

# MI Spirit- A Way of Being

**This podcast focuses on the evidence based practice of motivational interviewing**

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

Amy Shanahan: I'm Amy Shanahan.

Paul Warren: And I'm Paul warren.

Amy Shanahan: And we've worked together over the past ten years. We've been facilitating MI learning collaboratives and providing trainings and coaching sessions focused on the adoption and refinement of MI We're also members of the motivational interviewing network of trainers. Join us in this adventure into the forest, where we explore and get curious about what lies behind the curtain of MI Hey, Paul.

Paul Warren: Hi.

Amy Shanahan: good to be talking to you again about motivational interviewing. One of our favorite topics.

Paul Warren: Absolutely.

## **This episode we talk about the spirit of mi, the way of being**

Amy Shanahan: This episode we want to talk about the spirit of MI the way of being. And I'm curious, what interested you in wanting to really dive deep into the spirit?

Paul Warren: For me, as I was learning motivational interviewing, this was probably, one of the most elusive elements of MI. And it's ironic because as we were talking last time, the whole idea of like MI feels so right and it feels so in alignment, and yet the specifics of what MI spirit is goes beyond just that feeling of alignment with the practice. And, I wanted to talk about it in more depth with you in particular, because I think it's a really, important and helpful guide for the person practicing motivational interviewing to really, and this is perhaps a simplified way of saying it, but a guide as to how you want to be when you're sitting across from the person that you have the opportunity to be having a conversation about change with.

Amy Shanahan: And in the last podcast, we talked about people, including myself. I told a story, thinking they're doing motivational interviewing. And it made me think of the time that I thought, well, of course, I have that spirit of person centeredness and all the philosophical things about, and it did feel esoteric. It did feel like it was out there in the spirit realm, if you will. And the more I dug deep into the skills and listening in and not just the way of being, the specifications of that, that you can see it, you can notice it, you can practice it, you can be it. If you're not already, you could practice even more. And I thought it was maybe one of those natural born leader kind of concepts, natural born spirited am, I person I am, and yet I don't know that it always is.

Paul Warren: People can learn it and it requires, an intentional focus on sort of the four elements of MI spirit which we'll cover and talk about today.

## **Many people think simply because they're doing motivational interviewing, they're practicing**

You said something, that prompts me to want to go back a moment, which is you said, digging into the skills of motivational interviewing. And of course, when we're talking about the skills of motivational interviewing, we're talking about the superstars, O A R S open ended questions, affirmations, reflections and summaries. And you, know, we've established in podcast one and two that many people think simply because they're doing ors, they're practicing motivational interviewing. And of course, that's not the case. I have also found that a lot of training and a lot of folks who quote unquote, and I'm putting this in air quotes, this is radio, so you can't see it, but I'm doing it. Practice, motivational interviewing, spend a tremendous amount of time digging deep into becoming very skilled at doing open ended questions, affirmations, reflections and summaries. And don't get me wrong, that's great. That is, that is a good thing. You want to have command of your tools. And ultimately, and tell me if you think this is an overstatement, if you're spending more of your energy

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refining those technical skills, you're basically learning the words without the music. And the spirit is really the music. And I didn't make that up. I'm stealing that entirely from Bill Miller and Stephen Rollink. but ultimately, motivational interviewing is about having mastery of the words as well as being able to play the music.

Amy Shanahan: And I always love the music analogy. And remember when I was practicing and learning the saxophone in a very similar way, when I was first learning it, it was all technical. Figuring out my fingering, where do my fingers go? How do I sit,

and learning the specific notes. And it felt more synergistic when I was able to play a tune and get into the groove and be able to play the song and feel it and do it in my own way, which took some time. And I think that there's an opportunity to learn both at the same time. I had different mentors, coaches and teachers in that realm of learning the saxophone, and they all had a different approach to learning and teaching. And, ah, as we are in motivational interviewing, and I see a lot now trainers spending a lot of time focusing on the spirit. Because I think, to your point, a lot of people think well, I'm practicing these open ended questions, reflections, and I'm actually getting really good at complex reflections, and that's what I've learned over time. and that's, like you said, it's good. And now focusing in on this whole notion of the spirit is what I've seen a lot of trainers do more recently.

