

College Alternatives with Jonathan Brush[†]

Transcript of Podcast Episode 366

Julie Walker: Hello, and welcome to the Arts of Language Podcast with Andrew Pudewa, founder of the Institute for Excellence in Writing or as many like to say, “IEW.” My name is Julie Walker, and I’m honored to serve Andrew and IEW as the chief marketing officer. Our goal is to equip teachers and teaching parents with methods and materials, which will aid them in training their students to become confident and competent communicators and thinkers.

Andrew Pudewa, convention season is upon us.

Andrew Pudewa: Oh, man, it came quickly, and it’s going to be a tight, fast-moving six months here. Not six months, but four and a half, five.

Julie Walker: Well, you’re speaking; the last count I had was thirteen conferences this year.

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah. Why did you let me do that?

Julie Walker: Well, you know, we have our favorites, and we like to send you out.

Andrew Pudewa: It’s hard for me to say no.

Julie Walker: No, it’s true. It’s true. But I love that this year you’ve ... Well, you kind of do this every year, but you’ve come up with a couple new talks that I thought it would be fun for us to at least touch on. And that’s the one that you’re doing for some of the great homeschool conventions, called “Hacking High School.”

Andrew Pudewa: “Rethinking the Teenage Years.”

Julie Walker: Oh, it’s got a subtitle. I like it.

Andrew Pudewa: Well, as you know, I originally wanted to call it “Just Don’t Do High School.”

Julie Walker: No, not okay.

Andrew Pudewa: But you thought, no, that won’t fly, so. But yes, and you know, I’ve been collecting up and preparing and information. And I think it’ll be a very helpful talk because there are so many different options than what people would traditionally think of in terms of “What do you do for high school?” which is a big question you get at a homeschool convention.

Julie Walker: It is very true. And I know that you recently attended a conference and were a speaker for Unbound.

Andrew Pudewa: Unbound. Man, it was so good.

Julie Walker: Yeah.

Andrew Pudewa: I went there with very little idea of what I was going to encounter, and I came away in love. I mean, honestly, it was one of the best couple days that I have ever had anywhere, at least in terms of interacting with young people.

Julie Walker: Right, and so you had suggested at that time when you floated into my office after this conference: we should get the guy who's in charge of Unbound on our podcast.

Andrew Pudewa: And we have him today!

Julie Walker: We have him today.

Andrew Pudewa: Mr. Jonathan Brush. Welcome to the Arts of Language Podcast.

Jonathan Brush: Well, thank you so much for having me. I'm absolutely delighted to be here.

Andrew Pudewa: So just a tiny little bit of history. I am not sure; you probably remember better than I do the first time we met. A long time ago, I had some people I knew. They had a little company called CollegePlus. You got involved with that. And then I know we had a couple exchanges. And then finally you convinced me that I could come and attend one of your Unbound events. And I'd love to talk about my experience there, but give us the thumbnail sketch of what you were doing and what you're doing now.

Jonathan Brush: Yeah. Well, I laughed earlier when you said that you have a hard time saying no. And I was thinking I benefited from that in an extreme way because I was able to ask, and then you had a hard time saying no. And so I was really excited about that. Yeah, I think we met a long, long time ago at Cincinnati Airport really briefly, and I would be surprised if you remember that.

And then more recently have crossed paths at a few conferences. And one of the things that struck me is that you would say things. And I'd be like, I have students doing that. Like, we're doing that right now. And then you would say things, and I would think, I have students who ought to be doing that. We should be doing that next. And so it just seemed like there were too many overlaps to ignore. But yeah. So the really brief sketch of Unbound is that we did; we were originally a company called CollegePlus. Went through some changes and then through a whole series of really interesting things, and I really define them as miracles. And somewhat to my own shock and surprise, I wound up in charge of Unbound in July of 2020.

And at that point we did a little bit of shifting around in terms of how we run the program and what we do. And then the rest, Andrew, has been certainly a lot of hard work, but it has been a series of blessings and just some really exciting things. We got to really think about and sort of reimagine how we did education, both at the high school level, at the college level. And we run what we now call a project-based higher education program.

