

## Ep. 2: Girls as Social Activists (Part 2)

[00:00:00] **Trudy Hall:** Hi there, you are listening to *On Educating Girls: Creating a World of Possibilities*, a podcast produced by the National Coalition of Girls Schools, and I am Trudy Hall, your host for these important conversations about girls. This episode is the second part of our conversation on Girls as Social Activists. In our first episode, which you can find on Apple, Spotify, Google podcasts or the NCGS website, we began a conversation with Melissa Kilby, the Executive Director of Girl Up, in which we explored why so many young girls in this generation are becoming social activists.

[00:00:40] **sound clip:** For more than 30 years the science has been crystal clear. How dare you continue to look away and come here saying that you're doing enough when the politics and solutions needed are still nowhere in sight.

[00:00:57] **Trudy Hall:** Perhaps our listeners recognize the passion of Greta Thunberg, the Swedish teenager who has become the face of Climate Change. As she spoke her truth to this gathering at the UN, the reactions were predictable: some were wowed with her courage, others angered by her strident tone. We learn from watching activists like Greta that a young woman's passion is a powerful tool in the skill set for social activism. They must have the courage of their convictions yet be buffered by self-confidence when the pushback becomes personal. So, we are curious, what about the educational environment in which a girl is discovering those passions or honing her voice? Are there ways school communities can teach girls how to harness the power of their voice effectively? And where are the seeds of that impressive self-confidence planted? Today we want to tap into the wisdom offered by school leaders who are focused on girls and how they learn. Girls schools believe that changemakers are not born; but rather "nourished" intentionally into leadership roles in educational environments where their voices matter; where their voices are heard and honed. Throughout, we want you to hear voices of girls who define themselves as activists, because we want you to hear what confidence sounds like.

[00:02:14] **Opeyemi Ogundele:** that young women have the uncanny ability to experience and perceive more than their male counterparts. Um, I think we're naturally attuned to the needs of others and tend to be more community and collectively organized. And I've definitely been able to see this going to an all female institution. The amounts of insight and perspective that being a woman of color in this space has afforded me definitely allowed me to put myself in the shoes of others and become more attentive to what the people in my community needed.

[00:02:53] **Trudy Hall:** According to the statistics on the United Nations website, the world is home to *more than 1.1 billion girls under age 18*, who are poised to become the largest generation of female leaders, entrepreneurs and change-makers the world has ever seen. Ensuring their success is of utmost importance to us all. As a woman who cares passionately about educating girls--and has for decades, it is a privilege for me to be your guide today as we meet our guests for the second of two podcasts on the topic of Girls as Social Activists. I am joined by Dr. Briony Scott, the Principal of Wenona School, in Sydney, Australia and Dr. Kate Hadwin, the Principal of Pymble Ladies College, also in Sydney. Both women are known as thought leaders on the topic of girls education, with a deep commitment to the importance of research-based educational programming, so I know that today our guests will speak from their deep knowledge of what works for girls in an educational setting. To set the stage for their wisdom, listen to some quick thoughts from girls from three continents.

[00:04:04] **Faye Chang:** Being active within social movements is incredibly important to provide you with a sense of purpose and drive throughout life.

[00:04:14] **Oly Dyedi:** I think young women tend to be better social activists for two reasons. The first one being that they're young, which means they are the youth and the future of any society, of any community is its youth. And if there is no hope for the youth, there is no hope for the future. The second reason being that women are the beginning of any society, they birth the future leaders, they birth the leaders, the problem-solvers, the scientists, the doctors, and as much as they give birth to the society, they are still also tossed with teaching morality to society. They are tasked with teaching children from a young age what I'm wrong is.

[00:05:07] **Opeyemi Ogundele:** And it's even more draining when you have people who just don't seem to care about something you deemed very important, like racial or environmental justice. Uh, however, the most important thing to remember is that there are people who believe in the same fight as you do and share your passion.

[00:05:25] **Oly Dyedi:** Change is a community effort and it's not wise to try and bear the weight of the issue on your own.

[00:05:32] **Zahra Chan:** What drives me personally, a social activists? Well, I've always been taught to be empathetic and care about those around me. And I've always just been taught to, you know, speak what I think is important and share what I believe is important to enlighten the people around me. How do I think being in a girl's school has shaped my idea of activism? Well, I definitely think it has encouraged me to voice my opinions and not to be afraid to share what I believe is important and relevant to our society.