Paul Warren: I appreciate, the specificity of your saxophone experience, because I think it's probably pretty normal when learning something new, learning a new instrument, learning a new way of communicating about change. I think it's pretty normal for folks to focus, quote unquote, on the technical elements that is in MI m, it's OARS I think that that's normal. I don't think, again, as I said before, I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I think in order to refine your practice of motivational interviewing, one needs to go beyond just the technical skills. Cause let's face it, there are a lot of people that are very skilled at executing open ended questions, affirmations, reflections or summaries. And because they perhaps haven't spent as much time or haven't received supportive feedback around the, relational elements of motivational interviewing, which are the spirit elements, they're not really able to engage and retain the folks that they have the opportunity to be sitting across from in a conversation about change. And you mentioned earlier in one of the earlier podcasts about how Bill Miller was, as he was coming, to define and deepen and understand the practice of motivational interviewing, that people were kind of asking him why he was doing what it was he was doing. And

some of what I've heard that he identified was that one of the indicators of the ability to help people to move toward change, to make change, was the ability to engage them in an authentic way and certainly use the tools, but that engagement was critical in order to help them to move toward change and achieve change.

Amy Shanahan: Right. And we also talked about, in the podcast, the last podcast, the importance of giving and receiving feedback and practicing, which is so important when you're learning a new skill of any type. And I liken it back to the saxophone, how nervous I was when my instructor was watching what I did. And I liked it most when we were playing together, and I was able to feel and get into his or her rhythm and get feedback that way. But, I remember being really new to it and really nervous about it. And I remember when you and I and our colleagues got together, I had that same level of nervousness. I was watching you and watching Liz and watching Billy Jo and others and thought, God, I wish I could have figured that reflection out and just really

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Amy Shanahan: comparing and watching and wanting to be like others. And the benefit of the spirit and the skills and getting coaching and feedback is because we're all our own unique individuals. We have our own style. I'm not gonna be David Sanborn, saxophone player. I'm gonna be Amy's version of Amy. Right. And I've heard that a bit in motivational interviewing rooms as well, with other colleagues saying, you have to be yourself, be your own person. So I wanna make sure that listeners hear that it's not about being like Miller and Rolnick. It's about finding your own way. And here are the foundations for you to explore the spirit and the skills.

Paul Warren: Absolutely. And, you know, if Bill Miller and Stephen Rollink were here,

and I wish I could say, like, our guest stars today are Bill Miller and Steven Rolnick, but I can't. But if they were here, I am totally confident that they would support exactly what you said, that, like, don't try and be like us. Be your authentic self. Bring your authentic self to this conversation and be guided by MI spirit and intentionally make a choice that that is how you are choosing to be when you're with the person you have the opportunity to be talking to.

### **In motivational interviewing, it's important to figure out your style**

Amy Shanahan: And if I could add one more piece to that before we dive into the spirit, the piece that, gets me all jazzed up, pun intended. My m instructor in saxophone said, listen to other saxophone players. And so I listened to Gerald Albright, and he said, what do you like about Gerald? And I said, I like his balance of vibrato in his playing. It's not too much. And what did you like about this other one? And it frames our ear to find our own style. So it might have been my own style to want to be like that particular thing and not necessarily all of what Gerald Albright did, for example. So similarly, in motivational interviewing, when we watch other practitioners, it's great to pick apart and watch what you like. What is it that resonates with you? My belief is that it probably resonates because it's already within you to find that style and that purpose. I watch Bill Miller and I watch Steve Rolnick, and I watch Terry Moyers, and I watch you and other MI practitioners and go, wow, I wish I could be like that. And when I think about the detail, I can pick apart the detail of what I liked instead of just because otherwise I get worried about I'm never going to be like them and they're.

Paul Warren: Never going to be like you.

Amy Shanahan: Absolutely not.

Paul Warren: Absolutely. And ultimately they're bringing their authenticity to the moment of the conversation. And you, myself, anybody else who is practicing motivational interviewing, who's open to feedback, who is really intentionally choosing to be this particular way when engaging in conversations about change is ultimately going to be their authentic selves.

Amy Shanahan: And I'm glad you pointed out that word authenticity. We don't, often focus on it and it's authentic and it's the genuineness, it's authenticity and genuineness that's so important, which is why it's so important to figure out your style and your way of being with others.

Paul Warren: And I think it's important to make a distinction. When you said that, it really triggered kind of a memory that I had, from a training where I remember hearing, and this has happened a few times where I've heard participants say, well, I do my interpretation of MI m. I don't know if you've ever heard people say that, but I have heard people say that a few times. And the thing to me that's ironic about that is am I is what it is. We find our way into it, which is, I think, a little bit different than an interpretation because MI spirit really gives us four very specific guideposts that we want to choose to incorporate in how we're being. We're all going to approach these guideposts in our own unique way, but the guideposts remain the same.