And that has been one of the biggest joys and most exciting things I've ever done in my life. And I get to work with some really, really interesting people and some fantastic students, and get to do things in a really different kind of way that has proven to be quite successful. And so that's kind of the quick sketch of what CollegePlus was and where we are now with Unbound.

Andrew Pudewa: Well, I remember when I was there, meeting a number of your staff or team or volunteers or all the above, thinking, wow, this is the most extraordinary collection of people. He must do his business kind of like we do, which is wait for God to send all the right people so that we get the best possible team.

Jonathan Brush: That is so, so true. I just ... Every day, Andrew, I kind of pinch myself and go, I don't understand why these people are working for me. I know I'm not paying them what they're worth, and the amount of worth that they're putting in is absolutely breathtaking.

Andrew Pudewa: Well, it's about vision. So CollegePlus when it started, was kind of this way to get a college degree in a shorter period of time for a lot less money ... came out of a book called *Accelerated Distance Learning* by Brad Voeller, which I sold for a while. And this was kind of before the whole dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment thing was well known as an option among the general homeschool high school community.

But when you took over, you changed things. You added so much value, and now the organization has really this unique, unique position in options for high school students. I know when I was there, I think I met some kids as young as sixteen, maybe fifteen, and then, you know, well into their twenties. It was kind of hard for me to tell who was how old. But the whole idea of the project-based ... Give us a little unpacking of what that means and how you came to view that as being an important part of a higher education environment or opportunity.

Jonathan Brush: Yeah, absolutely. And certainly a tip of the hat to Brad Voeller, Ryan Yamane, and Willie Robertson. Those are the guys that started CollegePlus. They really were the kind of the founders and original people that hacked college. And there was a direct line between their ideas and their innovations and what we're able to do now.

But here's something that became apparent. So Andrew, my background was in ... I was homeschooled. I'm a homeschool graduate. I then had traditional education. I went to a four-year college and graduated from there. Then I went to work for that college. In a fit of institutional insanity, they very early made me a director of admissions. And I spent about twelve years doing that in traditional higher education, then left to go work for CollegePlus, and then ended up doing kind of non-traditional higher education.

And in the process I watched some things change, I thought pretty dramatically, but got kind of excited about sharing this with people because I think a lot of people haven't quite noticed this. And what has changed is that intuitively we know that technology has changed things. But the way I often describe it, is I say, we have moved from a primarily answers-based paradigm to a questions-based paradigm. And now I'm always careful to state: When I'm talking about this, I'm talking very much in a post-high school or high school type of situation, right?

So I'm assuming and hoping and praying that a student has a really solid education background that I think looks quite traditional and classical in many ways. So a big, big proponent of those things. But then what was happening is, is people were going to college or even trying to hack college under this pretense of this idea that what they really needed was a lot of information in their head because that's what education's always been about.

And that makes sense, right, because if you go back to when I was in high school, to get new information I had to drive to the library, pull a card catalog, look at the card, find the book, read the book, memorize it, or take good notes on it. And if I forgot, I'd have to repeat that entire process. And of course, we live in a very different paradigm today, in a very different world where we have access to, you know, instant access to information.

And so what we were observing was that we live in a questions-based paradigm where knowing, having enough context – this is where you're classical or really robust elementary and secondary education comes in. Having enough context is important. But then the important skill becomes how do you ask the right questions? And that really has to do with something we call QEMCI, which is Q for quickly, E for effectively, M for mastering, C for complicated, and I for information, so QEMCI.

Julie Walker: Is this something that you came up with?

Jonathan Brush: It is.

Julie Walker: Okay. I love that.

Jonathan Brush: And look, this is just a fancy way ... And I'm not ashamed to admit that since I came up with it, I can kind of bust on a little bit. This is sort of a fancy way of saying the key academic skill today is learning how to learn. Because no matter what you do, technology is likely going to come in and obliterate whatever it is that you're doing. So technology disrupts; disruptions cause problems. Problems need to be solved. And those problems that need to be solved are often fairly new problems.

And the senior people in whatever organization you're in, very likely haven't seen this before. And so therefore, it's imperative that you are able to **quickly**, meaning that you do it faster than everybody else; **effectively**, meaning you do it so it works; **master** – you have to do it better everybody else; **complicated** because simple's easy; **information**. And so the really critical piece here is how quickly can you learn? And then how could you apply what you've learned to what's actually going on? And that's where we made the shift, Andrew, from, you know, this isn't about hacking college. This is about helping students develop skills that actually work in the world that they're living in.