[00:05:59] **Trudy Hall:** [00:06:00] Kate and Briony, let me offer a warm welcome to you both. I'm really looking forward to learning from you both today. And I want to start by suggesting that I've looked at both of your websites and I find very compelling language about service and service learning. At Wenona, Brian eight, your motto, since the school's inception in 1886 has been, "That I may serve" and your faculty has created a service learning curriculum across all levels. I wonder if you can speak a bit about the programming that that curriculum includes, and more importantly, can you talk about how you measure your success in attempting to achieve those goals?

[00:06:43] **Dr. Briony Scott:** Thank you. We try and obviously develop a program that is age appropriate. So you want a program that, uh, even from kindergarten onwards is helping to educate young women to understand their role and their ability to influence an outcome. And so even from the perspective of a five-year-old or four-year-old, uh, having young women learn about what that their actions have implications on others and stretching and developing that as they get older so that they learn that their actions actually can have a positive outcome, that they can influence their world around them. And so we try and develop a program and it's constantly tweaking because you're also trying to tap into their interests and what they're interested in, fascinated by and going well, 'what is a problem here that you're trying to solve?' and keeping the ownership with them so that they have the agency to be able to address problems as they come across. Um, so we embed it structurally into the program, into the explicit curriculum so that they're aware of what is being overtly taught, but it also needs to be role modelled in the hidden curriculum in terms of the culture of the school and our expectations that these are by and large fortunate young women. Women have never been as well educated in history as these women are, and they are. And they are getting one of the best educations in the world. Um, so you can argue that they're the best educated women in history. And you go with that comes an enormous responsibility because that isn't the case for all women. It's not the case for all girls. And so what do they do with this? And, and it's not enough for you to come to school and for us to provide these opportunities for you to experience great things. You have to recognize that you have a responsibility to give back to this community to make it better. So it becomes it's in the language, it's in the assemblies it's in, uh, it's not that kind of patriarchal leader, um, benevolence that you can go out and, and fix other people's problems for them. It's not that. It's a sense that you have a responsibility with the gifts you've been given the opportunities you've been given to give back. So it runs in parallel is the upshot.

[00:08:50] **Trudy Hall:** I do want to talk, I do want to talk more about this, uh, notion that the language makes a difference in how you use language in the culture makes a difference and how you have to be repetitive in the language that you use in a very reinforcing way. And as I, as we think about language. I want to also turn to the promotional language that's that you use in your websites and Kate, this, this

question goes off, uh, to you. In your promotional language, on the website. It actually, you actually used the word change-makers. "We are change makers," you know, "we lead the way", um, and it clearly implies a mission orientation toward, um, leadership. Do you make any distinction between preparing girls for a life of service and inspiring them to become social activists? And is there a criticality in the language as you do that?

[00:09:45] **Dr. Kate Hadwen:** Um, look, I'm a really passionate believer and we talk a lot about being of service rather than doing service. So when we think about setting our girls up for life and changing their world and the world around them, then, uh, being of service in this world is really important. And what that means is that it gets to speak to their unique gifts and talents. And so you're right. Language is critically important. And I, I'm a huge believer that language has meaning and meaning creates culture, and culture creates behavior. And so when we think about how we encourage the girls to change their minds, That's just not at school because that's part of the process, but that process is actually leading to an endpoint and that's about the responsibility. And Briony spoke a little bit about responsibility. It's about responsibility and opportunity. And so how we really lean into being of service and therefore creating opportunities for the girls and also giving them the responsibility that actually, if you put your hand up, then there's an expectation that you will achieve an outcome. You know, that we will help you, but everyone's well intended. Uh, it's actually about the impact that you can make. So everyone has great ideas, but, um, our expectation is for the girls to have an impact on the world. And so that's what I talked to them about measuring. Uh, and that's what we talk about when we talk about committing to a life of service and not just servicing the needs of those in their youth, in their community, just around, around the school or locally that actually, how does that look globally?

[00:11:17] **Trudy Hall:** Kate, you just mentioned in your response, you brought up the issue of, uh, social media. When we spoke to Melissa Kilby of Girl Up, she talked about the positive impact of social media and how it allowed for connectivity. I have a feeling that within a school community, uh, social media may have a very different kind of, uh, utilization. And I'd love to hear from both you and Briony about this particular topic. Because I know every school manages it differently and let's start with you Kate, and then I'll shift to Briony.