Amy Shanahan: Yeah. There's not a manual to doing motivational interviewing. And at the same time

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Amy Shanahan: there's a framework, there's a list of things that are more consistent than not.

Paul Warren: Yeah. And again, I appreciate you putting it as, more consistent than not because it's kind of hearkening back to our discussions about the mighty, one of the validated coding instruments, which is really looking at ways of being and behaviors that are more Aml consistent and those that are not.

## **We talked about partnership in our last podcast about motivational interviewing**

And I'm wondering, given that we've been talking about, am I spirit? and we haven't, and we've kind of alluded to these four components of what it is, I'm wondering if now may be the moment for us to kind of lift the curtain and really kind of be specific about what each of these four guideposts frames about how we want to be, what they actually.

Amy Shanahan: Are, what is behind that curtain.

Paul Warren: Well, if it's MI it probably includes an acronym. and with MI spirit it does. And that acronym is pace p a c eternat. And the thing to consider about pace is each one of these letters represents one of the four guideposts of what MI spirit actually, is.

Amy Shanahan: So P is the partnership. Sometimes people also say collaboration. So partnership. We talked about the last, in the last podcast, we alluded to it when we talked about two people being the experts along their path. So that's one way to put it. And that the person is the experts of themselves and we may have an expertise in a



certain domain and we may be able to help them along, certainly with permission. And I like this notion of partnership. And what I like to ask people to think about is really think about that. Do you really believe that? Can you really sit with a person and understand and believe that they know what's best for them, they have information inside of them, and how do we walk along this path together?

Amy Shanahan: What are your thoughts about partnership?

Paul Warren: I share yours. And what I would also, elaborate on is that it is critical to the practice of motivational interviewing that the quote unquote worker, the peer, the practitioner, the therapist have that way of thinking about that this person is the expert of their life. I have simply been invited to be on their change team. And that's very different than hello, I'm an expert here and I have the answer to solve your problem. That's a very different sort of way of being an am I really requires us to ask that question. Do we believe that this person knows what's best for themselves? Do we believe that we will respect their autonomy even if they choose to do something that we don't necessarily think is in their best interests?

Amy Shanahan: Yeah. And, you know, similar to the skills early on in my practice, and sometimes even now still listening, I don't know why I say even now as if I've arrived somewhere, because I'm constantly practicing and fine tuning for sure. when I listen early on, I use the term the word I a lot. I am going to help you with this. I am going to, you know, and it's not just the language, it's believing it. So, it's a combination of listening in for the terminology and also what's in my heart.

Paul Warren: I like that you're asking people to consider that, asking me to consider that, because if I'm sitting across from somebody and I do not believe in my heart that

they have the innate capacity or they can draw from capacities or skills or strengths that they had from the past, if I don't believe that it's going to make it hard for me to really engage as a collaborative partner.

Paul Warren: And that can be challenging because let's face it, a lot of folks have lived experience, a lot of folks have degrees, and they may think I got into this work to help and I want to share

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Paul Warren: what I know. And, you know, I think I can help this person. And, and all of that is valid and it can be done in a way that still respects and gives the person across from them the right to choose what's right for them and to use their resources in order to move toward that change and to consider that change.

Amy Shanahan: I think about an example as a, patient, if you will, a person receiving physical therapy. And I think about this notion of partnership in that realm sometimes. For me, I think about, am I in the aspects of counseling and substance use disorder and mental health treatment and maybe health to some degree. And when I went into the physical therapy office, the woman was fabulously nice. She was instructing me on the things she was going to be doing and it was fine. It could have been stronger if she evoked from me or elicited from me what I was already doing. What was I concerned about, what did I already think about? So, for example, I was already doing some yoga, not consistently, and I was really curious, if I did certain yoga, could that enhance it versus using the rubber band or the balls that she was making me buy or not making me, but asking me to purchase to do my physical therapy. And actually she didn't ask my permission. She gave me the script and she said, hey, come on back, I'll see you

three times a week and do these exercises five days a week. And I know her intention was good. And in my head, I'm walking out. I am not scheduling three times a week because it's \$35 a pop. And I don't know if I'm going to exercise five days a week. Maybe I will, maybe I'll do six days. But there was that missing piece. Her heart was there, she was super nice, educated me on some things, and I know her intention was to get me better, to help me heal my shoulders, and yet there could have been a strength there in partnering, and perhaps I could have gotten better faster.