And while traditional higher education models are important for certain people, and we're not ... You know, if you're going to be a brain surgeon, and there's even a slight possibility you're going to saw the top of my head off and poke around, then I want you in a very traditional academic setting. Right? But for most people, a solid majority now, it's not about packing a bunch of information to your heads so you can regurgitate it. It's about being able to learn things

quickly and then having practical experience doing things. And that's kind of the new shift that Unbound is trying to follow and prepare students for.

Andrew Pudewa: Well, we love it. We should add that as kind of a thing on our interview process.

Julie Walker: QEMCI

Andrew Pudewa: QEMCI. Yeah. Who knows? You might write about that and get in the *Business World* today or some magazine. But if you're talking to a parent at, say, a homeschool convention or just a parent you would meet somewhere, and they say, so you know, I have this sixteen-year-old, and he reads really well. He writes pretty well.

He's not sure what he wants to do. He's maybe engineering, but maybe ministry. But I'd like to kind of help him do something right now other than the typical high school curriculum thing. Give me the elevator. Plus you can go a little longer than an elevator. How would you answer that parent about what Unbound can offer?

Jonathan Brush: Yeah, so we say that Unbound is a project-based higher education program. And I would say, first of all, we offer programs specifically for high school students. And we then offer a full kind of college equivalent and actually a program that leads to a college degree. And there's some sorting that has to be done there, of course, where we're kind of asking, what is it that you want to do?

And then we try to match you to the right program. Well, not "try." That we will match you to the right program of what we offer. But here's what is at the heart of all of those programs. If you're talking about anything that we do from a simple class that we do online right through into our entire kind of college program, we would say we're going through this all in the context of an education system that we call ADULT.

And that's a acronym that stands for **ask**, so that's that questions-based paradigm; **do** with this emphasis on you have to take what you've learned, and you have to apply. You actually have to have to do something with it. **Understand**, which is this idea that you have to understand the context of what's going on in your world, the context of where you are in the world, the context of how you got into this world.

And so these are bigger worldview type issues. And so ask, do, understand. And then an education should prepare you not to get a good job, not to earn a better salary. An education should prepare you to live well. And so you have to understand what does that mean to live well? And then finally thrive. What does it mean to actually do well and to live well and to continually do that repeatedly?

And an education system that does that is an education system that'll prepare you, to your example here, whether you're going into the ministry, and you wind up in seminary, or whether you're eventually going to go to engineering school, getting an engineering degree. And so in that context, then, we can offer you three major things that are really important. We can offer

you a set of classes and courses that will be less expensive than traditional education but is all taught inside of this paradigm. Some of them will be for college credit; some of them will be to just give you practical skills.

We will give you an opportunity to use those skills because all of our students in our college program have to do a project. Our first-year students have to take an idea from an idea to reality. Our second-year students have to take somebody else's idea from an idea to reality. And our third-year students have to take a team; lead a team that takes an idea from an idea to reality. And the point here is that you have to take what you've learned and actually do something with it.

And then the third piece is the one that people sometimes blank when I tell them. I say, look, because of the wonders of technology, I can help you do this while you're embedded in your local community. That means all of your local contexts and your local church and the family you've grown up with and all those things – you can continue to leverage and be among those people. But the most important thing that offers students is a community. And when I say a community, I mean I'm going to put you in context with and in fellowship with, and in connection to a series of high-achieving people who think differently, who are really serious about their faith, and who are people who want to do things.

And your association with those people will ultimately transcend everything else I teach you. The skills I give you will help. The information that we give you is great. The fact that we can help you earn a degree, or we can help you earn really important credentials is important. But it's the community of people that you connect with that ultimately will wind up making the biggest difference. And if you question that at all, I should just show you my calendar and how many weddings I attend per year.

