

Ep. 7: Girls as Community Builders

[00:00:00] **Trudy Hall:** Hello there you are listening to uneducated girls creating a world of possibilities, a podcast produced by the coalition of girls schools and I'm Trudy hall, your host for these important conversations about girls and their education. As we know well from our own. Transitions between the chapters of life are filled with emotion.

[00:00:22] The moments of saying goodbye and hello in life are often indelibly printed on our hearts, changing schools, moving to a new town off to university changing jobs, leaving behind the familiarity of friends and family to say yes to a hope of what will be exciting and wonderful. Today, we have an opportunity to explore how best to support girls through such transitions in.

[00:00:46] Yes, transitions might be fraught with anxiety, worry, and fear, but making a successful transition is really about being curious, having the confidence to take informed risks and exploring how to connect with and [00:01:00] to a new place on life's journey. As it turns out enjoying that feeling of belonging is a choice and it takes effort and intentionality.

[00:01:10] If we're going to be helpful resources to our girls, as they move from chapter to chapter. We need to understand the role that belongingness plays in this process. What is belongingness? Is that feeling you get when you are an important or essential part of an organization, a school, a community, a place, you know, you belong not because you have conformed to become something you are not, but because you have been embraced for being your authentic self, you feel connected to the people and the place you feel seen and heard.

[00:01:44] You feel affirmed in a way that is solid and satisfying. How can we help our girls identify and understand the search for belonging as they move from where they are to where they are going. And what skills do they need to hone as they prepare for each new turn and their [00:02:00] future.

[00:02:04] **Dr. Beth Reeves:** This is your lunch. Okay. Now I put a dollar in there. She can buy some milk. You can ask one of the big kids where to do that. Did you remember your phone number? I wrote it down for you just in case. Put it in your pocket. I don't want you to lose it.

[00:02:15] **Joey Adams:** Okay. You ready?

[00:02:19] **Dr. Beth Reeves:** I think so.

[00:02:22] Katie's big day. I guess it's natural for parents to cry on their kid's first day of school. But you know, this usually happens when the kid is five I'm 16.

[00:02:34] **Trudy Hall:** As we explore this topic, I'm delighted to welcome two guests who can speak to the criticality of belonging from different angles. Dr. Beth Reeves, president of Washington school for girls in Washington, DC.

[00:02:46] Shares her perspective as an educator who has worked to ensure inclusive school environments that promote a culture of belonging. Dr. Reeves has made a number of successful transitions in her own life. As she shifted from corporate marketing to [00:03:00] education, leading a Montessori and Quaker schools before assuming her role as president of WSJ, she holds an MBA from the Wharton school at the university of Pennsylvania and a doctorate of business administration from the university of.

[00:03:15] My other guest is Joey Adams, a 2010 graduate of Washington school for girls now serving as the manager of graduate success and outreach for the school in her role, she works collaboratively with students, alumni, families, and school partners, to ensure each graduate achieves for educational. After graduating from WSG joy went on to attend Thurgood Marshall high school and so on at the university of the south returning to Washington DC to work with city year and education non-profit before she attended Northeastern university to earn a master of education in higher education administration, both their current roles and their successful professional transitions.

[00:03:58] Speak to the reason why they are good at [00:04:00] this. They know what it takes to fit all the pieces of belonging together into a cohesive whole, the school where they do their good work on behalf of girls is a unique place, a tuition free independent Catholic school for girls from the ages of eight to 13, who come from the Anacostia neighborhoods in Southeast Washington, in the district of Columbia, it began in 1997 as an afterschool program.

[00:04:28] When representatives from the national council of Negro women, the religious of Jesus and Mary and the society for the holy child, Jesus came together to address the critical need for excellent education for girls from those neighborhoods in a few very short years, the school has become a fully accredited award-winning school community for girls with numerous local regional and national partnership that support its work, a place where excellence is the expectation and will girls clarity through.

