

MARSHALL PETER: Hello and thank you for joining CADRE's webinar on Reconnecting with the Roots of the IEP IFSP Process. Today's webinar is one in a continuing series of CADRE webinars. As I introduce our speaker, I would encourage you to respond to the poll questions that we have up. We very much appreciate getting this kind of data from you. As I mentioned previously, there will also be a few questions at the end of the webinar. We very much appreciate you taking the time to provide us with answers. They provide us with very valuable data and information that's of use both to us and that we enjoy showing our funders, the U.S. Department of Education.

So I'm really delighted that Greg Abell agreed to join us today as our presenter. Greg is the Principal at Sound Options Group LLC, a conflict engagement and leadership development firm that provides conflict intervention and professional development services to individuals and organizations. Currently, Sound Options Group serves as the administrative agent to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Early Learning in Washington State, where they provide conflict engagement services under IDEA.

Sound Options Group consults nationally on the design and delivery of conflict engagement systems. Prior to entering the field, Greg spent 15 years in public education as a school psychologist and special services administrator. He serves as board president for the Washington Mediation Association, and as a senior consultant for CADRE. And I have to say that over the years, Greg has been absolutely one of our go-to people and collaborators. We've always been quite taken and impressed by the extraordinary quality of his work. So with no further ado, I'm going to turn it over to you, Greg.

GREG ABELL: Great. Thank you, Marshall. I appreciate the introduction. I appreciate all of you out there who have agreed to participate in this webinar and talk about this topic. I want to start just by giving you a context for where this content came from. A number of years ago, as many of you were probably doing the same thing, in Washington we were looking at implementing IEP meeting facilitation.

Our group, Sound Options Group, we're a private company. We contract with our state to provide special ed mediation. We've done that since 1994. And of course, after I think the '97 reauthorization of IDEA and the suggestion that IEP meeting facilitation would be a great add-on to mediation as a resource, you know, we began having conversations in our state around how to go ahead forward in implementing that. Is that something we wanted to do?

And I just want to share a couple of conversations during that time that really shaped the thinking about where this reconnecting with the roots came from. We were at one regional office in our

state. We call them educational services districts. And we were talking about IEP meeting facilitation, talking with a group of special ed directors about what they thought about the resource that would make sense. And clearly out of that conversation, there was an awareness, sure, IEP meeting facilitation seems like a great idea. However, one of our concerns was is that maybe the IEP process itself has become broken, and that while at one level, adding IEP meeting facilitation to the IEP process would be useful, maybe we need to just step back and really look at what's become of that process itself. You know, that actually adding facilitation to a broken process adds some value potentially, but also has some downside to it.

So that really had me begin thinking about and had us begin thinking about, looking back to it later, how do we as a state begin to sort of move upstream, like in using CADRE's language, and look at how we influence the effectiveness of that process upstream from adding a facilitation resource? So that was one, I think, piece that came out of that. And so, you know, we reflected on, and I've got the objectives on the screen there, what's currently happened around that. And my sense is that where we've put a lot of energy in improving the IFSP or IEP process both has really been around compliance kinds of issues.

And that was triggered in the conversation -- I was with a district in another state and had done some training during the day and we were having dinner that night, a conversation. And one of the people in the conversation was lamenting that for their district, the primary metric of a good IEP that was being presented to them was that it needed to be legally defensible. You know, that a good IEP was a legally defensible IEP. You know, they were struggling with that and I just found myself going, gosh, I don't know who ever invented the IEP process and I don't know the specifics of who did that, but when they came up with the process, I don't think the idea was to create a process that would produce, you know, the means, the end that we were going for was this legally defensible document.

So you know, again, that triggered, have we come to that point where as we are looking at improving the learning of students and students who have special needs around learning, that we will achieve that objective when we produce a legally defensible document? Now again, I want to be really clear. I think that compliance and that there are regulations and structures of that process that we need to consider, however I think we've put an inordinate amount of effort in that side of the equation at the expense of considering other kinds of options.

So one of my goals in this process is to begin to think about, so what does make a good IEP? What are people's expectations and assumptions about what that process looks like? And to begin to --

you know, begin synthesizing, both for myself and for those of us who work in this field, what we ought to be focusing on as characteristics or elements of an effective process.

Finally, and this is on a bit of a lighter note, we could turn to the expertise of Dr. Seuss on the IEPs, and many of you may be familiar with this. I'll just read it briefly. IEPs by Dr. Seuss. I do not -- do you like these IEPs? I do not like these IEPs. I do not like them, jeez louise. We test, we check, we plan, we meet, but nothing ever seems complete. Would you, could you like the form? I do not like the form I see; not page one, not two, nor three. Another change, a brand new box. I think we all have lost our rocks. That's actually my favorite line.

