

Al: Well, good evening, Gerard. Great talking to you again.

Gerard: Evening, Al, great to talk to you, too.

Al: Yep, it's been, what? I was over there two weeks ago, we were trying to get this done when I was over there, but that didn't happen, we were way too busy. [crosstalk 00:00:20]-

Gerard: Way too busy.

Al: ... having some evening fun.

Gerard: Indeed.

Al: But it's good we're doing it finally. So, you were telling me how you were over in Ireland with some kind of cable thing, tell me about that.

Gerard: Yeah, so earlier this year in April, my family and I we went to celebrate my father's birthday, he was 80 this year, and we went to a very, very unusual and special place in Ireland called Valentia down in Kerry, and while I was there I just came across a really interesting story, which is that the first transatlantic cable that was laid for communications between the North American continent and Europe, was laid between Newfoundland and this place in Kerry called Valentia. So, by all accounts, and I was able to stand on a headland just on the coast and see one of the places where the cable came up out of the sea, and it basically sticks out, and has kind of a landing place in a cable station there. You asked me earlier when that was, and I was able to look at it, and it was 1858.

Al: You can't imagine that in the 1850s they were laying cable on the bottom of the ocean across the Atlantic.

Gerard: Yeah, and so apparently in August that year, Queen Victoria sent an electric cable to the president of the U.S. at that time, which was James Buchanan. So, she sent a telegram to him, it's quite a long sort of message she sent him-

Al: What, crazy.

Gerard: ... about reciprocal esteem and so on, which is kind of interesting.

Al: Well, my European telecommunication story is when I was ... I think you know, I was in the medical device industry, and we worked for this company that sent ECGs by phone line, electrocardiograms.

Gerard: Wow.

Al: So, you could take an ECG, and then you could send it by a phone line over ... this is back before the internet, over a modem, and at the other end it would collect that ECG, and then present it to a doctor. So, it was a pretty cool thing, pretty amazing at the time, and so the story is the CEO is over in U.K., I think London, and he is with his partner, and they're up in some hotel, and they're trying to test this thing before they go to the customer to show it off, and so they're down on the floor rewiring the phone line [crosstalk 00:02:53]-

Gerard: Yeah.

Al: ... their hotel phone to make sure this thing worked. Sure enough, they got it to work, and they said, "Oh brilliant, we got it working.", and then the next morning they wake up to go off and do it to the customer, and they go up to sign out, and the phone bill was like \$600 or something for the hotel phone bill, and it turned out they had never turned the connection off, so it was on the phone all night [crosstalk 00:03:18]-

Gerard: Oh, my goodness.

Al: ... seriously, but oh yeah.

Gerard: That's an expensive phone call.

Al: Yep, but back in the days that was way before no internet, and everything had to go over copper phone line, that was the only way to make anything happen. So, any who-

Gerard: Yeah, it's quite amazing the efforts people go to, to effectively communicate, and using the technology. It's been quite a journey, hasn't it, the last 50 years or so.

Al: Well, sounds like it goes all the way back to the 1850s.

Gerard: Yeah, well true, true, true. Very true.

Al: So, as everybody knows by now that's listening, we were over there for nine days to train your team, and then some other folks, and I guess I kind of knew this, but I didn't know it at the level that I learned by the end of the time is you spend most of your time with your business in schools. So, this goes back ... So, just give the audience here just a quick update on how long you've been in business, and what you've done in schools, and then it sounds like you've identified some issues over the years that are probably very [crosstalk 00:04:23]-

Gerard: Definitely.

Al: ... what we're doing here in the United States.

Gerard: Well, it's kind of interesting that what we've ended up doing, and being really quite specialist in is helping teachers to deal with the kinds of behaviors they see from some

of the children in their schools who have additional needs. But I can remember being, I think it was on a train reading a newspaper in about 2005, and considering a career change to follow the things I was passionate about, which was conflict management, and physical protection, self-defense, and so on, but I can remember seeing a newspaper story about a teacher who was brutalized by one of her pupils in a classroom. It was just one newspaper story among many, but it really took my attention, and from that point on I started to become really interested in how that scenario kind of develops, and how I might be able to help in those types of situations in terms of training, and preparing staff to deal with those things more effectively.