[00:11:54] **Dr. Kate Hadwen:** Yes, absolutely. Of course there's positives and negatives. And interestingly, it was my key research area before stepping back into school: Social media and its impact on young people. Uh, and so, uh, it's about awareness, right? Particularly when you think about social activism, you know, we want our girls to be aware of what could occur if they engage with social media. And so it's not about making the decision for them. I don't think about making the decision for them about whether they post things or whether they share information.

It's actually about really sitting with them and giving them a deep understanding of what could be the consequences or the outcome of choosing to share in that way. Uh, and if they're equipped and their skilled to be able to deal with that, then arguably you're actually you're skilling them up for their life. Again, our goal is for their whole of life. And so how do we, rather than, uh, refrain from allowing students to use technology at all, how do we actually use these opportunities and lean into these opportunities so that they can become opportunities to raise their awareness regarding the impact social media can have, but also the negative outcome that social media can have and how to deal with that effectively.

[00:13:10] **Trudy Hall:** Hmm. And that makes sense. And, and Briony, uh, pile on here, your, your, uh, thoughts about social media?

[00:13:18] **Dr. Briony Scott:** Well, I, I love social media. Um, I, I'm a great believer that you can't be what you can see. So for me, I'm actively engaged in, um, all forms of social media and from Twitter, Facebook Instagram. And I use that within the school setting as well, obviously. Um, because I want young women to know that there are no spaces that they can go, that I'm not aware of. Like, I want to be aware of where they are spending their time. I want to understand their language. Um, I want to be a participant in it. I really, really enjoy it. Uh, from my perspective, the social media is so incredibly powerful in terms of influencing and creating narratives. And I want to be a part of that generation that is creating a narrative of hope and that's creating a narrative, not, not just change for changes sake, but change to help problem solve, to improve things and to, and to make the world better. And if you look at the hashtag #metoo, that whole movement, that whole concept of social activism that grew out of social media, but it's not enough just sit on the sidelines and be commentating. So that whole line of, um, you know, the, the, the credit belongs to the man who's in the arena. He can't be sitting on the sideline taking pot shots and critiquing. Cause you know, I was listening to a podcast about that this week. There's no skin in the game with that. That's just an easy thing to do to critique. It's what you then do with what is happening in social media. Operationalise it, put it into action and invariably, it's a small deflated percentage of what, of what the words are. But if you do 10% of what you talk about or you're engaged in, in social media, and you can start to act on that 10%, that's 10% that wouldn't have happened otherwise. What you can't do is engage in social media and not then do anything about it other than just sit on the sidelines.

[00:15:08] **Trudy Hall:** Kate, I can see that you want to add on.

[00:15:10] **Dr. Kate Hadwen:** Thank you. It's interesting. You know, I speak with the girls when they say I want to go to this climate rally or I'm going to get involved in whatever social media they want to get involved in. And one of the things I love to ask them is, um, talk me through what changes you're making in your life to support

this outcome. I'm really keen, uh, that, um, whenever the girls decide to get involved in some form of social activism or, or, uh, really leaning to social media to understand sure, absolutely happy to support you to go to that climate change Rally. Tell me how you're changing in your life. Is it, is it that you're committed to no glad rap? Is it that you're committed to catching the train every day or walking to school possibly? Uh, so. You know, I, I just love that whole concept of as Briony is speaking to, you know, how we actually get them to really think about, think deeply about change for themselves and how that, how that change, or they can be the change that others can see around them in a practical way, as well as through technology.

[00:16:14] **Trudy Hall:** Well, you've tapped into something that I wanted to ask more about, which is, um, we know as educators, that if we model the behavior, uh, that makes an enormous difference in our, in our students' lives. They need to see us doing what we want them to do. You know, what you, what you, uh, do speak so loudly. I cannot hear what you say, right? And I'd love to know if this is true for teaching social activism and how have you seen it play out in your school communities and maybe start with you, Kate since you just finished off on that. Maybe if you could launch us a little bit and then we'll go back to Briony.