Could you all meet here or there? We could not all meet here, there. We could not all fit anywhere. Not in a room, not in a hall. There seems to be no space at all. Would you, could you meet again? I could not meet again. Next week? No lunch, no prep. Please, hear me speak, no, not at dusk. No, not at dawn. At 4 PM? I should be gone. Could you hear? While all speak out. Would you write the words they spout? I could not hear; I would not write. This does not need to be a fight. Sign here, date there, mark this, check that. Beware the student's advocate. You do not like them, so you say, try again, try again, and so you may. If you will let me be, I will try to understand the reason why. Say, I almost like these IEPs. I think I'll write 6,003 and I will practice day and night until they say you got it right.

Now again, clearly some humor in that. On the other hand, I think it also reflects some truth and the frustration with the process. Again, as Marshall said, I have a background in special ed. As a school psychologist, sat in many IEP meetings. And I look at the time at that point where we were a district highly focused on compliance, and our IEPs probably were about eight pages long. And now I look at IEPs that are 35 pages long that are -- we spend a lot of time struggling with the technology and how to enter the data into the IEP, and so that process.

So that gives you a context of where this is coming from, and looking at, you know, what's the purpose of this IEP meeting? In our business, we do a lot of work with teams and we have a model that says, you know, teams need to clarify some specific things when they're going to function as a team. And one of the primary things a team's got to function is, what is our purpose? If our purpose is to create a legally defensible document, we will put energy and effort into those elements that support that purpose. I'm going to go back and say I don't think the purpose of an IEP process is to produce a legally defensible document. To address the compliance and legal components of the IEP process are essential as we work together to build trust and moving forward, but that's not the outcome that brings

us together. The outcome that brings us together is how do we address the specific learning needs of children who exhibit the need for specially designed instruction?

And so what I wanted to do is begin looking at in my mind what are the key elements of that? How do we identify what are the aspects of this process that we should be looking for and beginning to align ourselves with? Now on this particular context, we don't have the opportunity to do this, but on the screen you'll see a little activity. And if we were in the same room, we often use this activity as a way to get clear on what are the group's assumptions and expectations around an IEP process. This is called as assumption paper. That's the activity. And the activity is designed to surface when people enter a shared process. What do they bring to the table as far as their assumptions and expectations around the purpose for being there?

And so the way this exercise works, and I invite you to consider using it maybe with the group to facilitate dialogue on this topic, is when I visualize the implementation of an excellent and successful IEP process, I assume -- and the way you work the process is people take three to five minutes and they just respond to that verbal prompt in written form. And pretty much they don't write a narrative. It's just writing bullets. I assume this, I assume this, I assume this.

And then depending on the size of the group, you can do it as a single group or you can break into small groups. People share their responses with each other. This is what I assume makes a good IEP process. And in that process of sharing, there's clarification of what those assumptions are. When you say there's good communication, what do you mean by that? And the group begins to synthesize that into some common shared assumptions and expectations around what this IEP process would look like operating effectively.

And then it begins to create a context in which we can begin to align our actions as a team, professional development as a team, how we begin to move towards -- how we can move towards aligning ourselves with those commitments. So we're not going to do that now. I would invite you, if you wanted to use that just as a conversation starter, so to speak, with the group around this particular topic, you might choose to do so.

Using that sort of a framework, I've identified what I think are four key aspects or elements of what makes a good IEP/IFSP process. And I'd like to just go through those right now. These are my themes, what comes out of that conversation. And I'm not sure how they might relate to what yours are, but again, it's a way to start that conversation.

So here's number one for me. An IEP process, an IFSP process, needs to be innovative, or it needs to produce innovation. I mean, that's the primary process of an IEP/IFSP process, because what we're saying is that this child, this student is not learning in a traditional context. That you know, what is the definition of special education? This child needs specially designed instruction, you know, that the regular, general ed curriculum and options in an IEP context, Part B, is not meeting his or her needs, and so we need to innovate. We need to do something different.

Well, what does that mean? Well, if you go to a dictionary definition of innovation basically, it means to create or introduce something new, to be creative. And that's really what I think, you know, the idea of an IEP team was in the beginning. Let's bring together a group of people with diverse experience, perspective, knowledge, points of view around the issue, in this case the child's learning, and let's leverage that learning to create something new, all right? And I think we've lost some of that. And so when you think about innovation, it's not about complicated. It's a very complex task.