[00:04:57] Before we dive in, I thought it might be good for [00:05:00] parents to hear some of the things that are on the minds of the girls in their eighth grade, as they think about their upcoming transition to a new school. Some

[00:05:08] **Joey Adams:** questions

[00:05:09] **Dr. Beth Reeves:** that are on my mind, as I think about leaving Washington school for girls is, well, I make the right friends who won't judge me

[00:05:19] **Joey Adams:** and who aren't

[00:05:19] **Dr. Beth Reeves:** toxic and will I be able to not get lost around the school?

[00:05:25] And is this the right place for

[00:05:28] **Joey Adams:** me for the next four years? Something that worries me about the upcoming transition to high school is how will I handle the situation and maintain my grades? Because it's going to get harder. Some questions that are on my mind as I leave the Washington school for girls for high school is will my weirdness still be accepted?

[00:05:57] And while I still felt as welcomed as I was when I [00:06:00] first entered this middle school, a question I had

[00:06:03] **Dr. Beth Reeves:** to

[00:06:03] **Joey Adams:** sum up who has made a successful

[00:06:05] **Dr. Beth Reeves:** transition to high school

[00:06:07] **Joey Adams:** is who motivated you to keep going. Something that

[00:06:12] **Dr. Beth Reeves:** worries me

[00:06:12] **Joey Adams:** about the upcoming transition to high school is being around a lot of people because I don't like people and it's going to be way more people at high school than it is at WSG.

[00:06:25] A question I will ask someone who has made a successful transition to high school is if they could give me advice on what they went through and how I can handle stress. Some question that some questions I have on my mind as I leave WSG is is this the right school for me for the next four years of my life? [00:07:00]

[00:07:14] **Trudy Hall:** Beth and Joey, so that our listeners get a chance to learn more about you and hear your energy. I have a question about belonging for each of you, Beth. You came to the Washington school for girls after you enjoyed tenures at

both a Montessori school and a Quaker school, given your back. You could have said yes to many new chapters.

[00:07:36] What drew you to the role as president of WESG? What was it about the school its mission or the community that turns your. And your heart in this direction.

[00:07:48] **Dr. Beth Reeves:** So thank you first, Trudy, for having us on here, we are excited to be here with you. Um, and I think that your question has an interesting statement and about what drew my heart, because it really was something [00:08:00] that.

[00:08:00] Drew me into Washington school for girls. And that was the mission of the school. I attended an all girls high school, myself growing up. I have my doctorate, I studied women business owners as part of my dissertation. I've always, really felt like my life has. Um, I've come back to points where I've worked on girls becoming their best selves.

[00:08:22] I just feel like that's something important on my heart. And so when I learned about the Washington school for girls, I knew that I wanted to really work in a community where I could use my experience to support girls, especially those girls that may face barriers to their own personal successes in life.

[00:08:40] Um, I feel like what drew me in was knowing that this was a community of girls and families that had hopes and dreams. And I really just wanted to be part of that and was excited about bringing my skills to this kind of.

[00:08:55] **Trudy Hall:** I can't think of a better reason to be drawn in. I think it's one of the reasons why I was [00:09:00] drawn to girls' education in the first place.

[00:09:02] But now Joey, it's your turn. Um, those of us in education know that one of the hardest things one can do is return to work at one's Alma mater your many identities as a student and a graduate and a teacher, they all bump into each other. So what pulled you back? To WSG. And what made you say yes to returning home?

[00:09:26] **Joey Adams:** That is a great question. I believe being a native Washingtonian up, I actually wanted to get as far away from DC, as I possibly could grown up merely due to the stereotypes of living in a city, um, being from Southeast Washington, DC, I just wanted to get away. I was fortunate enough to go away to college in Tennessee with a four tuition scholarship where I witnessed a lot of.

[00:09:54] Eye opening experiences, um, being a black, African American young lady in rural [00:10:00] Tennessee, but also being an education as well. I was into

giving back and volunteering my time. And I said to myself, what better way to give back than to give back to my own commute. And so after graduation, I have the option of going to Houston, Texas, or returning back home to DC.