Paul Warren: And she didn't invite you to be part of your own care?

Amy Shanahan: In a way, she did not. That's correct.

Paul Warren: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

## **One of the most critical components of acceptance is the accurate empathy part**

Which is interesting because it makes me think of the second letter in MI spirit, which is the A which is for acceptance. And you know, accepting somebody doesn't necessarily mean condoning what they're doing. It does mean, though, that you acknowledge, no matter what they're doing or no matter what they've done, that they have absolute worth and that you're respecting their autonomy to maybe choose to do yoga instead of using these therapeutic balls as you described them. and the idea of that, had she evoked from you some of the efforts that you had already made, she could have affirmed them.

Paul Warren: And that would have been part of acceptance. And then I think probably

one of the most critical components of acceptance is the accurate empathy part of it. Meaning? trying for, seeking to deeply understand what's most important to you, what's going to be most effective for you.

Amy Shanahan: And I love the notion of accurate empathy, and I wonder what you think about it. And I love asking people what their thoughts are about things, because when we use the word accurate empathy, what's the difference between accurate and inaccurate empathy?

Paul Warren: I love that question. And, from my perspective, and I'm going to try and state this simply. I think the difference between accurate empathy and inaccurate empathy, inaccurate empathy is what I'm projecting. It's when I, as the worker, am making an assumption about what you think, what you feel, what's important to you. Accurate empathy is when I have, I've set my assumption aside, and again, I'm a human being, I'm going to make assumptions. But it's when I've set my assumptions aside and I am listening deeply to what is important to you, what your perspective is on this,

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Paul Warren: why you're considering making this change, not why I think you should be making this particular change. So to me, that's the difference between accurate and inaccurate empathy. What do you think about that? What are your thoughts, Amy?

Amy Shanahan: Well, I'm really hooked on just that whole notion of you putting your own assumptions, perhaps even values and beliefs aside, to be here with this person. And that's part of accepting, which makes sense, why it fits in the, a part of the spirit

that you're really accepting that person by putting your own pieces aside. I really like the way you put that, because some people have told me that accurate empathy is what you said as well. Really listening to that person. I really like the distinction of also putting your own thoughts, assumptions aside of, for that person. And when I learn about this notion of neutrality or equipoise and just being with the person, and because I, I'm really curious about that, can we really remove ourselves from the equation? It's like the tree falling in the forest. If no one's around, do they hear it, can we really get rid of ourselves in the space? And part of me thinks yes, and part of me thinks not so much, because it is that synergistic relationship that makes it happen. And though you also added, not imposing your own assumptions, and I might be rephrasing it, imposing your own assumptions and thoughts on that other person, I like.

Paul Warren: Your question, Amy, about can we actually, you know, can we actually get ourselves out of the picture? And I'm inclined to honestly say I don't think we can. I do think though we can, and MI spirit helps us with this, I do think we can intentionally choose yes. I know these are, this is my assumption about why this person should do this. This is why I think they should do it. And I think as long as I acknowledge that and say, okay, Paul, you know what? You know, that's where you're coming from. Set that aside for me. It doesn't go away, it's still there, but set it aside so that you can be present for where maybe Amy is coming from. and again, I don't think we could, and I don't think we would really want to ever erase ourselves completely. Part of learning an evidence based practice is learning how to suspend our own projections and agenda so that we can be witness to and deeply understand somebody else's motivations, values, beliefs.

Amy Shanahan: And what you just said highlights for me that authenticity. When you said, you know, I have to put this over here, it's not going away and I have to

acknowledge it sometimes, which makes it authentic. And I think for me at times, that's what I've struggled with, in my practice, is separating the two out, that I'm still in the room, I'm still triggered by things. There's a thing that I could do, or I could make a choice to put it over here in the corner, almost in a visual way. Like I could put it up on the shelf and not bring it into the conversation. Because of course the writing reflex kicks in for me a lot. I think someone asked Bill Miller if it ever goes away, and if he's listening, I hope he affirms that. I believe he said, no, it doesn't go away.

Paul Warren: Hopefully he'll write in and confirm that.

