that's really my jam.

And it all started – I had a really amazing student teaching experience, that's what we call it here in Ohio. I was in grad school at Kent State, and I had this really dynamo school-based speech therapist. And we had some kids with high support needs who had had autism, and I just started there and then just always really felt drawn to those types of kids.

And what kind of has happened over 20 years, is that when you are into that type of learner, that just becomes your whole caseload, which I really love. So, I love having those moments, those teachable moments, where you get to hear a student say their first word.

**Mattie Murrey 2:17**

Mhm.

**Rose Griffin 2:17**

Or you get to set a student up with an AAC device, and see them flourish and have a way to communicate, and that's just not always the case for autistic students. And so, that's really kind of where it all started.

And most recently, in the past four years, I started my own business called ABA Speech. And we help speech therapists understand how to work effectively with autistic learners, and we do that through a podcast, and products, and we're an ASHA approved CE provider. So CEU's, that's also my jam!

**Mattie Murrey 02:49**

And you and I just got back from ASHA.

**Rose Griffin 02:52**

Yes, that was amazing. I was just saying how I did a talk about leisure skills for students in middle school and high school, which I think is such an underserved population, an age group. And so, I got such nice feedback from people, and it was really nice to connect with people, even if it was virtual. It was great.

**Mattie Murrey 03:07**



So, now you and I are both podcast hosts. One of the things that I love about podcasts is when you just get this vibe going with somebody.

**Rose Griffin 3:16**

Yes.

**Mattie Murrey 3:16**

And this conversation starts, and they just – wooh, they pick up! And you are just – you're just perky. You're smiling. You are in your groove doing what you do!

**Rose Griffin 03:26**

Oh, thank you. I love having a podcast. I know what you mean. Because sometimes you'll have people on and you're like, oh my goodness, that was just so special. It's just a really cool vibe. Agreed.

**Mattie Murrey 03:36**

Yes. So, you are on – a little bit of backstory, you're on What I Didn't Learn in Grad School because I know so many students who are going through grad school, and they have no clue what they want to do, and even really what's out there.

And your world is autism, and our neuro diverse friends who have these challenges in their life. Did you know about this when you were in grad school?

**Rose Griffin 04:01**

No. I mean, not until my final year of graduate school when I did my school-based placement. That's really – I had a Professor, I was just telling you before we started recording, that was on the Autism Outreach Podcast, my podcast, it's going to air tomorrow, Dr. Audet. She was really instrumental. She just had a class. It wasn't about autism, but that was her specialty, and I could just feel her passion when she taught. And so, I didn't really meet any autistic individuals clinically, until I was in my last year of graduate school. That's really where I became immersed. And I just had this really great speech therapist that was a school-based SLP, and she just really loved all students, but she really was in tune with trying to help support autistic students. And there were, I'd say, about five kids who really had high support needs. They were not yet speaking. They were in elementary school. And I loved working with all the students, but I definitely loved working with those students. I felt like when we had little successes in therapy, or somebody said something spontaneously, I just felt like it was the most exciting thing, and I still feel that way totally years later. So, yeah, that's kind of where it all started.

**Mattie Murrey 05:14**

So, walk us through the course of your career. You said you've practiced for 20 years.

**Rose Griffin 5:19**



Yes.

**Mattie Murrey** 05:19

Where was your clinical fellowship? And at what point did you start to think about doing a private practice?

**Rose Griffin** 05:25

Absolutely. So, I started as a school-based clinician five days a week. I actually, at that time, didn't have a whole lot of autistic learners because there was a person in my District that specialized in just helping students with more high support needs, so autistic learners, students with complex needs.

And then what was crazy, is that year my job got – I knew I wasn't going to have it the next year because there was a major financial error made by the Treasurer. This is really wild. So, I was able to go on interviews that year. So, it was very sad because it was my CFY year, and I was so excited, thinking that I would work in this District, maybe forever, I don't know. And I took a position at a non-public school. And this non-public school helped serve students who are autistic, and it served students who had behavioral barriers, and major behavioral challenges, and this was their least restrictive environment.