[00:10:19] And, uh, the sad it's a come back home. And when the position at WSG found me the first time around, I actually thought I did not apply. I was super nervous. I was just like, wow. The school reached out to me about returning back to be an actual worker at the school and not a student. Until I realized, and I was talking with peers, family, and they say, Joey, you know, you asked the universe, you asked God to give you an opportunity to give back to your own communities.

[00:10:52] So what better way than to do that. And so I applied and I am here eight months. Doing [00:11:00] great. And I just really liked that WSG at the time really shaped a lot of my behavior characteristics as a student and motivated me into the young woman I am today. And so I wanted to be a part of that tribe for current students.

[00:11:14] **Trudy Hall:** I can't think of a better reason to go home. Um, I love, I love the fact that you just threw the question out to the universe and the universe responded. So I didn't to go back to Beth, um, because you are really a well-schooled educator in terms of how girls go through transitions. I'd love to have you talk a little bit about how schools and parents can be proactive in preparing girls for an upcoming transition to a new school environment.

[00:11:45] When do you start, how do you see.

[00:11:48] **Dr. Beth Reeves:** So I think that it there's so many things that really depend on both the age of the child that you're, that you're talking about. Whether, you know, a transition first grade [00:12:00] into second grade is so very different from ninth, eighth grade into high school. Um, also I think that it really depends on what.

[00:12:08] You know, your question was whether it's parents or the school and what they're doing. So I feel, I feel like I'd like to first speak to as a parent, what that would look like. And, um, one of the things that I think is really important for any adults, but particularly for parents to do for children, thinking about, or for girls thinking about transitions is expecting, help them to normalize the emotions that come.

[00:12:32] Transitions knowing that we all have times when we've transitioned in our lives, when we've been nervous, when we've been uncertain about what it would feel like kids need to hear that you have to normalize that there will be mixed emotions, that you can be both sad about leaving where you are. Happy about leaving where you are, that you might be excited about your new school, but also scared about your new school.

[00:12:57] And again, that will play out differently depending [00:13:00] on the age of the student that you're working with. I think that to the extent possible, you know, if you're switching, if it's a new school environment that you're transitioning into getting familiar with the school environment in advance, visiting the school, seeing the layout of what.

[00:13:15] Like seeing the classrooms, meeting the adults in the community, meeting other families and students in the community. That that really goes a long way. Our, you know, our students as they're transitioning or going through the high school application process in eighth grade, have an opportunity to do a shadow visit as they call it where you go and you've.

[00:13:33] School and you shadow behind the other students there, that's so important because it really will give you a glimpse into what that environment that next environment will look like. And so to the extent that you can get some ideas around what that, that transitioned environment will be like, will help.

[00:13:50] Prepare the conversation for the student that's transitioning. Um, I, you know, I feel like you have to, for, for [00:14:00] students, you have to stay in the positive as well. Encourage involvement, encourage that they reach out to adults in the new community where they are, even though it may be intimidating, nicely

[00:14:11] **Trudy Hall:** done.

[00:14:11] Nicely said, uh, you've given us a couple of key directions in which we can take our energy on that one. You're the manager of graduate success and outreach. And I know you work with both students in grade eight, as well as graduates. Who've just transitioned to a new school from your perspective, where do you think the hard places are in the transition process?

[00:14:34] Where, where do you see girls needing help and guidance?

[00:14:39] **Joey Adams:** Yeah. So going into that transition for. Middle school from high school. Most students actually, well, in my experience, most students actually have an idea where they see themselves for high school. And that includes a number of factors. A lot of students have older siblings.

[00:14:57] A lot of students have older friends who are in their after [00:15:00] school activities. So they are aware of a lot of these schools already. My job is to expand the pool of options for those students to learn about. Different types of high schools have the opportunities. There are within a DMV and even outside of the DMV, I can say that my time here so far and helping out current eighth graders with that high school application process, I have heard a lot of my students mentioned just

adjusting to a school and being a new student on the block, as the students say, Now they're eighth graders.