Gerard: And from about 2006 onwards, so we're heading towards 14 years or so, or more, of helping people in those situations, we really tried to get into the detail of how the situations come together, and then how we can train people, and often we only meet them for a very short period of time, maybe one day of training, or even less sometimes, and how to train them in what they need to know to make the best possible decision to keep themselves and the children that they're looking after safe, and balancing those two things together. So, at this time in the U.K. we're, I think, known in some parts for delivering very pragmatic, and relevant training for frontline staff who are often teachers or teaching assistants in classrooms who are dealing with children who have a range of different needs that mean that sometimes they might pose a risk to those around them. And that's it-

Al: And so, I don't think ... So, your customer is ... We'd call it special needs here in the States, special needs teachers, or is it the general teacher that's dealing with a normal classroom?

Gerard: Well, here in the U.K. we have a general strategy in education of inclusion, and so in a mainstream school, in a normal school, the strategy there if they have a child with some special needs is to try as far as possible, and to go to great lengths to keep that child in a mainstream setting so that they can mix with other children who also have different needs, some children who are maybe quite gifted, and so on. So, the strategy is to have a real mix of abilities in every classroom, and so while we do also work for special needs schools, we call them special schools here in the U.K., or alternative provision schools where some children with additional needs are sent to help them to reintegrate into mainstream, the vast majority of the schools we work with are actually mainstream.

Al: Okay, so the school teacher that you're teaching is otherwise dealing with a classroom of regular kids, but then they have some kids but then they have some kids that are more of a challenge for them?

Gerard: Yeah, yeah that's it.

Al: Yeah. And then in the class we were at a couple weeks ago we had some people from special schools, or alternative schools, right?

Gerard: Yeah, we had a couple of attendees who were from a school where they specifically cater for children who are on the autistic spectrum, or who have other behavioral or

emotional special needs. Yeah, and it was quite interesting working with them. I mean, they're usually very experienced people who are really dedicated to what they do, and they have insights into how to help those children.

Al: Yeah, and some of those stories were pretty sad, but it's great that there's people willing to put their heart and soul into helping those kids, but-

Gerard: Yeah, absolutely. We see those people all the time. They're out there giving their best for these kids, they're really trying hard, and often in the face of a lack of investment from the government, so they're having to work with what they've got to give the best they can to the children, and it's really heartening to see.

Al: So, I'm guessing that ... Although, I think in the States here we think that the U.K. is maybe a more mellow place, and things are a little easier over there, a little more laid-back, I don't know if that's true or not? I certainly enjoyed our time over there it seemed pretty mellow, but-

Gerard: We like to think so. Yeah, of course, it helps that there's an influence from their neighbors across the Irish sea [crosstalk 00:09:45]-

Al: There we go.

Gerard: ... everybody as mellow as we can.

Al: Yep, exactly, but you still ... Why don't you just share some of the insights you've gained over the last 14 years about what issues that end up having to be dealt with?

Gerard: Yeah. So, when you do what we do, and you visit schools, both primary schools and secondary schools, and mainstream schools, and special schools, and everything in between, you should start to see patterns, and develop an understanding from a sort of different viewpoint really of the kinds of issues that staff face. So, we use a framework that we use to do a very quick sort of trainings analysis with staff when we are actually in the training room with them.

Gerard: So, we have ... Of all the stories, and all of the challenges that we hear about, we have a way for dividing them up into about seven categories of situation in which a member of staff at the school would have to make a decision as to whether to continue to deescalate a situation which has arisen, verbally or through other behavioral methods, or whether they have to make a decision to actually physically intervene and put their hands on a child with all of the risk that that entails to everybody involved. So, we use the framework of sort of seven scenarios to try and quickly get to the bottom of what might be happening for a specific team.

Al: Interesting, so why don't you share a few of those, because this came up literally yesterday, we were at a school, and this exact question came up is, how do you decide when you're going to stay with verbal, and non-escalation as we call, deescalation, and

when you're going to say, "Okay, now I got to take appropriate action.", again, our terminology, but-

Gerard: Of course.

Al: ... which can either mean, in our case, calling for support and backup, or saying, "Yeah, you're going to have to physically have to intervene and do something."?