Andrew Pudewa: I'll say the things that impressed me the most about the students: Number one, there wasn't a single kid in any of the three presentations I gave that pulled out a phone and was distracted. I mean, it was one hundred percent locked in. Almost everyone was taking notes with a pen in a notebook. And the questions that kids had and the things they said to me, that was just way, way above my average experience, which my average experience is way, way above the average teenage group experience, I'm sure.

The second thing I noticed was how interested the students were in coming up to me afterwards and in between and during meals and sharing their thoughts and reactions to what I said and how it fit in with other things they had heard. And then the third thing was just observing at a distance, looking at these kids' really significant, meaningful conversations.

I was almost in awe of that level of community and what obviously were real friendships. And then I came to learn that these kids only actually get together maybe once or twice, possibly three times a year and maybe not at all. And yet you had created this way for them to have a cohort or a group of some sort. And they just took joy in encouraging and in some cases, I'm sure, challenging each other at a level above what I have really ever seen, especially just kind of ... Everybody was like that. How did you cultivate this?

Jonathan Brush: So I would love to take credit for that. I would also love to tell you exactly how that works. And unfortunately, I can't do either of those things. So first of all, I've inherited an organization and a culture that attracts people like that. And so that's an important thing. And of course, we have some work to do to maintain that and to work on that attraction. But I will just admit straight up to you that we attract exceptional students. And so in many ways when people say how did you do that? I say, well, we actually are getting people who benefited from really fantastic parenting. And I don't mean to say that every student that I have has fantastic parents or a perfect family life or anything like that. But we certainly have a higher than average situation there.

And so that is a big part of it. And then we have the advantage of a culture that reinforces those things. And then I will just flat-out tell you that I spend a lot of time trying to figure out exactly how that works so that I can replicate it. Right? That's what good business people do. And Andrew, I find myself most of the time thinking that this is perhaps a measure of faith: that I pray and thank God for having sent these students and then pray for Him to do it again. And he continues to answer that prayer in some really unique ways.

Julie Walker: But it's, yes, absolutely a hundred percent everything you say. But Jonathan, I know that you ... Just what you were describing, these projects that you're having these kids follow through and do and leading a team ... I mean, you are encouraging a culture of teamwork, of working together. And I'm sure that they just crave getting together and want to be together and be friends.

Jonathan Brush: Well, I'll tell you that there are a few unique pieces of our culture that we really point to and say ... You know, when people come in, they say, that's different. And we say that's on purpose. And so, yes, to your point, first of all, we have high expectations for our students. And we're unapologetic about doing that. So my biggest job is to cast vision. And I say, you know, we have ... Here's some places I think we need to go. Here's some place ... Here's some ways that we have to go there together.

And then we try to push a lot of responsibility down. So for example, we have a national conference that we hold in Michigan every year. We will have several hundred of our students and more of our alumni attend that event. And that is entirely planned by our students' leaders. And when I say entirely, I mean: I signed the contract for the camp that we rent. It's a Young Life property up there. And then literally the students build the website, do the marketing campaign, sign the speaker contracts, find the speakers, build the schedule, run the budgets, hire the shuttles, coordinate the travel.

They literally do everything else. And then this is, you know, something we've done since 2014. So it's a long-standing tradition there. And so what we do is, we constantly tell our students a couple things. We say we have expectations that you treat everybody as made in the image of God, the *Imago Dei*, that you live and practice *Coram Deo*, living in the presence of God. These are our kind of theological framework and foundation. Then we tell them, we expect you to be adults. We expect you to act like adults. And we, then, assume that you'll figure out how to do that. And so we have a ... We always have three rules that have to do with each event. And then rule four is don't be stupid.

And we actually expand that. And we say, act like an adult, and don't be stupid. And then we say, you know, acting like an adult means treating each other with respect and all those things. And if you have questions about what is stupid and what isn't, come talk to us. And then ultimately, if there's a disagreement, we win. So that there is a ... there is some framework here, right? And so we have this idea that, you know, you have this responsibility. And then the final thing is, and I think this is a big part: I deliberately design our student teams—and those are the teams every student is in as well as our student leadership groups—with conflict in mind.

And that is, I deliberately put people together that I think won't get along initially in terms of their ideas. And they'll come from different perspectives. And I don't mean I'm trying to create battles. I mean that I think that the way you create culture is through how you resolve conflict. And so we put pressure on our students through these projects that they have to do, through these live events and the intensity of these live events that we have, that's going to create some conflict. And then they have to work through that.