Amy Shanahan: he'll send me an email and say, you're wrong, or he'll say that you're right. Right. And I think over time, for me, the practice of being aware, for me, a lot of times I feel it in my gut that, oh, I have this reaction to want to say something or eager to want to. Oh, let me give you. And it's hopefully with good intention, not because I think I'm the expert of someone, but I'm excited to want to help. So your comment, made me really underscore that authenticity, that sometimes that happens and sometimes we react to respond in that way. And I might not pause enough to quiet it down and put it on the shelf and I might give someone information prematurely. And there's ways that we can adapt to that and course correct, as you would say, Paul.

Paul Warren: Yeah. And that's the beauty of motivational interviewing, you know, motivational interviewing, I found sometimes in trainings that people reverence it and treat it like it's, you know, delicate crystal. And, that's

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Paul Warren: not my take on motivational interviewing. Motivational interviewing is a

robust, muscular, living, breathing in an evolving practice about two human beings talking with each other and two collaborative partners focusing on a particular behavioral change goal. And there are lots of moments where course correction is required, where the worker can sort of step back and say, oh, wait a minute, I just got ahead of you in this conversation and I'm going to step back for a moment. And that doesn't mean you're doing am I wrong? It means you're doing am I in an authentic, conscious way and responding in that moment.

Amy Shanahan: It's interesting because, the yellow brick road just popped up into my head and the theme of our podcast is lions and tigers and bears am I? And I was thinking about that as you were saying it, like, oh, I got ahead of myself. I got too far down the yellow brick road and I looked back and noticed Dorothy picking the apple from the tree. And maybe I was just all excited about getting to Oz or to the next step. And I can turn around and go back and say, hey, Dorothy, what's going on? The tree is hitting you. What's up? And lean in. And to me, it takes us to the next letter.

### **Amy: Compassion is a fairly recent addition to mi spirit**

In the PACE in the spirit, the C is compassion. So being able to dance with someone and be in their space is part of the empathy versus compassion. I like to talk about the two words, because I've always been curious about that. What are the difference between, because we talk about accurate empathy and acceptance and now we float into compassion.

Paul Warren: Tell me if I have this right, Amy. My understanding is that compassion is a fairly recent addition to MI spirit. To pace. I, and I, and again, you know, hopefully

somebody will clarify this, but my understanding is that it was added to MI spirit because motivational interviewing is a persuasive can be a persuasive way of interacting with folks. And the c, as I understand it, was added to because we want to safeguard that we're putting the clients, the patients, the individual considering change. We want to put their agenda above our own.

Paul Warren: That we want to be compassionate and make sure that their welfare is the primary focus of the conversation as opposed to the agenda we as the provider, the peer, the worker may have. So compassion, to me, is another one of those guideposts or safety rails that keep us authentic and client centered and, and truly, you know, respecting somebody's autonomy.

Amy Shanahan: And I look at it from the perspective too of, compartmentalizing empathy and not even to put them in compartments because it's almost like there's a big door in between the wall of the two that putting yourselves in someone's shoes, as most many people will define empathy, or taking on someone's perspective, or the ability to take on somebody's perspective and feel their emotions and understand how they're feeling. Compassion does have a distinct, I think it's a distinct intention that includes the desire to not only want to be in the space, whatever that space is. I think I've heard people say suffering with. And then it makes me think of suffering as sadness. And compassion could be about any emotion that people are going through. It includes this desire to help. So this one woman shared with me her story that she reflected back to a dad who was dealing with his child's mental illness. And she reflected back that he was frustrated and he got really mad and said, no, I'm mad. And she thought she misstepped and, created discord, if you will, and was stepping on his toes and they were wrestling instead of dancing. And later on, as we explored that, she said he came back and apologized for his, posturing and his loudness about his anger,



and that she hit a nerve for him and

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Amy Shanahan: he felt like he was in a safe place with her to be able to share the volume or the magnitude of his feelings. And it really, she took a step back because she thought she was wrong by saying, you're frustrated. so feeling his emotion, being able to step in his shoes was the empathy. And her being able to sit with that, with him and wanting to help him was the compassion part.

Amy Shanahan: That's my definition of her exchange with him.

Paul Warren: Understandably.