Gerard: Yeah so, my personal model for helping people make that critical decision, there's a great book out there by Jonah Lehrer called The Decisive Moment, it's about making rapid decisions, and the problems with that, but I love that phrase the decisive moment. Helping people to make the decision whether to put their hands on a child or not is really central to how we've evolved the training program that we deliver. The key issues for us really come out of the legal tests for whether it is the right time to put your hands on a child, and then following that, whether the kind of method of control that somebody might use would be appropriate in the circumstances.

Gerard: But the bigger of those two questions, the when and the how, the bigger of those two questions is the when. So, when is it appropriate for me to put my hands on a child is the decisive moment, because if it's not the right time then you shouldn't be doing anything, period, and that's really key. But if it is the right time, then you should be doing something, and it's a very shallow margin between the two things. So, helping people to do that, we apply ... I mean, having done lots of research into the legal questions that are at play in that decisive moment we use a principle called necessity, and necessity has several components to it, one of which, one of the key ones is, have you attempted to verbally communicate with this person and create time and space for it not to be necessary to put your hands on them?

Gerard: So, that's a key fulcrum, that's a key moment, which everything hinges upon is whether you've tried to do that, and whether that's working. Of course, in our experience using such methods as we've learned from the Vistelar methodology, and the universe of creating the persuasion sequence and redirection, we've got lot of specific things we can ask staff to do, which would start to clarify that necessity, or lack of necessity in that moment. So, it's been really interesting over the last few years for me to observe the consistency that that verbalization skill brings to the legal questions which will follow in the event of an intervention happening, you know?

Al: Yep.

Gerard: Did you do the right thing? Was it the right time? Did you really need to do that? Was it the right thing to do? We've really been able to make those two things dovetail, and explain very clearly to staff and have them practice in our sessions that those moments, and those feelings that they might have in that moment where they're making the right decision.

Al: And in the U.K., if there is a physical engagement, is there a requirement that the teacher or whoever would need to write a report?

Gerard: Oh definitely, yeah.

Al: 100%, yeah.

Gerard: In fact, yeah, and our advice would always be, even if you're in doubt as to whether if you use a prompting movement with a child to prompt them to move somewhere, for example, that if you're ever in doubt as to whether to write an incident report about that, that you should, absolutely.

Al: Yep, yep. Okay so, let's go a little bit more in depth then. Obviously you're giving them a little bit of time, and Vistelar tactics help with that, but at some point you say, "Okay, it's necessary.", so just provide some more insight on what do you tell the teachers, and what have you learned?

Gerard: Yeah, sure. Well, let's just talk about the scenarios then.

Al: Yep.

Gerard: When might it become necessary for a teacher to actually physically intervene with a child? The first three scenarios that we talk about are that the child is physically attempting to hurt one of the staff members present, that's one. Number two, of course, is that the child is trying to physically hurt or injure one of the other children present. The third one, of course, then is that the child is attempting, or might hurt themselves. Those are three clear kind of moments where the professional adult in the room who's responsible for what's happening would be faced with that key decision. If the risk is really imminent, and words alone have failed, so to speak, then it's quite clear, I think, we'd all want that adult to intervene.

Gerard: What we've always sort of ... One of the examples that we use, and we talk about with the teams is that even in environments where people feel like they shouldn't touch a child, and we fully understand why people would say that, if your child was at school, and they were about to run onto a busy road, maybe they got off a minibus, or they got off a bus somewhere, and they were really excited about where they were, and they turned the wrong way and started running in the wrong direction, and they were about to step off a pavement, or a footpath, in the way of an oncoming vehicle, then would you want the teacher, or the classroom assistant, or whomever it is that's there, would you want them to grab that child and pull them away from the oncoming car? The answer everybody gives us is that, "Yes."

Al: Yep.

Gerard: So, even though often there's a hesitancy, and it's a correct one, there's a hesitancy, and a fear maybe of using force with a child. When it comes down to the actual narrative, people make their minds up very quickly on what the right thing to do is.

Al: Yep. Just as you're talking there, Joel actually has that exact example, I think, when he's ... the term that often gets used in the United States is zero tolerance, we're going to

have zero tolerance for physical engagement, and it's a great concept, but if somebody is getting ready to drink poison, or run into traffic, aren't you going to do something? The answer's always, "Yeah, absolutely."