And so, I was school-based for a year, and then I was immersed in this – I always call it my autism boot camp, where I did learn about applied behavior analysis, and I did learn about working with students who had behavioral challenges, and I did that for three years. And then I actually, I really liked school, I guess, and so I went on and I got my administrative licensure, and took some jobs like that, and then I got my BCBA. And then I just kind of morphed into – now what I do is I work in a public school, and I have my own private practice, and ABA Speech, which is the podcast and courses, and all these things. I just really loved learning from other speech therapists.

Like right before I was on, I was doing a Facebook Live for people who have taken one of our autism courses. And I'm just amazed that people would join me on Facebook. They ask really relevant questions about the course, and they want to learn. And that excites me because what I'm learning about my private practice in this platform I have at ABA Speech is that I can help so many people in this work that I'm doing, in this work on the podcast, in this work that I'm doing on social media. As silly as it seems, I'm on this app called TikTok, which is like a dancing app, and a way to disseminate, and I have videos that have been reached by almost 200,000 people. And it's just really...

**Mattie Murrey** 7:39

Wow!

**Rose Griffin** 7:39

Yeah. And it's about IEPs. It's just really cool to know that what I'm doing in my daily work, and what I've done in my career so far, is able to help other people, or just give people things to think about, and what they're doing in their practice, and how my strategies may help their students.



**Mattie Murrey** 07:57

So, constantly thinking...

**Rose Griffin** 7:39

Yes.

**Mattie Murrey** 7:39

... constantly turning, and then presenting it to everybody else to learn, to collaborate, to improve.

**Rose Griffin** 08:06

Absolutely, yes. I love that. Content creation is definitely something I love.

**Mattie Murrey** 08:12

So, something interesting about your journey in specializing in working with autism individuals – and I hope I said that, right, because autism is not my world – is that you started off in graduate school. You had these opportunities. You found somebody who just really had that joy, and you reached out. They were mentoring, they were your supervisor. And then you began to add different pieces ...

**Rose Griffin** 8:37

Yes.

**Mattie Murrey** 8:37

... to your skill set. How did you decide which pieces to pick up?

**Rose Griffin** 08:42

Yeah. I think what it was, is I always felt, I always hurt – my heart always hurt for these kids that are in these non-public programs. They don't come to us, typically. Now, services have evolved a lot over the past 20 years, but when I was first working in non-public programs, the kids that we were getting were not very small kids. They were kids that were in middle school. They were kids that were upper elementary.

And we had one kid that was 18. It wasn't even my client, but I talk about him a lot in my trainings because it devastates me. He was 18. He had no way to communicate besides using very unsafe behavior that was a barrier to his learning, and a barrier to him accessing the community. And my coworker was able to work with him, and taught him how to use an AAC device, just to kind of orient and request and get his needs and wants met throughout the day. And I just hated that that student had to wait until 18, and I thought, why is this happening in our field?

And so, everything that I do now is to make sure that speech therapists feel supported. Because another thing I do is – something new, I'm trying to help parents through advocacy work. So, I was just on a call with a parent today who lives in a very rural district. And she said, "My speech therapist exited my son", or, "I've



heard my speech therapist exited my son because they were not yet speaking". And that – my heart hurts for that student, and for that family, but also for the speech therapist because sometimes if you're not really understanding how to help serve your students it can feel very overwhelming, and it can feel very hard.

And so, that's why I have always felt very passionate about helping the students that are hard to reach. And then also supporting the students, the speech therapists, the families, when it is hard, when our traditional speech therapy strategies that we're taught in graduate school are not working for this learner. It's like what do we do then? Where do we go now?

**Mattie Murrey 10:32**

Have you – this is not on our list of questions that I had pre-written or you had given me, but so many of us struggle with being burned out, overwhelmed, and you just hit on a topic there when we aren't equipped, when we don't know what to do.

**Rose Griffin 10:48**

Yes.

**Mattie Murrey 10:48**

Have there ever been times in your career where you have felt overwhelmed, unprepared, overburdened? What did you do?

**Rose Griffin 10:57**

Absolutely. I mean, I think that's how I felt a long time ago when I started working in a non-public program. So, I think this is how I got completely immersed in learning about applied behavior analysis, and thinking like, wow, this is really helping a student who was 18, who had no way to communicate. He was completely immersed in school, but they just couldn't reach this student. And when I saw that this student was able to be reached, I thought I want to learn all about this. And over time, I've just been able ...