[00:15:33] They have already experienced three years for some more, since we are a third to eighth grade school. So some students have already built a lot of experiences, but a lot of shit with students. And so they have already learned the works about WSG. And so for a lot of our eighth grade students, that scary part is being a new student, being a fresh meat.

[00:15:54] As lot of the students say. And so I can say [00:16:00] that my job now, and it's just to help them about. Who they are as a student, as an individual. And just know that just because you're closing one chapter as an eighth grader doesn't mean that stepping into this new chapter as a ninth grade, it has to be scary.

[00:16:16] Just have a

[00:16:16] **Trudy Hall:** quick follow-up question for you. And I, I wonder. Do the students ever suggest that maybe high school is a time to change their identity entirely. If they've been a button up sort of person, and now they want to be a laid back sort of person, or if they want to change the spelling of their name, do you, do you ever have students who say, this is my opportunity?

[00:16:35] To be someone totally different.

[00:16:38] **Joey Adams:** I think that is a great question in my experience so far. No, I can say that working in middle school, that is a weird through years of our lives that I feel like. You are able to change so much about yourselves and is due to the fact that we are trying to, um, conform, um, have different [00:17:00] friends, have friends in general.

[00:17:01] And so we are trying to mold ourselves into being who our peers want us to be. But I tell a lot of my students. In ninth grade and high school, anytime you start a new chapter. So even from elementary school, into middle school, middle school, into high school, high school, into college college, into the workforce, it's always a new chapter.

[00:17:23] It's always a new leaf that you could turn over, that you can try new things. And so it's just always a learning experience. No matter that new chapter that you're stuck guarding

[00:17:32] **Trudy Hall:** and Beth, you and I chatted briefly as we were getting ready for this call about. Girls can observe the signs or signals about how a culture is just by

going on tour, spending time in the environment you, you mentioned earlier, a shadow visit.

[00:17:46] Can you talk a little bit more about what girls and their parents should be looking for as they figure out whether this is a place where they can feel that ever so critical belonging that they're going to want to feel?

[00:17:58] **Dr. Beth Reeves:** Yep. I love [00:18:00] thinking about this with our current students, because I feel like it can seem so.

[00:18:05] Overwhelming or intimidating to go visit a high school where you aren't a student yet. And you're not quite sure what you're looking for. One of the things that I encourage our students to do is really to think about all the different things and pay attention to. Isn't set at the school, but what's visible.

[00:18:24] So when you walk down the hall, who do you see represented in the hallways? And I don't necessarily mean the people. It could be what artifacts, what pictures are hanging in the hallways who is who's represented. There you go into the classroom. What kinds of books are they reading in the English classroom?

[00:18:41] What's visible in the library. Are there people that look like you around the building? Will you see your store? Told will you find your tribe if you will, in your, in your school, what kinds of activities are there? Are there clubs that speak to something that [00:19:00] you're interested in? Um, I think that, that students sometimes don't feel like they understand fully what that means for the selves yet, but yet if you go and you see.

[00:19:11] There's someplace that has an anime club. And then, you know, you love anime. That might be the signal for you that, oh, there are other students here who enjoy the same kind of things that I do. I think that for families or adults with a student, you know, going through this same, like what else can I look for beyond what they tell me about the school?

[00:19:31] I think. Questioning the school on what, how they welcome students. What are their traditions? What are their welcoming traditions, if you will, how do they greet students every single day? How do they arrive at school? How are they acknowledged? Do people do the adults in the community know this student's names?

[00:19:49] Um, is it, you know, You're just sort of one of many, or is there some personal attention there? I think that's really important as well. I would also say it's interesting because I [00:20:00] think how does the school acknowledge newness for students in the, in the beginning of the school year? So if. K to 12 school and you're

entering in ninth grade and everybody has been there from eighth grade and then they roll up into ninth grade and you're the new student.

[00:20:17] That's a very different situation. Whereas if it's just a high school and you're all ninth graders together and you're all starting at the same spot, I think that schools tend to do. A better job when you're all new at the same time, versus if you're just one person entering in at a time and everybody else has been there.