## **One of the gifts of motivational interviewing is witnessing another's experience**

And another word, and I want to share this with you because as you were saying that, another word kind of came into my mind, which was, and it was when you were talking about the suffering with part. I think one of the gifts that MI kind of invites us to experience is witnessing somebody else's experience. And, you know, I can never feel what somebody else is feeling, but I can witness that they feel it, and I can reflect back what I'm witnessing so that they can feel heard and so that perhaps they even experience being understood. And I think that that's one. And it. Let's face it, it's, sometimes painful and challenging to witness some of what the folks we have the opportunity to sit across from have experienced and what they are experiencing. And

ultimately, that can be very engaging and healing for people to know that their thinking about why they want to make the change, their feeling about why they want to make the change, and they're thinking and feeling about why they don't want to make the change is being witnessed in an authentic way.

Amy Shanahan: And I've often heard people in the trainings and in the world share that they feel that they're an empath and that they take on or feel the emotions of a person. So there's a. Perhaps a fine line between feeling it. It would be your own interpretation of that feeling, I would imagine. I can't erase myself. And I might assume that your sadness feels similar to my sadness, which is a really nice segue into evocation, which is the e part of the spirit where I may think that your sadness is a certain way or a certain thing, because I'm interpreting it, I'm making assumptions. I'm, exploring and reading your cues, and I'm also putting it through my own personal filters of my own experience. And sometimes that's that whole vulnerability of empathy where you go into that space that you've experienced something and try to understand this other person's perspective. And I think the evocation of the spirit helps us get to that point. So, instead of expressing my assumption, I can use evocation to explore more about what it means to you. I'm wondering what you think about that. I've just really just kind of came to the surface of my thoughts as you were talking.

Paul Warren: Yeah. And as you were saying that, it really reminded me of a moment that I experienced just recently in a training. I have the opportunity to be, doing an MI training now, an online MI training with one of our colleagues. And one of the participants in the training, was very generously sharing with the learning community about a particular patient that she was working with. And as she was sharing about this patient, I started to have some. Some feelings about how deeply this woman cared about this patient and how much she wanted to save and rescue this patient and spare

this patient from some of the pain that they were experiencing. And I'm not sure why, other than perhaps that my colleague and I, as we're facilitating this learning community conversation about motivational interviewing, we often are practicing motivational interviewing in terms of modeling it for the learning community. And

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Paul Warren: I said to the participant, I said, you care so deeply about this client. I did a reflection and she paused and she started to cry. And she then said, I do. And to me that reflection evoked from her the acknowledgement that her caring, the depth of her caring was really fueling her writing reflex.

Paul Warren: And it's interesting because the other learners in the community really talked about how they also were feeling, how deeply she cared. She didn't say that. She didn't say, I want to report that I feel very deeply about this client, but she said it.

Paul Warren: So the evocation, either through an open ended question, through a reflection, is really inviting that person to go deeper in what it is they're communicating at that moment.

Amy Shanahan: And I can imagine if you said that to me, the next step would be to somehow explore that my deep caring for this person was getting to that point where I was responding to the writing reflex. And I think about the way you provide feedback because you've coded my work as well, and you do it in such a way that you affirm my strengths and my values and you lean in and give feedback. So what are your thoughts about this whole notion of motivational interviewing is not always about being nice. And I, There's times when we want to give practitioners or even the people that we're

serving some feedback that might not feel like it's a nice thing. So what might you have done, perhaps in this example or in other examples that you've experienced, how to lean into that and give this person some feedback. What are some ways that you would do that, if you don't mind me asking?

Paul Warren: Oh, I don't mind at all. And, you know, I want to underline something you said because I think it's really important and I hope it's a key takeaway from our conversation today. And I invite anyone listening to really think about this particular point because I often think that motivational interviewing is mischaracterized, As two things. It's mischaracterized as active listening and being nice and too slow. And it takes a lot of time.

Amy Shanahan: I added a third thing, whether you like it or not.

Paul Warren: No, I'm glad you did. Because that is also, I think, one of the mischaracteries characterizations. You know, so many participants have said in trainings like, oh, I would love to do MI m, but I just don't have the time.

Amy Shanahan: Right.

Paul Warren: And ultimately, you know, that's not my understanding of the practice of motivational interviewing. but to the. To the point about, feedback, and feedback where you may be, developing discrepancy or creating a certain amount of cognitive dissonance, I can imagine using the example that I just gave, I could imagine, after having done that reflection, having witnessed the participants reaction, I could imagine that I might have said, if you were the participant, you know, Amy, would it be okay if I offered a bit of feedback and you could have exercised your autonomy and said yes or.

Amy Shanahan: No, even though most times I'll say yes, even though part of me wants to say no. Okay.

Paul Warren: Okay, well, please talk about a classic example of ambivalence.