**Mattie Murrey 11:27**

Goosebumps!

**Rose Griffin 11:27**

Yeah. It's exciting, because I don't want anybody to feel that way. And we would look at this student's record review, and like his old paperwork, and he was in speech therapy, and it just – it's hard because what I'm doing now – not because I didn't have great professors because I did – but I did not know what to do.

I remember working with a three-year-old outpatient, like right when I got out of graduate school, and he was autistic, and he didn't like really want to engage in the therapy session that I had planned, and the activities, and I didn't know what to do. And I went to my supervisor and said, "Hey, like, I'm not sure here. Like, this kid is upset. Like, he's not yet speaking. I don't know how to reach him". And my supervisor said, "Work on joint attention". And I was like, okay, that doesn't help. Like, I need a tutorial. I need you to show me. Like, okay, we know what joint attention is – shared activities, connection before communication, but you can do it through





play, you can do it through books, you can do it through songs. There's so many ways to do it, but nobody out there was doing courses on this.

Now, it's almost like speech therapists have so much they have to choose what they're going to learn about, but back when I was out there, it was like navigating the wild, wild west. I mean, I just was trying to learn everything that I could so that I could help every student on my caseload start communicating, because that wasn't the case for these students.

**Mattie Murrey 12:48**

But you identified the main problems they had...

**Rose Griffin 12:51**

Yes.

**Mattie Murrey 12:51**

... and then you went about finding your skill set to meet those needs that they had, learn more, reach them, connect and grow.

**Rose Griffin 13:01**

Absolutely, yes. I just immerse myself in learning about how to help them.

**Mattie Murrey 13:06**

So, how do we get started in therapy with students who are not yet talking?

**Rose Griffin 13:10**

That's a great question. I think the most important thing is to build a rapport with students, and I think this idea of connection before communication. So, the idea of working on joint attention or shared activities where we're doing things together. Which when you're working with younger students, this can be a little bit easier because there's more things to do. You can do songs together. You can do toys together, books together.

And I think the thing that's hard, especially when I was a student, is trying to tell parents, they may see this type of – like they may not understand that this is where communication starts. We know that parents are probably – I'm a parent of three. You want your kids to hit their milestones. You want your kids to talk if they're not talking, etc. But you have to start here. You have to start with foundational skills, like engaging in shared activities. I think that's really, really important. And it's important to be able to tell parents that too. Like, hey, these are things that we can do. This type of engagement together on something is really, really important. This is a foundation that we're laying for other skills. So, I think I wish somebody would have told me that a long time ago. Just start on that.

Also, just thinking about how is your student requesting right now? Are they pulling their parents over to the pantry, as I often see when I'm on a home visit. Are they able to point? Pointing, and those are definitely very



important foundational skills. Following one step directions. If you're seeing a student like in the clinic or a home environment, it can be very, very natural.

And I think just this idea of play. Like I was talking to another speech therapist today who's in one of my courses, and she said, "What if the kid doesn't like to play with anything? Or he's dumping everything out". I'm like, "Well, he likes to dump stuff out. What other toys can we do where we're dumping things out?" I mean, I can think of a million things for toddlers and preschool students.

So, sometimes what we have to do is think about what does our student really love and enjoy? And can we do that activity with them to then also work on that connection? And really, to become close with that student? I think that's how I've always felt with kids, autistic learners, is that I feel like I want to build a rapport with them. I want them to know I get you. If you're communicating this way on this day, but this way on this day, I understand. I'm here to help make it all make sense for you.

**Mattie Murrey 15:41**

And you're entering their world ...

**Rose Griffin 15:43**

Yeah.

**Mattie Murrey 15:43**

... with their strengths, and identifying their strengths.

**Rose Griffin 15:46**

Yes, absolutely. I think that's very, very important.

**Mattie Murrey 15:50**

How do you do an assessment with someone who's not talking yet?

**Rose Griffin 15:54**

That's a great question, and I think that's really what's hard for speech therapists. That oftentimes we are trying to give something like a PLS, or something that's a standardized test. And oftentimes, our students are not going to sit for that type of test. They may not engage for that type of test. They may not sit at the table. I mean, most of the students that I work with that are itty-bitties that are young, are not sitting. They're not going to sit at the table, and that's really not appropriate for a lot of kids at that age.