[00:20:35] I think you can ask a school about that because that's going to sort of set the tone for how you join into the community and how welcome you are made to feel. Um, the last thing I would say is that I think it's important for schools to replicate. To families and students that are new. What is the reflection of home at school?

[00:20:57] How are families invited into the school [00:21:00] experience? If what is the expectation that families will be involved? Is there an expectation that families will be heavily involved? And then if my family works and can't make all the school events I'm left out, or, you know, how are. Invited into the conversation and the participation at school, because I think that fundamentally students want to see themselves and their life story and their backgrounds reflected in their school environment to really feel like they belong.

[00:21:28] So how do schools demonstrate that they do.

[00:21:32] **Trudy Hall:** You've just brought up such a really good point that oftentimes the transition is as important for the parent as it is for the student. Um, and using the example that you just used about how, um, the parents are included. Can you think specifically about the, what a parent should be listening for in that moment?

[00:21:51] Based upon their own individual needs as well, but are there's very specific things that are apparent or want to hear about their role in the school? [00:22:00]

[00:22:00] **Dr. Beth Reeves:** I think there should be. I think parents should be looking for the opportunities where they are able to participate in the school community. Not.

[00:22:09] Overbearing kind of way, you know, not that there should be an expectation that parents will, you know, especially if this is a high school, if you will, it, there shouldn't be the expectation that you'll micromanage your students' work, but there should be opportunities for you to be invited in conversation with your children's teachers or invited in to participate in the activities of the school, or be included in some broader conversation.

[00:22:34] What is going on so that you can understand the big picture of the school. I think that, you know, even through high school, that there should be positive opportunities for families to engage with the school community. That feels very different from if your child's in second or third grade, when, you know, there is more oversight needed for children.

[00:22:53] But I think that even through the high school age, that families should look for what the school suggests would be [00:23:00] opportunities for you to actually physically be. The school building with your student or with your, you know, with your school community.

[00:23:09] **Trudy Hall:** Yes. So, so long as your daughter would say, you don't embarrass me, right?

[00:23:15] **Dr. Beth Reeves:** Yeah. You don't want to show up too much. That's what I think it's all in an appropriate kind of way. Not a helicoptering kind of way.

[00:23:24] **Trudy Hall:** Um, so let's jump to when girls are actually in that new place, they've made the leap it's those first few weeks. Um, and actually Beth has done a nice job of saying what a parent should have been asking.

[00:23:35] Um, as they even imagined the welcoming process, but where those are the moments when they're most likely to miss their former teachers and their classmates. So they might say I don't belong here and they might reach back out to their former school and people they know and say, I've made a mistake. So let's start with Joey, both from your professional and personal experience.

[00:23:56] What's the most useful thing a supportive adult in the community [00:24:00] can say, or in this moment,

[00:24:02] **Joey Adams:** Yes. I think the most important thing is honestly hearing their students' voice and getting their input. And so some guiding questions can look like, why do you feel you don't belong? How can I best support you in this transition to better, to better assist you in this adjustment?

[00:24:21] How can I help you make this new environment feel home? How can we make this a safe space for you to make you feel as though you belong? I think the important thing is being able to just learn how students and just simply listen. To what they have to say, because that can go a long way into assisting them with that adjustment.

[00:24:41] We have all been in a space where we have been the new kid on the block or the new individual. And sometimes all we need is the listening air. We just

need a new companion. And I think that as a supportive adult in the community, that's what we can do best for our students to support that [00:25:00] transition.

[00:25:02] **Trudy Hall:** And Beth issue. Listen, um, to that response, do you want to do some pile on, are there other things you would add to the, yeah,

[00:25:10] **Dr. Beth Reeves:** I absolutely agree with Joey. I think that, you know, listening is so important. I have to say, honestly, as a parent, one of the hardest things for me still with. Children who are young adults is not going in to try to problem solve the conversation for them all the time.

[00:25:27] Sometimes they really just, most of the time, I shouldn't even say sometimes most of the time, they just want me to listen. They don't need me to come in and offer 10 solutions. And in fact, they're better served if. Can I allow them to do the problem solving? I think that that's true for what Joey's saying too.