[00:16:49] **Dr. Kate Hadwen:** Oh, look, educators are such wonderful promoters of this, you know, educators around the world are so great at actually demonstrating to young people what that looks like in a really healthy way. And that starts with Briony and I, and, um, leaders in education all around the world so that we can provide the platforms and we can actually enable students by one supporting their ideas. So yes, we can do it ourselves, but we can also deeply listen. And so, sometimes it might be that young people might come forward with an idea that perhaps could feel risky or could feel like, um, you could even put the school at risk, for example, and stopping and pausing and deeply listening and understanding that whole 'nothing about us without us.' We're in this together. We're in this world together, and I talk a lot about our school. We're a very large school and I speak at every opportunity about the school being a family, and we're connected as a family. And so, uh, what I do impacts on the rest of our family be they, you know, 2300 students that impacts on each of each member of our family, our Pymble family, and then more broadly the family around us. And so I think that ecosystem is really important and we all have opportunities to lead. Uh, and to demonstrate leadership in our own ecosystem that builds on what can be the narrative for the girls for their future

[00:18:11] **Trudy Hall:** Briony. I want you to take that in a little bit of a different place. You talked about narrative, um, and you also talked about, uh, the fact that you are walking the talk with social media. And so obviously your students are seeing how



you're using social media. Can you talk a little bit about how you weave narrative into the ways in which you help students understand and model your behaviour.

[00:18:36] **Dr. Briony Scott:** I think the narrative is such a powerful way of making sense out of a chaotic world. And these young people have a lot of things coming down the pipeline at them, a lot of, uh, issues that tap on their heart and draw on their, their empathy. And by and large, it's a generation that are really acutely aware of social injustice and global inequity. And probably far more way, far more than we were like, because where they're just exposed to this torrent of uncensored imagery and language. And so for someone in my role, I have to be very clear about what is the one message that I am saying above all messages. And for young women in particular, the message is that you, this is your life and you're making your choices. And while it's great to take advice and listen to other people, ultimately, I don't want other people making decisions on your behalf. The choice about your life, who you live with, the job, you do the kind of lifestyle you're going to live, where you're going to live, that sits with you. And there's a whole lot of stuff that's going to happen in this life that you have no control over. How you deal with it, that is squarely in your court. So this whole concept of social activism and the narratives, and, and it was interesting. You asked a question earlier around, well, how do you measure success? And I go, sure. You can measure success in, uh, you know, do you get a problem solved? Do you get, uh, enough kids going to the climate rally or, you know, all of those things. And then there, isn't another element that educationalists go. We're actually playing a really long game here. Those are Aristotelian values that we want, the character that we want in our young women. I'm never going to see that. They'll be played out when they're 30 and 40 and 50 and 60. And when I'm long gone, like, so I play a long game. And so there's this really interesting challenge you that I'm educating now and the social issues that matter so much to a 14 year old or a 15 year old may not matter as much when they're 50. Maybe there'll be other things that are going on. But the character that is that is built into them, that's tested and forged under the early second sense. That's what I want to see continue to flourish long after they've left school.

[00:20:57] **Trudy Hall:** such a good image. I liked the, I liked the image of the character flourishing, um, because I think I, I think of character as being at the center and the core of a young woman. Let me ask you though, um, we're talking so positively about the ways in which girls can be social activists, and I'd like to shift the lens a little bit. Uh, when we spoke with, um, Melissa, uh, last week, she also talked about, uh, potential for burnout and, uh, some negative consequences. And as educators, I'd love to hear you talk about, um, how you've seen this play out if girls get too involved in some of these areas. And are there cautions and thoughts that you would have as educators about how to either prevent that or how to address it when it surfaces?