**Mattie Murrey 16:22**

Right.

**Rose Griffin 16:22**



So, how do we get a good snapshot? Because this is what happens is we don't have a great robust assessment, then going into therapy and setting the goals, it's like an absolute mystery. And then it's like, well, what do we work on? The student doesn't engage. They don't seem to like the activities that I've planned. They didn't get a standardized score. And what do I do now?

So, I always try to say do an observation. Like I have a course called Start Communicating Today, that's an ASHA approved CE course, and one called Help Me Find My Voice that's for school aged students. And in those courses, I do have informal screeners that talk about some of these foundational skills. Like joint attention. Can the student request? Are they able to match picture to picture? What are their play skills like? Do they have any spontaneous communication? And so, I have those in there, too. Now, the BCBA in me likes this test called the VB-MAPP, which kind of looks at some of these skills.

But I think the main thing to think about is how is the student requesting? Like, how are they currently communicating? And that really gives us a good place to start because sometimes what I see, especially as a school-based clinician, is that requesting is not something that is on the assessment, and then it's not on the IEP goals, and then it's not taught. And then a student doesn't really understand their communication is powerful because they're using communication to label an icon of the bathroom when they're on a toileting schedule, and they don't like the bathroom, and it's hard. And so, it's just like all sorts in that assessment.

The other one I wanted to make sure I mention is the Functional Communication Profile-Revised. That is also a really nice assessment because it looks at all these different parts of communication, and those foundational skills, joint attention requesting. All those different things are so, so very important, and really encompass what we should be doing to help support our early learners.

**Mattie Murrey 18:11**

That's brilliant because you take it right back to the basic things that we teach at grad school. Look overall. Here's the expressive. Here's the receptive. Where are they communicating? How are they communicating? Why? When? Purpose. Function. And then lighting those fires.

**Rose Griffin 18:30**

Absolutely. Good place to start.

**Mattie Murrey 18:33**

So, looking at goals. We've got our assessment done. We've got some strategies for engaging and building rapport with that student. What do we do about goal setting?

**Rose Griffin 18:45**

I always make sure that if I have a very early learner, and we've done an assessment, I do look at the assessment, but I always try to make sure that I do have some type of goal for that joint attention piece, those types of shared activities – for younger students especially.

And so, I was actually just writing a progress note this morning for one of my private practice clients, and so we're working on joint attention. And so, I might say the student will work on a joint attention activity, and I may have a duration on there. So, I think that's something that's important too, is how is the student



currently doing it? Including a baseline measure. A baseline measure is so very important. Knowing where are we now, and where do we want to be? And as a speech therapist, I get it. Especially as a school-based speech therapist, sometimes it is hard to make sure you have that really good baseline data.

But that's the thing too, I would – if students are listening, I really kind of had a lot of experiences as I was getting in the field, in my 20 years, where I was working with autistic students, and when I was working in the outside placement, and now in a public school. Oftentimes the IEP meetings are not just myself and the parents. It's myself, the parents, teachers, outside providers, advocates, sometimes lawyers. And I've really learned that these things are so important. Making sure you have a robust assessment, making sure you have really good baseline data, and making sure that you're really telling everybody those things. I think that when we start there, and making sure we have that shared – those shared activities, I think is the most important part. And parents, and other people, may be pressuring you. Like, you should work on labeling, and we need to do this. But we know that some of those foundational skills, like joint attention, and being able to request, and potentially pointing, and following one step directions, and play, those types of things are very, very important, and it's really like we're building a nice foundation for this student.

**Mattie Murrey** 20:50

Well said. So, for somebody who wants to follow in your footsteps, and really has the drive to work with somebody with autism, what words of wisdom do you have for them?

**Rose Griffin** 21:02

Yeah. I would just say get as much experience as you can. And I think when I was a student, that's definitely what I did, is I tried to take it all in. And then, once I knew what I wanted to do was autism, is I really just went for those opportunities that I knew were going to give me that experience, that were going to help me be immersed in helping autistic learners. And so, every single step in my career has always been about autism, whether it was an administrative position, whether it was a position as a clinician, or what I'm doing now in my private practice, in my business. Every single step that I've taken has been to be immersed in helping autistic individuals.