And you know, something that informed me on this a couple years ago, I was reading an article about innovation. I think it was actually in the healthcare field. And in the context of talking about innovation, the author was differentiating between three types of problems or challenges: a simple problem, a complicated problem, or a complex problem. And he gave examples of each of those, and we're going to leverage this in a subsequent topic in a moment here.

But he said a simple problem would be like baking a cake. Now I don't want to offend anybody who maybe is a great baker, but baking a cake is simple because, one, someone else figured out how to do it; and two, they wrote it down and they put it in a book called the cookbook. And if I want to bake a cake, I go to, you know, the shelf in the kitchen, pull a book out, follow the recipe. Or even more simply, I go to the pantry and pull out a box and bake a cake. And so what makes a cake a simple problem is that it has a recipe-ic or formulaic solution. You know, simple problems are problems that we already know how to solve the problem. You know, the problem has -- you know, the challenge has a process. It has a procedure. It has a structure. It has a recipe. It has a formula. All we've got to do is apply the formula and we'll solve the problem.

Well, then the author goes on to say, what's a complicated problem? He said a complicated problem is like a simple problem that's just more complicated. I always love those kinds of definitions. But the example he gave would be building a rocket. Now it's fairly obvious that building a rocket is way more complicated than baking a cake, but what's similar about the two is that if you build a rocket and if you launch it and if it works, if you build another one exactly like it, it's going to work. And that's the --

you know, NASA did that. You know, they had the Redstone rocket and the Atlas rocket and the Saturn rocket. You know, they had these different rockets. They built them and used them multiple times.

So then the author goes on in this particular article to talk about, so what's a complex problem? So we've got a simple problem, baking a cake; complicated problem, a rocket. He said a complex problem is like raising children. Now when I read that, it really just clicked for me very clearly because I've got two children and they're both grown and adults now. And you know, what we learned as parents for our children is that what it took to raise our son, who was the older, for the most part was non-transferable to raising our daughter, that what it took to bring them to successful adulthood was very, very different. You know, other than unconditional love, it was a whole new learning curve.

Now what does that -- how does that apply to us? Special education, you know, the design of specially designed instruction is not a simple problem, it's not a complicated problem. It's a complex problem because, fundamentally, we are saying we are addressing the needs of a child whose needs for learning are very fundamentally different than other children. And so we have to innovate. We have to address the complexity of that, you know, to meet the needs of the child.

When I look at this particular model, I think that one of the things we've tried to do with special education and the IEP process is to take a complex challenge and make it a simple or complicated challenge. You know, we've tried to make it recipe-ic and formulaic. And I think, you know, to some extent there are aspects of it that would meet those conditions. However, fundamentally, it's a complex challenge.

So that's the first element for me, that, you know, the IEP process, we want to be looking at something that's creating innovative thinking, that's, you know, moving us outside the box of what we're currently doing, what's currently being tried, and opening up possibilities. Now if we move onto the second element then, and again these are connected, we have to realize that the work that an IEP team does is what we refer to as adaptive work. And we're going to compare adaptive work to what we call technical work. But that the fundamental work that an IEP team or IFSP team does is what we call adaptive work.

In a book some of you may be familiar with, it's a book called Leadership Without Easy Answers by Ronald Heifetz, Heifetz teaches leadership at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. It's an excellent resource in the book, but he differentiates between two types of work that leaders facilitate and/or that groups engage in: technical work and adaptive work. Technical work, he says, are where

we're solving technical problems, where in some sense we already know how to solve the problem. We know how to respond to them. So if we apply that, you know, to the previous model, technical work is basically addressing simple or complicated challenges. You know, they're technical in nature. If we solve them, we will in many ways solve them for all time, okay? So that's this idea of technical work. So the challenge becomes how do we access the knowledge, the learning that's available, and apply it to that situation?

We contrast that with what he calls adaptive work. And adaptive work is where the problem we're trying to solve may or may not be clear-cut, and there are in fact no technical solutions or fixes available. So in other words, we're not even quite sure what the problem or the challenge is. And even if we kind of knew what it was, there's really no, quote, off the shelf solution. There's no like, okay, here is the best practice or the range of best practices for that particular challenge.

So here's the piece that's essential when you understand the notion of adaptive work. Learning is required to both define and/or understand the problem, and implement the solution. Learning is required. So fundamentally, and this is a belief that I have for almost all teams, but I think it's particularly true for IEP teams, IFSP teams, is that our fundamental job in order to achieve innovation as a team is to engage in shared learning. That's what we're there to do. If in fact we are not engaging in shared learning, we're losing the value of this particular team.