[00:21:43] **Dr. Briony Scott:** Well, I think there are some significant risks involved and so I was interested I was talking to one of my young girls today around her involvement in climate change. And she said they were well educated on this concept of step up, step down. Learning that, in fact, it's an insatiable beast and you can never give enough and you're never going to fix every problem. And so at some point you have to be educating around boundaries about educating around self care, educating reinforcing this very strong narrative that that is not a weakness. That is a strength because you're playing a long game. It's a marathon, not a sprint. I think it's, it's challenging for young people because they get very passionate about a cause, throw themselves into it and invariably get burnt. Invariably people don't hand over power just because you asked for it. They don't fix the situation just because you're a nice person. There are a lessons that you have to learn around human nature and negotiation and persistence. One of the things that I do, I, I, I, um, have advocated very strongly around refugees and, and child protection here in Australia around lung cancer awareness, um, the professionalization of, of education and, and things that matter to me and that plays out in the papers. It plays out in the media and the news. And it's so interesting watching my young people watch me and then watch the trolls come in. And, and the people who take me down and the people who don't not only agree with me, don't agree with. That also really don't like the color of my hair and the fact that I must have these political views or, and, and, and off they go with this stuff. And of course I get hurt because I'm human, right. It's awful, but I'm role modeling to these young people. We ha and, and not every principal is going to be involved in this level. I completely get that, but I would argue that most principals of schools are involved in social activism just by providing a counter-cultural way of perceiving young people and raising them. So everyone does it differently, but for me, I am in that space and I have to be able to role model to them. Yeah. It really sucks sometimes. You, you, you have to learn how to back down, but don't back down from what you believe and what you know, to be true. Just know that there are some times you're going to have to take a backseat. Sometimes you're going to have to move forward and educating them. Cause there's no point educating around a cause if they're going to die in the attempt. Well, are they going to get sobered out or, uh, it gets so toxic they get shamed, all those things there. We, we have to be able to teach them that if you're going to apply in this world, then you, then you need to have the skills and those skills just aren't being passionate about a cause, it's understanding how do you challenge human nature? How do you understand, how do you bring about change? It's not straightforward. Otherwise everyone would be doing it.

[00:24:28] **Trudy Hall:** Uh, Kate, I'm guessing you believe in the long game too. What would you add on to those words of wisdom?

[00:24:35] **Dr. Kate Hadwen:** Yeah, I I'm at Pymble when we thought about our strategic plan, we, uh, we did something really different, most strategic plans, sit around buildings and people, and, you know, the same sort of four characters or



four pillars that people might have and one of the strategies that we settled on is, "diversity is the path to unity". And, uh, it's a, it's an interesting one to settle on, right. Diversity as the part to unity. And so almost what it does is actually called forward social activism from the get-go and just says, as a school, we expect that it's in fact we're driving towards it. And so, uh, you know, it just creates a really interesting context for us and we've got groups of students coming forward. For example, we've got the Asian support. Who, uh, and getting to Brian his point about actually creating the structures for change. So sure, they they're going to get burned along the way, and they're going to learn some along the way and they're going to grow. But if they understand the fundamentals around the structure and that yes, you are going to have to comment publicly at some stage about this. And as Brian, he says not everybody's going to love it, but you know what? You have a voice and frankly you have a responsibility. You know, we, we all do, and we've set that agenda as a whole school and said, as a school, we have a responsibility to make diversity by unity and to bring everybody together. And so now we're seeing all of these things bubble up that we have not seen before publicly own that as a school. And it's created all of these moments within our staff and within our school where our staff have gone, "Hm, sure. That's a really good point. You've just made right. That's uncomfortable. We're going to have to do something about that." It's like a policy thing, you know, when a policy thing comes up where we can't do this, or we can't do that. And I love that our girls are taking hold of this, you know, and love that our girls are calling us the community at large to account on things that they're really passionate.

[00:26:40] **Trudy Hall:** Well, you're leading me into, um, an interesting place in this conversation because I think the three of us are probably fully believe in the transformative power of, um, coming of age, in a school community that is filled with girls' voices and is all about the empowerment of girls voices. And I'd love to hear both of you speak to that reality and what that really means in the life of a young woman. Why is it that social activism takes root in communities like this? What's so different about a girl school community as they come of age and learn to use their voice surrounded by other girls, um, who also are fascinated by their voices? Let's start with Kate.

[00:27:25] **Dr. Kate Hadwen:** Yeah, thank you. Um, I mean, I, I'm just going to go to the fundamentals first and then I'll move on to, I guess, the more philosophical, but for a start, in a girls' school every leader you see in your student body is a girl. You know, you're not, I was shocked by, I remember reading a newspaper article a little while ago about a co-ed school that ended up having only boys as their, as their head students. Because they couldn't frankly, find a girl. I mean, how ridiculous. Of course there were great girls at that school, you know, but for a start, you've got all around you, a whole network of other women who were there beside you, supporting you and encouraging you and cheering you on from the sidelines. It creates an, uh, an opportunity or I guess, an ecosystem through which girls' voices

are really raised. And, uh, there's, there's so much support and there's so many positive role models for girls to be themselves and be who they are. I think there's certainly an important need for girls and boys to have opportunities to co-learn together and to spend time together. But that, that not take away from having a home having some way where you come back to where you feel is uniquely yours and where you're nurtured, which is different from a co-educational setting, I guess, where everybody's learning at the same time and doing everything together. And I've worked in great co-ed schools and single-sex schools as well. Girls in girls schools is some is about the ecosystem that is created for girls for those environments, which is really, really deeply enriching for them.