Gerard: Yeah, and you find these situations where a no touch policy is actually in play. If you read the policy it basically says that nobody should touch a child ever, but then when you go and speak to the staff who are in the classrooms, and in the dining halls, and in the areas every day, you'll find that they're flaunting that rule, because they have to.

Al: They have to, exactly.

Gerard: So, a policy that's being ignored daily, it's not really a policy at all. It's just a kind of window dressing for what somebody somewhere would like to happen, the kind of ... We call that the pink fluffy unicorns dancing on rainbows kind of approach. We'd rather it wasn't happening, so we're going to write that down in the policy.

Al: Right, yeah.

Gerard: But the truth of the matter is, the unicorns aren't unicorns, and the clouds aren't fluffy, and so on like that. It's well-meaning, but it doesn't help the staff who are often caught then between a rock and a hard place.

Al: Right, yep. So then, the other four would be obviously a little bit more nuanced, but what are they?

Gerard: A little bit, yeah. So, every school that I've ever visited has what they call the runners, I don't know if that's a term you might use in the U.S., but a child who tries to run out of the classroom, or who tries to run away from the person dealing with them, or the child who wants to run out of school, or even the child who wants to go home, and will sometimes climb a fence even to get away from the school, because they really don't like it that much. So, that's one of the scenarios. Then we have child who are not frustrated or distressed at all, but they're having so much fun in a given moment that they forget to be safe, and they climb on top of a bookshelf, or they climb on top of another piece of furniture, and they're having a merry dance up on this piece of furniture, and the adult in the room things, "Oh, my gosh, I really need to get this child down from there.", and that turns into a question anyway [crosstalk 00:21:04]-

Al: Right, yep.

Gerard: ... physical intervention. Then the really difficult and more nuanced issue here, one of the scenarios is we have a child who is refusing to do what the classroom teacher or the classroom assistant has asked them to do. So, they're just being resistant to [crosstalk 00:21:31]-

Al: Yep, yep.

Gerard: ... and they're not complying with the learning task or the learning activity that is being laid out in front of them, and not just that, I mean, to be honest that's quite normal that you find a child who says, "I'm not interested.", and we would never want to use physical force on that child, but sometimes their resistance, or refusal to be involved, turns into something else, and it kind of turns into a contagion that starts to spread around the classroom. Especially in a classroom where you've got not just one, but three or four other children who become dysregulated quickly or easily, and we have one who is reaching that point of distress more quickly, then that can just upset the applecart such that all the apples start falling off the truck. That can be one of those situations where if a teacher sees that coming soon enough, they might want that child to leave the classroom as they're becoming dysregulated, or before even.

Gerard: So, there's this really key moment, and that's where this decision comes into play, how well does the classroom teacher know the child? How well have we planned for this moment? What are the things we know will help this child to not escalate further at this moment, and so on? Those things all come together, and maybe it's a moment where they have to remove that child from that classroom, because leaving them stay there in full view of their peers with all the issues of status, and hierarchy, and embarrassment, and shame that come along with that will just create an even worse situation. So, that scenario is really tricky, but sometimes it means that a teacher will choose to exit that child from the classroom to deescalate the situation to make it safe. So, those are some of the other ones.

Al: And then there's one more. Is there one more?

Gerard: There is one more, and it's kind of a new one that we added after a few years of going around and talking to people, and we call it separation. So, the seventh scenario that we deal with and ask the teams about is what they see, and we always use the example in early years where a child is maybe three or four years old, and when they come to school in the morning they don't want to leave their carer, or parent.

Al: Oh right, right, right, right.

Gerard: So, often the parent arrives at the door, the door opens, the school staff or the nursery staff welcome the child, but the child is like stuck to the parent, like [crosstalk 00:24:17]-

Al: Got it, yep. Yep.

Gerard: ... and the parent looks at the carer, and says, "I really need to get to work, I got to get back in the car, I have to travel. Can you please help me?", and that's one of these decisive moments where the school staff have to decide whether it's the right thing to do to peel the child off the parent, and sort of forcibly bring them into classroom. Again, I could go into lots of detail, but that's a really tricky moment, and there's lots of ways of managing that before and around that critical moment, but sometimes on the 4th of September when it's the first day of school, that can sort of ambush staff, and that they can be in a situation where they have to make a key decision.