And so, I would just – there's so much information out there now, that you really kind of have to get into, but I'd start by taking courses, looking at some social media accounts – everything with a grain of salt, right? Because you're going to have your own experiences with your own clients, and your own students. And just, being a part of the community.

**Mattie Murrey** 22:04

A genuine, authentic member of that community.

**Rose Griffin** 22:08

Yes, absolutely.

**Mattie Murrey** 22:08

What have been some of the greatest challenges you've had in your career?



**Rose Griffin 22:14**

Some of the greatest challenges I have had in my career, I think, are just making sure that you have a good career and personal life balance.

I definitely know that when I was starting out in the field, you just feel so overwhelmed, and you feel like everything is the most important thing in the world. And while it really is, you want to make sure that you stay extremely organized. And I think that's really kind of helped me now, with my own business and things like that, the way that I've chosen my schedule, and kind of the career path that I've taken has always been because I always wanted to be a speech therapist because I love helping people. But I always knew that I wanted to have my own family too, and that was very, very important to me. And so, I set my own hours.

I have very clear work boundaries. Do I stick to those? Not all the time, but I try to. And I think back in the day, I probably wasn't as vocal enough about like having those good boundaries, and saying, like this is like – this is my family. And something about like, I have three kids, so that's really important to me. And I think anybody that I work with would say, "She's a really great speech therapist, and her family is very important to her too".

So, I think that's kind of a challenge, is you can't let yourself get so overwhelmed. I was actually down in my storage room yesterday, like cleaning out stuff, and looking for some random picture, actually, from my CFY year for this webinar I'm going to do in January. I found it. I found the yearbook that I was in. It says, "Speech Teacher". It was so funny. But I saw all these inspirational quotes that I used to have on my like notebooks and things like that when I was a student, or when I was starting out. And I think if you just have a couple of mantras, or a couple of words that really like help you feel good about the work you're doing, and to try to not get overwhelmed – easier said than done, now I'm 20 years into the field. But I think that's really what's so important because you can get so overwhelmed because we're helping people who really need our help. But you have to think about what's good for you, what's good for your family, and having those boundaries, and that balance is very, very important.

**Mattie Murrey 24:17**

Mhm. Can you share with us a story of a time you worked with an individual and you were like, "Yes, this is why I do what I do"?

**Rose Griffin 24:23**

Oh, my gosh. Yeah, of course.

I had a student who had lived in another country for 10 years, was very cared for, but did not have any way to communicate. And I met him in sixth grade, and he was autistic, he had no way to communicate. I remember the former speech therapist said "Yeah, he's kind of like a textbook". And I went down, and I tried to find all this stuff, but he really didn't. It was not functional. He wasn't using it. And I started working with this student, and really collaboratively. I had a great paraprofessional. This was in a school-based position. I was able to see this student three times per week, which is actually quite a bit of speech therapy for a school-based client, but he really needed that support. And he started talking. It was amazing! I thought he was going to use an iPad, but he couldn't point. We worked COT. He's able to point now. And we just really worked together, and we started sign language, and we started working on requesting a lot of these foundational



skills that I'm telling you. He was definitely my buddy. And he was able then to start working on verbal imitation targets. And what was amazing about this student is that he started spontaneously talking. He was able to say almost all the speech sounds that we would all say, and this didn't happen for him until sixth grade. And it was just amazing. Like, I wrote a paper for ASHA, the peer journal. I did a talk about him at ASHA.

I talk about him a lot because I would say it's like don't ever give up hope, no matter how old a student is. They may have just not come into contact with the correct therapy or correct therapists yet to help them find their voice. And that's the kind of student that I'll never forget, and that I love to share that story because I think we as speech therapists are so inspired by the work that we do.

**Mattie Murrey 26:06**

Yes.