And if you do that successfully, the culture that comes out of that is a binding sort of culture. And you can see this in any kind of high-stress environment like military organizations or anything like that. Now I'm not putting people in physical danger, but we deliberately put people in sort of stressed situations. And then they have to figure out how to work through those together. And when they do, if they do it properly—and by God's grace we've done it properly much more than anything else—the end result of that is people that are really, really connected to each other at a high level. And they share a lot of culture that way if that makes sense.

Andrew Pudewa: That is such a phenomenally good preparation for the real world, where you will get in a situation, and it will be hard to deal with some of the people, whether it's school or business or some vocation, the military, whatever.

Julie Walker: Well, I have to ask a question because he mentions conflict. And I have to ask Jonathan: Do you have your students read through Patrick Lencioni's book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*? Because one of those dysfunctions is fear of conflict, and I think that is so common today. We don't want to confront people whether we think it's for their good or not. I think that is such a valuable skill: not to be afraid to bring up things, knowing that you trust each other.

Jonathan Brush: You know, I have read that book. And we have not asked our students to. It's one of those when you suggested, I'm thinking I'm not sure why we haven't asked our students to do that. It's a good book.

Julie Walker: It's a great book.

Jonathan Brush: We should.

Andrew Pudewa: They may be busy doing a lot of other things, but yeah.

Jonathan Brush: One of the things that I find is that we do have students who are really scared of conflict, and that comes from a whole variety of cultural backgrounds. And so some of it is

just when they first see it, you see them kind of recoil and worry. And then we press through. And I'll use an example. Our national student cabinet plans the national event I talked about.

And we deliberately ... Like, we agonize for hours over picking the team members for that who will work hard on that program, but who will not all see things the same. And I simply tell them ... And we try to do this in every situation. I say, if you are not to the point that you care enough about this outcome to disagree about it, then I do not believe you care enough about this outcome to really want it.

But once you disagree about it, then I'm going to guarantee you that if you will treat each other as made in the image of God, and you remember that you live in the presence of God, then that will give you the context and the ability to see through to this, to the other side, where I guarantee you you will find something that doesn't look exactly what like you thought, but that gives you a better option, a better solution, and works better than anything you could have imagined before.

And then our job is to constantly create those situations and those opportunities and walk and coach and guide our students through that. Not solve it for them, but to give them the tools they need to, then, get to the other side. And once you get to the other side, and you see the results of that, it's pretty addictive.

Andrew Pudewa: Okay, let's get just a little bit practical. Let's say that I ... although my children are all grown; I wish ... But let's say I have a sixteen-year-old who is a good student and is ready to, like, just grow up and start life. And I say, hey, you're going to do this Unbound. Take a good look at it. The student says, okay, whatever. And they start. What does that first year look like for your kind of typical sixteen- or so-year-old kid?

Jonathan Brush: First of all, I just think you must be reading your mail. That is almost ... that's probably the vast majority of students. That's how they find themselves in Unbound, is the process you just described there. But so here's how this would work. You would be assigned, first of all, we would hope that we'd have some conversations with you so you know what you're getting into.

And then secondly we would assign you to what we call an Ascend team. And this would be, you would have an Ascend team leader. And this would be an older student or an alumni who has gone ahead, and who's personally responsible for walking you through the program. You'll meet with your team through an app called Slack. And some of you might be familiar with that. But consider it to be sort of an instant messaging application that works really, really well.

And you'll meet altogether as a team twice a month. And you will have what is also called an Ascend webinar, where your team will attend a webinar with somebody who we call subject matter expert, meaning that they're already practically living out their education. And so these are people who are successful in some area of life. And sometimes it's business; sometimes it's personal life and things like that.

But these are folks that you say, okay, well, I'm learning the theory here. And now I'm seeing the person be successful there. And then we're going to ask you to close those gaps and think about how those two things connect. And so virtually and online now, you're going to start building these connections and relationships with your folks on your team.