Al: Well, and you got the additional issue there of the parent putting pressure on you to-

Gerard: Oh, totally.

Al: Yeah.

Gerard: Yeah, and of course, the reason that's the seventh scenario and the most recent addition to the list we have is that I've personally seen two court cases arise where the parent has reported the school staff's behavior, their action, to peel the child off, or lead them into the classroom away from the parent, they reported that to the police, and the situations turned into a court case-

Al: Oh, wow.

Gerard: ... where the school staff has been prosecuted for assaulting the child. So, that there's been a couple of those in the last few years here, which just underlines how critical a moment that is.

Al: Yeah, you wouldn't ... and it's probably the parent-

Gerard: You wouldn't think of that-

Al: ... was probably the one that instigated a little bit saying, "Can you do something here? I got to get to work."

Gerard: Well, I think it's a really interesting moment, because it's a moment of cooperation that turns into a moment of conflict, and it turns into that in the blink of an eye, where an opinion or a perception and a feeling about what's happening turns from, "I need to do this, and it's the right thing to do.", to, "Oh gosh, that was wrong and bad, and I feel bad about it so now I need to do something about it.", and then they call social services or the police, and the whole thing spirals into a big story, you know?

Al: Yep.

Gerard: So, without saying it's right or wrong we just recognize that as a scenario where a critical decision needs to be made.

Al: So, when you do your ... Generally it's a day of training for teachers, and you would walk through these seven scenarios, and then give them, one, kind of the background on how to make that decision, but when they decide to do something then what do to?

Gerard: Yeah, well our experience is that the way we run the training and how we sort of frame the training that we deliver is that it should give everybody in the room answers to, or at least a foundation from which to make good decisions in those scenarios. One of the things we always ask the staff is that, "Is there anything else that you think happens in a school that we need to talk about today?", and those seven that I've just described to

you seem to cover school staffs experience of those critical moments where they need to decide what to do.

Al: Yep, yeah. You didn't cover the one ... Told this story a bunch of time, but I was in the fifth grade, obviously a bunch of years ago, a little town in Oregon, we had a teacher that regularly threw chalk at us. So, we didn't cover that scenario, the chalk throwing teacher.

Gerard: No. Well, of course, we're usually ... When we walk into the training room we're hoping that the teachers and everybody are in control of their own behavior, and that they're not using coercive methods or anything like that, and that they're able to control their own emotional response to things, which ... I don't know if I'm ... I mean, here's some more substances that ... one of the things we're finding is that as budgets are shrinking in every educational system you can imagine across the world, what you find is teachers are under more pressure to produce better results all the time. So, you have people who are to one extent or another under huge pressure and burning out, and also being faced with unusual and strange behaviors that they perhaps haven't been taught to deal with, and day on day that can become really frustrating. I can imagine a situation where a teacher on a one given day would turn around and throw a piece of chalk at somebody, or something like that. Of course, these days, that's a career ending-

Al: Career ending [crosstalk 00:29:11]-

Gerard: ... or career limiting decision. Back in the day, Al, I guess it was just another day at school.

Al: Nobody blinked an eye, exactly.

Gerard: Oh, and I could tell you stories about me, and especially my brothers who are older than me, being in school in Cork in Ireland, and the kinds of things that were going on there, and it's a different landscape now what's acceptable.

Al: Well, just last night in the news here, I'm sure it didn't make the U.K. news, but there's ... and you don't know the scenario at all, but there's ... it's either a teacher or a security officer, it's not clear, walking down the hallway with a young child who looks like maybe he or she is five or six, and something hits this guy, or gal, well, I'm pretty sure it was a guy, picks the child up and slams the child to the ground. It's [crosstalk 00:30:06]-

Gerard: Yeah, I saw it somehow-

Al: Oh, you did see it?

Gerard: Yeah, I mean, Facebook kind of knows, I suppose.

Al: Oh, there we go, yep.

Gerard: Social media knows what we're interested in, or what we watch. I did, I saw that video, and it's just incredible. But again, I think you and I would have certain perspectives on this, that I think you're looking at somebody who's descended into a very personal space at that moment.

Al: Exactly.