Amy Shanahan: Right, right. But I'm going to say yes anyway.

Paul Warren: Okay.

**Amy, you asked an open ended question in a seeking collaborative way**

So. So if you were the participant and you would have said yes, I would have said, I'm wondering if the writing reflex is at play here and you really want to save this person.

Amy Shanahan: So you asked an open ended question in a seeking collaborative kind of way to explore it with me.

Paul Warren: Yes. After, of course, having asked permission. so I would have asked permission if you would have granted me permission, I would have asked that question. And hopefully

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Paul Warren: I demonstrated at least a little bit in this, the tone that I would have used to ask the question, and then I would have paused and allowed you to respond. and I

may have even followed it with, you know, and what are your thoughts about that? What do you. What do you think about that? and using.

Amy Shanahan: Sorry, using evocation to like, to me, evocation is that exploration, that whole notion of being curious about what that person's saying, what they're experiencing.

Amy Shanahan: What they already think about, why they're so emotionally involved in this particular situation or client patient person.

Paul Warren: Absolutely. And I'll frame it another way. And tell me what your thought is about this. Also about testing out my hunch.

Paul Warren: And not testing it out as if I'm analyzing a specimen under a microscope. Testing out my hunch in a collaborative conversation with somebody whose autonomy I respect, and having a conversation with somebody that I'm intentionally choosing to be guided by the four components of an I spirit.

Amy Shanahan: You know, all along, we share that words matter, and I'm thinking about examples of how I thought I was asking evocative questions and perhaps they didn't yield much, if you will. Right. So if I'm evoking, I'm assuming I'm going to get some information and it just dawned on me that there's times when I ask it in a more leading way, I think I add more information sometimes to the question and it takes me practice, still takes me practice to be mindful of the words that I choose and that I have to put myself on that back shelves, right? So if I'm thinking, well, maybe there's a better way that she can be compassionate with this person, I already have that in my head and I'm bringing it into the language that I use. And to me that's the part of MI practice that's

deceptively simple is mostly m about putting my stuff on the shelf and being more open and really truly being curious and exploring this person's experience.

Paul Warren: And helping them to explore their experience.

Paul Warren: In a guided way.

Amy Shanahan: Yeah.

Paul Warren: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I guess if, you know, to kind of bring our conversation about MI spirit to a conclusion today, I guess, I'll share one final thought which I'm just reiterating something I said a moment ago, but I'd kind of like it to be my m parting thought in regard to this conversation and I'm very curious to hear what yours would be, Amy.

## **When practicing motivational interviewing, we can intentionally choose to engage by Mi spirit**

My m parting thought would be that reminder of that when practicing motivational interviewing, we can intentionally choose to engage in a collaborative conversation guided by the four components of MI spirit. The practice of motivational interviewing is much more than simply the execution of active listening and being nice.

Amy Shanahan: And I will add to that practice was the first thing that I thought of and you said it. So it's a good lead in that practicing the skills is a very good thing to do and one thing that we do a lot of and intentionally practicing the pace, the aspects of the

spirit, and there's times when people will say, I'm going to practice more complex reflections and that's fabulous. And there can be times that you choose to practice listening in because we talked about that in the last podcast. Listen to your own work and lean your ear and train your ear to hear it. Are there times when you're using partnership language? Are there times when you felt like or you heard that you weren't really accepting the aspects of what was going on? Were there times that you are expressing your compassion and being with that person? And are you using evocation in an intentional way to be curious about their perspective and their expertise? If you will. So giving yourself permission to focus on the aspects of the spirit and practice them as well.

Paul Warren: Thanks for, engaging

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Paul Warren: in this conversation, Amy, because I really feel that my understanding of MI spirit, is always evolving and I really value your perspective on this and appreciate, being able to think more deeply and talk more about this particular critical, critical component of motivational interviewing.

Amy Shanahan: I appreciate the opportunity as well. This spirit is something that I think I could spend a lifetime of podcasts with a lot of people exploring because I'm really curious about how it looks to individuals and certainly important to share that we're all our own people and we express ourselves in a different way. And sometimes one person's empathy and expression of compassion doesn't look the same as another's. Or I might look different with you today and next week it'll look even a little different depending on what the emotion or the experience is. Thanks for listening to episode



three of Lions and Tigers and Bears. MI M join us for our next episode when Amy and Paul discuss how to evoke change talk CASAT Podcast Network.

Paul Warren: M.

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