Now we're going to assume you're going to enroll in the spring or in the summer. So you're going to have a few opportunities to do that. But really the kickoff is our national conference, which happens in Lake City, Michigan. So in Michigan you're going to have an intense live experience, where you're going to meet the folks on your team, and you're going to be working with them on a bunch of different things. And you're going to actually see people, and it becomes real.

And that means that the online context is a lot more fun going from there. As you begin the fall, you'll start your courses in the program. That will vary, depending on what track that you're on, whether you're going for just a certification, or whether you're actually going to earn a college degree. And these courses will be delivered online.

In addition, we'll have a few non-accredited courses. These courses we design specifically to be fun. We want you to be engaged, involved with them. They have a lot less busy work because they're not accredited, and they're focused on really practical skills. So we teach a decision making course. We teach some financial courses and tactical communication courses. And these are courses that we think teach the skills that we know students in our program have to learn, which is really to say students in real life have to learn these things. So you'll continue through the fall.

In the winter you'll show up in someplace warm. So that's been recently Gulf Shores, Alabama. Sometimes it's Florida. Andrew, that's where you joined us this year. It's something we call base camp. And base camp is focused primarily on practical skills. So there's an intense focus on practical skills and the things that you need. Specifically we teach students about time and task management. And we say that time and tasks only make sense in the context of relationships. So we teach a lot of relational skills. And then they'll continue through the spring. And then we will fly them out to Colorado where they will have the leadership intensive program, which we call Capstone.

Dr. Jeff Myers, who's the president of Summit Ministries, teaches that class. This is the culmination of a series of three college courses. So there's college credit attached to this. And even our students who are non-degree-seeking take these courses. And the Capstone event is focused around intense leadership and relational skills. And at that point between January and spring, you will have come up with the idea for your project and will have carried out that project. And there's a whole framework that we help you go through that, depending on whether you're a first- or second- or third-year student. But you talked specifically about first-year students. So that means a first-year student will have taken an idea and taken that idea from an idea to reality.

Andrew Pudewa: When I was with you in Alabama, you gave me a few examples of some of those projects. Can you just mention those for our listeners?

Jonathan Brush: Yeah. And let me mention them at two ends. One is the kind of like, wow, the superstar stuff, and we have some of those. But then I want to stress that this is not about doing something that just blows everybody else out of the water. Obviously, those are fun to talk about, but this is really customized to a student. And we say this should take you a substantial amount of work. It should put you out of your comfort zone, and it should be hard enough that you have some doubt about its success. And then I also emphasize that the success of the project is less important to me than the lessons from the project. So you can earn credit for a project that didn't work as long as you have adequately addressed it and learned from it.

So kind of, these have included things like people running marathons or obstacle races. We've had people illustrate a children's book. We've had folks start businesses. We've had folks meet certain metrics inside of a family business and start a new division of family business. One of my favorite ones, a couple of my favorite ones from last year: We had a student, who had never really worked with tools, buy and completely restore an old Mustang, and she literally had to learn all of the skills that went along with that, running from how to rebuild the engine straight down to upholstering the seats. I mean, it really was a complete transformation.

Julie Walker: And she did that in a semester?

Jonathan Brush: And she did that, yes, starting in the fall and then finishing late into the summer. We gave her a little bit of extra time. And then Abby Elliot up in South Dakota was the one that you can go on our YouTube channel, and you can look up her project. But Abby found that there was a human trafficking organization in her town, who was working against human trafficking, and that their biggest fundraiser was a breakfast that raised about two or three thousand dollars.

And she thought that that was a little bit shocking. And so Abby planned a masquerade ball—I was able to actually attend that with some of our staff—that ended up bringing in kind of ... I think Abby knew us and her family and a handful of other people, and then nobody else who attended. So some of the biggest chefs in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the biggest business people all got into this. All of the local news outlets and media sources covered it.

So she had this masquerade ball and a great big auction. And at the end of the day, they raised almost \$60,000 in one night, which funded this organization. And so that's kind of at the extreme end of things. And so the point there is not so much that you have to do something that's just earth shattering. It's that you have to do something that personally challenges you and takes you outside of your comfort zone and teaches you something where you go, oh, I had this idea, and then I saw it actually work. And again, once you see that happen, your whole world shifts a little bit. And you go, oh, the possibilities are way bigger than I thought.