[00:29:04] **Trudy Hall:** Uh, thank you for that. Briony, I can tell you want to add something to that?

[00:29:09] **Dr. Briony Scott:** I think it's a great question because I, I also think that just sending a girl to a girl's school doesn't guarantee anything. If the school you send them to is not gender aware and conscious around the messages that they're sending. So it is actually possible to go to other schools where you do have. The leadership team and the teaching staff are acutely aware. They're just very few and far between because by and large, they ended up being generalists. And I always get interested by people who, who challenge this idea about the fact that I am committed to girls' education so profoundly. And yet we have no issue with the fact that if I went into medicine, I could be what we call an Australia general practitioner or a general doctor. Um, but if I choose to specialize as a cardiologist or as a, you know, an endocrinologist, no one would have any problem with that? Right. But I go into education and I got actually, don't want to be a generalist. I want to specialize in girls' education. And everyone's like, how dare you? You have to be a generalist. I'm like, I don't want to be a generalist. I'm a specialist. I know what I'm doing in this world. And the reason that I know what I'm doing is because, uh, if you look back through history about where women have, um, gone through being in, in stereotyped roles and have had to break through into other worlds, the best way of doing it has always been being surrounded by other women and an example, I'll give you two examples. One is. Where women try profoundly to break into medicine for so many years, but were told their brains were too small or they wouldn't cope with the sight of blood. I mean, there's all sorts of reasons why they apparently couldn't be really good doctors and eventually it was a Catholic nuns who set up these hospitals that allow the women to get the skills, to be able to get into medicine, to be able to be good enough at what they do. It wasn't going to happen any other way. In scuba diving, it was always thought of as a man's sport. Women could not get through. They could not get through the process. They couldn't get to the training level until a small group of women ended up doing it themselves, forming it themselves and then raising up another generation of women who went into scuba diving instructing. Now I know that sounds such an obscure example, but time and time and time again in history, the way that women have

broken through systemic prejudice and bias is by pulling them apart separately, educating them to a phenomenal degree and empowering them with the skills they need so they're not battling against those stereotypes and then putting them back out into the workplace or back out into the world, they want to penetrate. And by doing it that way, we're not saying these kids aren't being raised as nuns. They're not being raised in isolation. They have incredibly rich, uh, beautiful social lives, but. I want to be able to educate them, to know that they can do anything. They choose anything they want to do. And if that means that I will put myself between them and all those social and cultural pressures that go on now, you can't really do that. You can't do engineering, you can't do it. You know it, no people don't say it explicitly, but you look at the kids doing engineering studies in the HSC it's 98% male across all the schools in the country. So you go, okay, there is a way bias there. So how do we do it? I step between them and that, and I allow them to do engineering studies. By the time they graduate year 12, want to go to university to be engineers. They then go out, they're prepared, they're ready. They know their stuff. I will never apologize for doing it.

[00:32:37] **Trudy Hall:** I can tell that this conversation could go on for a long time, because I have so many more questions to ask each of you, as we think about what it is that prompts girls to consider themselves as social activists. But what I do want to do as we bring our conversation to a close is. Each of you very wise, very experienced women, the opportunity to leave our listeners, uh, with a sense of, um, an important piece, an important, um, uh, last piece of wisdom that you would like to share with them that you would like to have them leave this conversation thinking about or reflecting upon, um, Briony, H do you want to start?

[00:33:20] **Dr. Briony Scott:** I would encourage them not to mock or to minimize small beginnings. Courage is a muscle and it's a muscle that develops with practice. And it might be that some of the first overtures that a young girl makes are actually quite small or minimal, and it's easy to overlook them, but if you recognize them for what they are and acknowledge, even if you don't agree with the argument of what's being voiced, if you're acknowledging the fact that they have exercised courage in raising an issue or raising a topic, then that is phenomenal. And the more that they can do that, um, the more that that will develop and grow as they get to adulthood. Things like courage, which would cause a lot of social activism takes enormous courage. Um, it doesn't, it's not a switch that you flick on at 18. It's something that is in them and you just want to foster and develop and encourage, uh, as they grow so that they can learn and continue to grow and learn and continue to grow. And the issues that they engage in in the way they express themselves may change. But that courage muscle, that compassionate muscle, that ability to be empathetic, but to operationalize it and turn it into activism, that all takes time and practice. And so don't mock or don't minimize the small things, just foster and encourage.

