

Book of Fundamentals Episode Six: “Reflections”

Summary

In the final episode of our podcast, Jack, A.D, and Emma reflect upon the conversations that we each had with some Minnesotan folks, as well as the proposed introductions we first laid out in Episodes 1 and 2 regarding conversations and warning signs. This episode serves as both a reminder of some of the themes that existed throughout the podcast series, and as a moment for us to comment on the process that we ourselves went through in creating this series for you all. We would be honored by your joining us for one last conversation in our Book of Fundamentals podcast.

Key Points

- As we had originally discussed in (1) and (2), the individuals we conversed with in (3), (4), and (5) agreed that conversations are crucial in getting to know your neighbors.
- They also agreed that avoiding assumptions and actively listening and engaging were components of being a good neighbor..
- While each participant brought their own perspective, they tended to emphasize the same key points, like listening, clarification when confused, and kindness.
- Our journey in creating this podcast was as profound for each of us individually as we hope others will ultimately experience when they begin their own acquisition of understanding.

Episode Six: Transcript

A.D: Welcome to our last episode on the Book of the Fundamentals podcast. In this episode we will be reflecting on some of the ideas and key points that we've gathered throughout this process. Honestly, it's been a learning curve for all of us, but we've enjoyed the journey along, as much as we could. Are there any pressing thoughts that you guys have had towards doing your episodes?

Emma: I really liked how we started with a couple episodes that kind of outlined our process, and the direction that we wanted to go. I really appreciated that because it felt, for me personally, like I was preparing for the conversations that then each of us had with the various individuals that we met with. And then, listening through both my episode and y'all's episodes, and what you and your people talked about, I thought was super fascinating... So, not in a “toot our own horns” sort of thing, but I really liked the way that we were able to provide some background and some suggestions from the start, but then also watch how, in some cases, what we talked about— like the importance of context, the importance of conversation— was very visible, and also supported *by* the people that we talked to. But then, there are other critiques that emerged too, and so I liked that we got both sides of things.

Jack: Yeah I mean, do we want to break down some of the critics that were talked about?

Emma: I mean, I think one of the things that I'm more specifically thinking of is A.D, in your conversation you talked about the need to undefined terms. And I like that you guys came to that same conclusion, that that was something that needed to happen, but the way that you guys broke down the terms “immigrant” and

“migrant” and stuff like that— I think even in your episode, you yourself commented that, some of the perspectives that were provided were not the way that you would have interpreted it.

A.D: Exactly.

Emma: And I, I liked that it was so clear that, because her perspective was different than ours, she was bringing this whole other interpretation to the table.

A.D: Absolutely.

Emma: And so I appreciated the way that just, kind of, played directly into what we've been talking about.

A.D: Yeah, no, I agree. I think that, for sure, the manner in which you guys also carried your conversations was profounding as well. Because, this goes without saying, but— we hadn't connected with these individuals prior to this conversation. And I think this is sort of what is expected for, you know, our audience, is that: you're supposed to go into these conversations not knowing that different perspectives are existing, or if, you know, you have opposing views, right? You don't know what that person thinks, and with *all* of our conversations, especially all throughout— some of them might be all over the place, but we've been able to acknowledge the fact that: Not everybody's on the same page, and I think that's alright, you know, that's okay.

Emma: When I was talking to Dean Roz, as we, unlike y'all's conversations, your episodes where you talked about this ‘need to very directly interact and sit down with an intention of deciding what terms meant and coming to some sort of conclusion, some understanding—’ when I was talking to Roz there was more of an emphasis on *just* exposure. And that was something that seems very straight forward, like yeah, if you're exposed to people who have different cultural identities or understandings of the world., of course you're going to get a different perspective. But she talked about it more as: well exposure's all you need. You know, she grew up in a school where there were a lot of other identities present, and so she wasn't even necessarily as aware of the differences, because that was just— everything. That was, that was everything that she was around. And that was kind of a different perspective than this— not necessarily structured, but more structured— “we should have a conversation” approach, so I liked that as well.

Jack: Yeah I mean, I think that kind of functions in with my conversation with Mauricio, because St. James is also very similar in its diversity of groups, well, specifically hispanic and white. But because of the exposure, even as recent as the nineties, Mauricio really emphasized how much the community felt as one. And I think it's important to take that, and just kind of understand where— what was successful about St. James. And now that we found that out, like, where can we take that?

Emma: And what was *unsuccessful* in other locations?

A.D: Yeah, because I think to— while we did have, you know, conversations with a small sample of people, it's important to note that, you know, there are bigger towns in Minnesota that might have a lot more conflicts with each other. And, yeah, I think that's important to acknowledge as well, but then also realize that, really as we've emphasized over and over again is: Just have a conversation. You know, I think that, especially for me, what I've admired throughout this process is that: I've been able to communicate with both Jack and Emma, and have gathered a lot of their opinions that I, you know, previously hadn't thought of. And so I think that,

you know, really opened my mind to how I think about these words, or contexts, or definitions and all that, in that respect, and so I encourage everybody else to do the same as that too.

Emma: Yeah, I think, off of that ,that's something that all 3 of the people that we talked to also mentioned, even if each in their own way. Like, Mauricio talked about the importance of compassion, and having empathy, and sympathy, and attempting to understand people. And Xela did the same thing in terms of recognizing the humanity of everyone. Again, that's just– at some level, we're all on the same page, it's just our path of getting to that endpoint of: Recognizing everyone's humanity, and recognizing that we all have that same goal in life... I think, whatever the path is to get to that point, is just something that needs to be discussed between the given group that's assembled in any moment.

Jack: Yeah I really think the last thing Mauricio said about: having the mindset that everybody wants the same outcome, or everybody kind of wants the same thing in the end, and everybody wants to get along... A.D mentioned that we were able to learn from each other, but I think that's very much because we all kind of had like a... Understanding that we *wanted* the same goal, we're on the same team, we're doing this thing. So I think, more than anything, the main takeaway should be: To try and see people as your neighbors, your allies, your friends, people that want the same thing that you do. And go from there. And why– if there are differences, assess how you, how you came to that.

A.D: You know, that makes me think too of, you know, like in college there are, you know, lots of clubs and organizations that are based off of, you know, whatever interests certain individuals have. And I think that, within communities too– I'm not sure if, you know, these are applicable to our audiences, but this is something that could be brought up, is– maybe starting those communities where you actively engage in those conversations with each other outside of your regular– or your respective– occupation, or stimuli, or surrounding, this, you know, something around that– I think that that is absolutely helpful, you know... And it could really bridge a lot of connections and humanity spirits.

Emma: And finding those connections is again, like, all the we're really encouraging, you know? And in whatever way that process forms itself to be.

A.D: This has been a wonderful journey, to say the least. We appreciate you taking the time to listen to us. We hope that we've been, at least, somewhat helpful throughout this process in bridging and conversing in conversations, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts and opinions, and hopefully gathering more of your stories, as well as you, you know, learning from each other... I think that's, you know, the most important part with all this, is that *you* get to take your own knowledge and understanding, and *also* apply that to other experiences, and learn from that. So, thank you for joining us and our last episode.