Gerard: They're not in a performance mindset, they don't understand that the CCTV camera's watching them, not to mention all the other children, all the other teachers at the school, and [crosstalk 00:30:45]-

Al: Well, it's-

Gerard: ... that they're representing, you know?

Al: Yep. Well, as we talked about in the class two weeks ago that you well know, and yeah, I don't know if I've told be, Gerard came over ... How many, it was about six years ago? Seven years ago that you came to the United States?

Gerard: Yeah, it was 2014. Yeah, April or so in 2014 I came and worked with Gary for the week long instructor school then, so amazing [crosstalk 00:31:10]-

Al: So, relative to what you just said, you're obviously quite familiar with it, but that's ... We talk about conflict triggers, of knowing what yours are-

Gerard: Totally.

Al: ... and being aware of what they are and so you can deal with them if somebody's pulling your chain or pushing on one of your hot buttons, and how do you maintain your emotional equilibrium. And we talk about showtime mindset, making sure that you're walking into a situation that you know that it's a performance, and more than likely you're on camera, and you better pay attention to what you're doing, because this is ... you're on stage, and everybody's watching. Yeah, obviously-

Gerard: Absolutely.

Al: ... this guy in this video wasn't paying attention to either one of those, right?

Gerard: Yeah, absolutely, and I mean, it's really interesting, often I'll be with a group of teachers and teaching assistants here in the U.K., and we'll be working through some verbalization skills, and I'll be putting some templates in front of them and saying, "At this moment, this is probably a good way to structure what you say next to the child." Sometimes people will look at me and go, "Well, the child I'm thinking of, and the child I'll deal with every day is nonverbal, so that the child doesn't really have words to speak to communicate, and they don't really engage with things that are being said to them either."

Gerard: One of the key things that I would say to them just on your point about the performance is that, "Well, sometimes we make attempts to communicate with people because it may work, but also because everybody else is watching us do it, too." So, if you're trying to engage with one child in a classroom there's 29 other children in the classroom watching you do that, and that has a huge effect then on ... One of my favorite sayings is ... it comes from the vast lore of conflict management, but one of the favorite things, in not sure where it comes from, but it says, "How you treat them today is how they're going to behave tomorrow."

Al: Exactly.

Gerard: Yeah, and then so having that understanding that dealing with one child is a performance that's being viewed by the other 29, and your colleague, and maybe the CCTV, too, depending on your school, is just so, so important for regulating behavior, and making the right thing to do very apparent.

Al: Very cool. Well, Gerard, I think we should end this here, I think this is a good segue, and then let's very soon, I know you're moving from one part of the U.K. to another part, that's all I know, 300 miles? I wouldn't know the-

Gerard: Yeah.

Al: ... geography there at all, but I think we should get back together soon whenever you're available and talk about then what ... We know the seven scenarios, but then what do you actually teach in class-

Gerard: Sure.

Al: ... and how do the teachers respond to that, because I know you got a bunch of experience on ... like you said, there's a lot of hesitancy when you're touching a child, and you've dealt with that for a bunch of years. So, I think [crosstalk 00:34:24]-

Gerard: Yeah.

Al: ... be very interesting to hear your thoughts on that, and then you also said you're just not in the U.K., you've actually been down to the UAE and dealt with schools in that part of the world.

Gerard: Yeah so, I've been visiting the UAE for a variety of reasons since about 2008. So, we have a long history of actually going out to Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and doing our best to understand the culture out there, which in a work sense is really interesting, because almost every work place is multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual, and then there are interesting kind of complexities around dealing with conflict in that environment. But we've worked in hospitals, and more recently in schools in the UAE since that time, and really developed a lot of expertise. In some ways you learn that everybody responds to conflict in the same way just differently. So, it has been a wonderful opportunity to see things from that perspective. Yeah, I just spent two weeks in the UAE in November

helping schools out there it was so interesting to look at peoples different experiences of conflict in that environment.

Al: Yeah. So, in general, if the U.K. is a little more mellow than the United States, where does the UAE fall on that spectrum?

Gerard: So, in the UAE, you have such a multiethnic, multinational, multilingual sort of set up that I think that people ... like many expat environments around the world where people sort of have more filters when they're dealing with others, and they're more careful not to set off other peoples conflict triggers. So, it's a very interesting kind of environment out there. At the same time, everybody's under stress for various reasons, same as in any life style you might have anywhere.