[00:34:43] **Dr. Kate Hadwen:** Briony's talked about courage and I'm going to talk about hope and the importance that hope plays for all of us in, in particular for our young people. To not get bogged down by all of those things, be they little or small that we can see that we can do better in or where there's an opportunity for change, but actually how the smallest things it's the mosquito, right? Don't ever think of mosquito can't have an impact in the middle of the night. You know, the saying. So it's the smallest of actions that can lead to the biggest of change. And I talk all of the time to our team about that. Nothing about us without us. And really the importance of genuinely and deeply listening first to your children to understand their perspective. If nothing else, sit with them, listen, understand their perspective and then support them in whatever way that means for you. That will look different for everybody. Everyone will find their own unique way to support their children's endeavors. The way that the seeds planted as Briony is talking about, you know, what that looks like, um, really starts with listening first and seeking to understand, sometimes those ideas will be confronting or contradictory to our own and that's okay but they come from somewhere, they come from a place of deep meaning and purpose for our young people. And so, uh, you know, giving them that sense of your voice matters to me. Uh, and then I'll do this with. Uh, is, is critical.

[00:36:14] **Trudy Hall:** Well, I have to say that your school communities are extraordinarily fortunate to have you at the helm, um, as you lead them, uh, through these challenging times. Uh, and I, I'm really proud to call you colleagues. Uh, cause I think we've been on the journey together as we educate women and it's been, uh, my great pleasure to connect with you today and hear, and really resonate with the kinds of information that you're sharing with our parents. I love that every single one of the children out there that we all talk about just needs one charismatic adult. And I'm hoping that our listeners today, uh, will walk away with that sense that courage is a muscle they need to constantly reinforce, um, what their young daughter is saying and that they too want to be that one charismatic adult in a in a young girl's life. So thank you very much for the phenomenal wisdom that you've shared with. As we conclude this podcast, I would be remiss if I did not share exciting news on the third Global Forum for Girls Education coming next spring. Have a listen as Megan Murphy, the Executive Director of NCGS, and her friend and colleague Loren Bridge from Alliance of Girls Schools Australasia talk about why this is precisely the right time to gather educators from around the globe to talk about the criticality of girls education.

[00:37:42] **Megan Murphy:** This year, our coalition will convene both online and in person. The third global forum on girls' education, and we're going to bring together the leading educators, researchers, advocates, authors, and practitioners from around the globe to exchange best practices and innovative approaches for academic excellence and healthy development of girls. And I think in many ways, Trudy, this past year has been described as unprecedented and challenging and in many cases, even surreal. Many of our systems, whether it's social, political or

economic were disrupted significantly, if not thrown into disarray entirely. And yet, I think that we've also witnessed people coming together to support one another and develop creative solutions for navigating this new space. In many ways, this new world that we find ourselves in and our students have had the unique front row opportunity, I think to witness this global change-making in real time and on an unparalleled scale. And what's most inspiring to me is that much of the change and progress has been directed by female activists and advocates. And so at no other time, has there been among girls and women? I think such a deep sense of shared potential. And there is no doubt the time for girls and for girls schools is now

[00:39:03] **Loren Bridge:** I think when the leading voices in girls' education from right round the world gathered together for three days, the impact is transformative. I mean, just try and imagine being able to lean into the knowledge and experience of over a thousand like-minded educators, researchers, advocates, and practitioners, as they share best practice and innovative approaches for the academic, social and emotional wellbeing of girls. I mean, that's the global forum being able to connect globally to learn and be inspired to contribute and expand the conversation on girls education. And then to bring it all back to your school, to your students and to your colleagues, to your own practice. It's profoundly powerful.

[00:39:52] **Trudy Hall:** This has been the second episode of *On Educating Girls*. We would love to hear from you as our conversations about what girls need unfolds. After all, this is a conversation that is intended to meet your needs as you meet the needs of the girls in your lives. Please send comments or questions to: [podcast@girlsschools.org](mailto:podcast@girlsschools.org) and join us next time when we explore Girls as Happy, Healthy Individuals. Thanks for listening, it is important to the girls in your lives that you do!