Andrew Pudewa: Yeah. Gosh, I love this. Well, we are coming to the end of time, and I would like everyone to know where they can, of course, learn more about Unbound. So give us the website. Also I know you have a podcast probably produced by your awesome people. And any other things that you would like people to know if they are looking for this type of option for their young adult?

Julie Walker: Well, and Jonathan, if you could also just speak to, is this only for faith-based students? And is it only for homeschoolers?

Jonathan Brush: Absolutely. So let's answer the last questions first. No. We are unapologetically Christian. And if you come in, you should understand that. If you have a different faith background, you are totally welcome to be part of Unbound. You just are not welcome to be offended that we're Christian. So and, but if you want to come in, we've had some ... Some of my favorite students have come from different traditions.

We had somebody who is an Orthodox Jew, who was a huge leader and person in our community. And then we had somebody years ago came in who was a very militant atheist but also one of the smartest students we've ever had. And first of all, we loved him as a person. But also he made all of us sharper because he was quite an intelligent young man. And we had to really think hard and had some really just amazing discussions.

And so, yeah, the majority of our students are absolutely coming from Christian backgrounds but a wide variety of those. Lots and lots of different faith backgrounds there inside of that. And so you should know that we're unapologetically Christian, but we don't make you subscribe to a certain set of beliefs. But you'll know that we do. And you'll find that as you interact with us.

The second question was just homeschool students. Absolutely not. We have a variety of students from different backgrounds, the majority of which are homeschoolers because they're a little bit more prepped to do something different. But we've had public school students and private school students and homeschool students, and so open to to all kinds there. Of course, if you're doing it at the younger ages, homeschooling gives you the flexibility to be able to do that. And then in terms of, you know, how to find us: Be Unbound. beunbound.us is our website. You can learn about us there.

Also, we know this is a different way to do education. And so we won't allow you to give us money until we've had a personal discussion with you, and so that we make sure that you understand what we do, and we understand what you want, and those two things match. And if they don't, I am unapologetic and in fact quite aggressive about helping you find something that does match better. My worst nightmare is enrolling somebody in our program that we can't help and that is going to not benefit from it. And so that's a key part of what we do.

So if you talk to us, or you're hesitant about signing up for an appointment, please know that this is not a twist-your-arm-into-enrolling-in-Unbound. Sometimes it's a twist your arm to make sure you're certain you want to enroll in Unbound before we want to make sure that you can make that match, and we can bring you in. And of course, if you go to social media and search for Be Unbound podcast or Be Unbound YouTube channel, you can learn about us there and get some interesting perspective on us.

Julie Walker: And of course, we'll put all those links in our show notes so that our listeners can easily find you.

Andrew Pudewa: Jonathan, thank you so much for your time. I am very excited about being able to share this as one option among several, but in my view, possibly the best. And I hope that we have some more time together because you are a great teacher. You are an inspiring human being to be around. You obviously attract a superb, high quality of people and community around you. So I hope you just keep going and keep growing. And let us know any more we can do to help and serve you and your mission.

Jonathan Brush: Well, thank you so much, Andrew. Your audience should know that quite a few folks raise their hands when asked if they have done IEW. I will tell you that none of the content that I write, including a book that we've recently released, gets out of my house before my children, who are IEW-trained, edit them first. They're much better writers than I am. And I think I shared with you, Andrew, that the amount of students quoting content from your talks at our last events is pretty extraordinary.

And some of those students live in my house. Three of my children were actually at the event. And just last night we were talking about content that you delivered at the event. And so we have been really blessed by IEW, writ large, and then Andrew, by you specifically, particularly in this last event. So lots of blessings you've already showered us with. And we thank you for the opportunity to be here and to have this interaction with y'all as well.

Andrew Pudewa: Well, thanks so much. God bless you.

Julie Walker: Thanks so much for joining us. If you enjoyed this episode and want to hear more, please subscribe to our podcast in iTunes, Google podcasts, Stitcher, or Spotify. Or just visit us each week at IEW.com/podcast. Here you can also find show notes and relevant links from today's broadcast. One last thing: would you mind going to iTunes to rate and review our podcast? This really helps other smart, caring listeners like you find us. Thanks so much.