Gerard: There are some additional considerations there, because there's a kind of stratification of, if I could say, class in the UAE, where, quite simply, you have people who are born and bred in the UAE, they're UAE nationals are generally in positions of great power and influence, and then you have professional people, generally from the Western world, who are running high status positions in organizations, and that runs all the way down then to laborers who are building the skyscrapers, and then they are generally from developing countries who aren't particularly well educated, but are good at construction skills, or something like that. So, it's just a-

Al: And the kids are all together in the same class of all those-

Gerard: Again, that would be kind of stratified. The schools that I've generally worked are from two or three of those categories where they're international schools, so-

Al: Okay, yep.

Gerard: ... the teachers in the classrooms will be from all over the world, and the students in the classroom could be from all over the world, and could be local Emirati child as well. Part of my experience then is working with counselors from the schools that are out in the Western regions, which are basically just a few years ago the communities in the Western regions were leading a nomadic lifestyle very much in the desert, and two or three generations on their kids are now going to schools where they're being taught by teachers from England, and New Zealand, and Australia, and Canada.

Al: Okay, yep.

Gerard: And yes, the local very old kind of society that built up out there is still very much in effect where the elders of the tribe are kind of in charge of what's happening, and there are certain expectations on the young people. So, it's a fascinating kind of area to work in, and a real privilege to be able to offer some conflict management skills really for the teachers, again, which should be universal.

Al: Yeah, very cool, because I ... Years and years ago, I still remember, living in the United States you think that this is kind of how the world works, and we have a couple hundred

years of history, and then you go to the Middle East, and there's thousands of years of cultural conflict, and history, and ... Yeah, so it's a-

Gerard: It's fascinating, yeah. It's an interesting ... I mean, there's the people who came to the U.S. brought with them their ways of interacting with each other. I remember reading some years ago, I can't remember where this was, this might be Malcolm Gladwell, about just the importance of certain types of society that formed way back in the day, and how, for example, shepherding, and the kind of animal husbandry, and so on that went on, that really shaped how human societies kind of interacted with one another. If you had what you had then it was important, and you probably had it with your family.

Al: Right.

Gerard: So, there's just a lot of ways in which that influences still the way families interact with people, with other families, and so on. This sort of tribalism, and othering that happens.

Al: Well, very interesting. Well, now that this partnership's been in place in an informal way for whenever you came over here, but now it's more formalized as the last couple of weeks, so-

Gerard: [crosstalk 00:41:00]-

Al: ... I'm hoping we're going to have more opportunity to have these chats. I think this is-

Gerard: For sure, we're looking at a-

Al: Yep, and-

Gerard: ... really exciting 2020 taking the Vistelar methodology out there into lots of different areas in the U.K. We work in schools, of course, but hospital security is a big area for us right now. In the past we worked a lot in dementia care homes, helping staff to work with older people, and we're working in mental health escorting, and so on. I mean, there's a lot of different areas that are just really ... we hope are going to benefit greatly from exposure to the Vistelar methodology in the coming months and years.

Al: Well, and I'm just hoping that this continues to blossom so that we can find a reason to get me over there for another trip, because-

Gerard: Great.

Al: ... it was great fun. As you know, I was very fascinated by the language, and the different terms being used for things.

Gerard: Yes.

Al: I learned about cockney slang rhyming, do I have it right?

Gerard: That's right. Cockney rhyming slang, that's it, yeah.

Al: So, not on this one, but the next podcast, let's definitely do a little-

Gerard: Let's get into that.

Al: ... cockney rhyming slang, yeah.

Gerard: For sure. Yeah, definitely.

Al: Cool. Okay, Gerard, well, good luck with the move, I hope it gets all very to little pain, goes seamlessly.

Gerard: Thank you very much.

Al: We'll talk again soon, and we can go into more detail on once you make that decisive moment decision, what do you do next?

Gerard: Right, yeah absolutely. So yeah, thanks for having me on. It's just about a week before Christmas here, so I hope you have a lovely ... happy holidays, I think you say over there?

Al: Exactly.

Gerard: And it'll be great to speak to you in the new year.

Al: Thanks a lot, take care.

Gerard: Thanks, Al.