[00:25:46] I think B having a listening ear goes a long way. I do also think it's important to normalize that the struggle is real. I think that, that they should know when they're going through a difficult time that what you're experiencing [00:26:00] is normal. It, I, I understand that I've had times that I've felt that way as well.

[00:26:06] Times of transition in my lives. So I think normalizing it and listening and listening to their concerns is really all that is needed. Many times. I,

[00:26:16] **Trudy Hall:** my brother often says to me, how do you want me to listen? And I think that's great. Guidance is well, just from the standpoint of I supposed to solve this problem.

[00:26:26] You just need to emote. Right. Um, so, uh, to return to the word that we've used at the beginning of this episode, belongingness Beth, what might a parent hear from their daughter? Um, that indicates she's moving to a greater comfort in this new place. We know it doesn't happen overnight for most of our girls.

[00:26:46] We know it's a process. Um, and then conversely, are there signs that we should look for that indicate that the intervention, uh, is.

[00:26:56] **Dr. Beth Reeves:** Well, I think that generally speaking excitement about, about what [00:27:00] is going on at school is, is obviously a good sign. I think that a sense of, um, connection and commitment to something bigger than themselves might exist.

[00:27:10] There, you know, expressing involvement in something that's in the future at school, or getting involved in the activities and being excited about the activities that they have gotten involved in. I think that, um, it's expressing a desire to do something that's even in the farther future. Some schools have great traditions that they've set up.

[00:27:30] They say, you know, when you're a sophomore, this will happen when you're a junior, you get to go this. And as students become more ingrained in the community, they get excited about those few. Kinds of experiences and that's good to know always, you know, it's always good to hear that they feel like they're socially accepted.

[00:27:48] Doesn't have to be a large circle. You know, we all know it. Children are different from each other. It doesn't have to be a lot of friends. Maybe it's just one good friend. Sometimes that's all you really need is one good person to connect you along the [00:28:00] way. I think those would all be. Uh, conversely, I do think that, you know, being withdrawn from the school community would be a concern, not feeling like they, even after a reasonable amount of time and a lot of encouragement that they haven't felt like they found their place yet at school.

[00:28:18] That would be a concern for me having connected with any adults in the community sometimes, um, particularly in high school, students need to be encouraged to know where their ally adults are, where, you know, they may not know how to navigate through finding the teacher or the club leader or the advisor or the counselor.

[00:28:37] That's going to be most helpful for them. Um, so maybe that's a, not yet thing. Maybe they haven't found it that there's some adults in the committee. That could help them if you can help lead them to it. Um, I always say frequent trips to the nurse's office are a concern, you know, I mean, maybe don't feel good every now and then at school, but generally speaking, that should be infrequent.

[00:28:59] [00:29:00] So if, if that is happening with frequency, that would be a big concern.

[00:29:05] **Trudy Hall:** That's a really good tip. And Joey, we all know that sometimes we do choose wrong the fit just isn't right. And we don't ever feel like we belong. Are there specific questions or prompts that a supportive adult can offer in that moment when it's best to assess next steps?

[00:29:27] **Joey Adams:** Yes. I think one of the important questions is one of the questions that I asked earlier is how can we make this place feel like home for you? And then I think another guiding question can be, what would you like to see

implemented at the school or in this climate to make you feel comfortable? I think at times, usually students haven't given it enough time to actually adjust to a new place.

[00:29:52] And as Dr. Reese mentioned earlier, it's all about. Getting involved. So another guiding question can [00:30:00] be, have you made any new friends? Have you joined any new clubs or organizations and that sense of belonging or lack there of usually occurs because students do not take advantage of those opportunities that are provided to them and they stay to themselves instead of venturing out.

[00:30:16] I think the best way to assess if you belong in a place are nice simply by a certain yourself. How do we know if we like something, if we don't give it a try? And that's what I tell my students all the time, no matter what, no matter in what type of capacity that it may be. Studies have shown that individuals who are more successive in our environment on those who are involved with, in their communities in some capacity, whether that's.