**Rose Griffin 26:06**

Like when we're in graduate school, we're like, "Yes! I am going to help every student. I'm going to do everything". And then once you get into the field, you're like, "Uh, IEPs, progress reports, contentious IEP meetings,. Uh-oh, that person's not friendly to work with", and you kind of start to lose your focus. But you always have to stay focused on your why, which may sound cliché. But those little moments and glimmers, and those stories, I could just bore you to death, but that is what lights me up still, 20 years ago. Like, I love what I do.

**Mattie Murrey 26:38**

Mhm. When we focus on our why's, and I work on that with the grad students I work with, "What is your why?" Write it down, tuck it away, frame it, put it on a wall, but remember why we do what we do for those days when it is more hard.

**Rose Griffin 26:51**

Absolutely. Yes, I like the idea of putting it like up in your office, if it's like a saying. Because I think sometimes too, when you are working in the world – and not everywhere, I have great coworkers, but I have definitely worked with some people who I'm not sure if they still like working with kids, or they just complain about stuff.

**Mattie Murrey 27:07**

Right.

**Rose Griffin 27:07**

But I try to be extremely positive. Whether you're on my social media, or you're on my email list, or you hear my podcast, I will never talk poorly about somebody. It's not who I am at my core. And I think you just cannot get into that, which just happens in workplaces. Do you know what I mean? You've got to – especially with COVID now, it's just very stressful. So, you've got to just focus on the positive and remain flexible.



**Mattie Murrey** 27:30

I think if I had some words of wisdom on what I learned – didn't learn in grad school, it was about how to be professional. Those were never – they were never addressed.

**Rose Griffin** 27:43

Yes

**Mattie Murrey** 27:43

And you don't talk badly about people, and you don't talk about people when they're not in the room. And if you have a conflict, you go to that person. Those are just ways to professionally handle yourself.

**Rose Griffin** 27:54

Absolutely. So, I'm Italian. My maiden name was Donatelli, but my dad always had this saying that was, "The less said the better".

**Mattie Murrey** 28:01

Yes.

**Rose Griffin** 28:01

And I say the saying about every week because I work with middle school and high school students. And just in general, I'm just saying like, "the less said the better". Do you know what I mean? Like, it's just a good rule to live by.

But, I agree. Like I teach a graduate course here at Kent State for people becoming BCBA's. It's all about ethics. But we talk about – in the latter part of the course we talk about soft skills. And I'm like, don't blow off this part of the course because, honestly, this is more important than what we just discussed in the first part. Because if you go into a meeting, and you don't make a good first impression, or you go into a meeting and you don't seem collaborative, people are going to write you off, and then you've set yourself up for a lot, a lot of work.

**Mattie Murrey** 28:40

Yes. Yes, well said. So, on that note, the final question then would be, what words of advice do you have for the SLP to succeed and be successful in following his or her big why?

**Rose Griffin** 28:53

Yes. I would say just remain positive. Think about the students that you're working with now. And that what you're doing every single day is going to have a ripple effect. That you may feel like am I helping here? Am I doing anything? But what you're doing is not only helping that student, it's helping that student interact with



their siblings, that student interact better at school, or outside in the community, and that what you're doing is making a difference every single day. And remain positive and flexible.

**Mattie Murrey** 29:22

Excellent. Thank you for your time. Before we sign off, you have so many wonderful and exciting things you're doing. Can you tell us where we can find you?

**Rose Griffin** 29:32

Yes, absolutely.

Every single week we have a podcast, [Autism Outreach](#). It's all about autism and communication, and a new episode airs every single Tuesday. So, make sure to check that out.

And at [ABAspeech.org](#) we have a lot of really amazing resources. We are an ASHA approved CE provider, and we have two autism courses. One for younger students called Start Communicating Today, and one for older students called Helped Me Find My Voice, and it's for how to help students who are hard to reach. And so, I hope that you will check them out. What's cool about them is they come with a community where I go in live to our Facebook group, and I answer questions, and I do group coaching. And so, it's really nice because I get to know all of the participants. So, I hope people check me out there.

**Mattie Murrey** 30:19

Well, I am for sure going to go check you out. And it's Rose, like the flower, and Griffin.

**Rose Griffin** 30:22

Yes. That's it.

**Mattie Murrey** 30:22

Thank you very much for your time today.

**Rose Griffin** 30:27

Thanks for having me on.

**Mattie Murrey** 30:37

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.

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