[00:30:42] Working, whether that's attending teachers office hours, whether that's joining the debate club or even a sport, it's just about getting involved in, in certain yourself in that environment. So not only about getting involved, are you learning about yourself, but you're also learning more about the community [00:31:00] at large.

[00:31:01] And so a lot of times we focus on, will I be a great fit for this school? Will I be a great fit for this environment where sometimes one of the most important questions is, is this environment a good fit for me? And so by getting involved in just learning more about the community and what the community has to offer, the type of people, there are the culture that's at the school.

[00:31:23] I think all of that relates to that sense of belonging.

[00:31:30] **Trudy Hall:** I like that both of you are giving us really practical advice and really good questions that we can employ immediately. This is really helpful. So thanks very much. And, and obviously, uh, all good things must come to an end. I'd love to have you offer a key takeaway or a soundbite that you think would serve a supportive adult.

[00:31:50] Well, as they offer guidance to a girl who's facing an upcoming transition, how can they help girls find that belongingness that's so essential for [00:32:00] success?

[00:32:00] **Joey Adams:** Um, so I'd take away for myself would be to simply put yourself in the student's shoes. So, as I mentioned earlier, we have all been that new

adult or that new individual in a new place, just simply wishing, somewhat friendly with.

[00:32:14] Sometimes all, all it takes is just that one person, that one connection to continue to connect us to other people or guide us in the right direction. So by being a listening ear, providing a safe space for students is much appreciated. And I think just by simply listening to that student builds that relationship that is so much more important and can take you further and assisting that student than anything else.

[00:32:39] **Trudy Hall:** And now to, uh, Beth, what might you say.

[00:32:43] **Dr. Beth Reeves:** I feel like students are very deserving, uh, learning environments where they feel welcome and accepted and girls in particular deserve spaces where they can be their authentic selves. They really do. I would say those spaces are out there. And [00:33:00] so if, you know, if a girl is not feeling the sense of belonging, where she is, I think that trusted adults can help her to figure that out.

[00:33:10] Moments. Um, I think that that, that we should use our voices, that girls should be encouraged to use their voices to really, uh, find or create, help, create that authentic space for themselves. You are

[00:33:24] **Joey Adams:** not alone. There are other students who are in the same position that you may be, and you would not know that if you don't put yourself out there to join those clubs.

[00:33:37] So there are students who are also alone, who are also looking for another friend who are also looking for those safe spaces. So we are all in the same boat. So what I like to tell a lot of my eighth graders who do mention to me, Ms. Adams, I'm so nervous about. Place about it's just so nerve-wracking to me, Ms.

[00:33:55] Adams, what am I supposed to do? And I say, you know, besides not being the only [00:34:00] student, there are students who are going to be coming from their middle school and there'll be the only one you might be fortunate enough to attend this high school for another WSG alum. My piece of advice is if you're lonely, why do that alone?

[00:34:14] Why not go and make friends one? Make that community or that safe space for yourself and other people. So that would be my piece of advice for students is just to know that you're not alone, but also help yourself and help others by building that safe.

[00:34:31] **Trudy Hall:** That is such a nice high note on which to end.

[00:34:34] Thank you so much for helping us remember to remind them that not only are they not alone, but their parents are not alone in this either. And just as we can find resources for our girls, our parents can find resources for themselves often in the school personnel who are helping their own daughters through that.

[00:34:53] So, thank you both very much for our conversation today. I've really enjoyed it. I've learned a lot. Um, and I know that our [00:35:00] parents will take home very concrete advice and, and resources. I appreciate you both.

[00:35:06] **Dr. Beth Reeves:** Thank you. Thank you for having us.

[00:35:09] **Trudy Hall:** This has been the seventh episode of on educating girls as always.

[00:35:14] We'd love to hear from you with thoughts and suggestions. Please send comments or questions to podcast@girlschools.org and join us next time. As we provide insights, information and resources you can put to use. Thanks for listening. It's important to the girls in your lives that you do.