See, I believe that, you know, again, this IEP, IFSP process was built on that notion. We're dealing with a complex challenge. None of us as individuals have sufficient understanding or information to address that challenge, so we're going to create a team of people who bring diverse experience or perspective together, whether it be OTs, PTs, SLPs, school psychs, regular ed teachers, general ed teachers, other kinds of specialists, nurses, you know, adaptive technology folks. I mean, we're going to come together and we're going to bring -- and parents, and we're going to bring that knowledge together and we're going to recognize that we all have -- our knowledge has value and we're going to leverage that for moving forward.

So key aspect, key work of the IEP team: are we doing adaptive work? Again, I'm going to say I think that in looking to improve the IEP process, we put a lot of energy in the technical aspects of it. And clearly there are certain aspects of the IEP process, IFSP process, that are technical in nature. However, fundamentally, the technical aspects of the IEP are to document the adaptive work that the IEP team does.

So moving on -- oops, got to go back. Looking at Heifetz's model, and this again is from the reference I spoke to earlier, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, Heifetz identifies three types of situations in which teams find themselves. And as a mediator, as a facilitator, I often look at these three types of situations as, you know, characteristically three different types of conversations. And I think that as teams are coming together to engage challenges, it's sometimes helpful. And I've actually used this model with a number of different types of teams to determine what's the conversations needed for the challenges that we're having.

So a type one situation for Heifetz would be the problem that we're trying to address is clear cut. You know, if we went around and we sort of polled the entire team, the team would say, yeah, this is -- we understand. This is the problem, this is the challenge, this is what we need to address. Okay, we're all in agreement on that. We need to deal with that. And we all agree what the solution is. No one's in disagreement about that. And so typically in a type one situation, you will grant authority to whoever has the technical expertise to accomplish that kind of challenge.

So for example, I go back to my days as a school psychologist. You know, the team determines after maybe doing some pre-referral kind of work with a particular student that, in fact, the child needs to be evaluated to determine if he or she is eligible for special education instructional services, all right? That's a type one problem. Because you've got documents that are required to do that. You know, how do we get -- how do we make a child, quote, focus of concern? How do we get parent permission for assessment? Those are all technical issues. Those are all type one situations.

And typically, at least in the districts I worked with as a school psychologist, that was my job. The team would come together, we need to address this -- need to evaluate this child, pardon me. And school psychologist, start the process. We give you the authority to do that.

A type two situation, little different. We all agree what the challenge is. We are pretty clear what the problem is. And yet there are multiple solutions out there for how to address that particular challenge. I mean, there really are a range of what could be best practices, so to speak. You know, research-based instruction out there of what we need to do. And so what we as a team will often do is we will tap into people who have expertise on what we're trying to address, we will give them authority to share information with us about the range of options for us, and as a team we'll make a decision. We will learn from that conversation what are the options, and we'll decide, here's the option we're going to implement.

So for example, if we believe that -- I'm going to just make this one up quickly that the child -- that the student really needs to do some work around expressive language, and maybe we'd assign that to the speech and language -- the SLP. Then we're going to access the SLP's resources to tell us what are the range of things we might do to improve expressive language. And we're going to look at those as a team. We're going to decide here's what we're going to do around that particular area. Or if we want to improve, you know, math computation skills, okay, what are the options for improving math computation, math reasoning? Let's look at the options out there. Let's learn what's available. Let's decide as a team what we're going to do.

So it's a combination of technical and adaptive, and that you're tapping into pre-existing resources and knowledge and options for moving forward, but you're having to decide which of those makes sense for this particular student in this particular situation. We're having to adapt, look at what's available, and adapt it to this particular need.

Type three situation is the most complex because we don't even agree what the problem is or what the challenge is. You know, for a young child that might be failure to thrive. We don't know what that is. For an older child, it may be a behavioral issue, but we're not sure what the behavior is driving that. Is it medically related? Is it environmentally related? Is it social-emotional issues? We've got to figure that out. We don't agree on what it is.

And so our first level of learning is, what's the challenge? What are we trying to do? You know, out of the special ed context, I often get called from -- I do a lot of work with schools. I'll get a call from a school principal or school superintendent and say, I want you to come and work with my building A. I go, what's the problem? Well, it's a climate and culture problem. Well, climate and culture, that could mean lots of different things. And so our first conversation is, what do we mean by climate and culture? Because I'm saying I don't even know exactly what you mean by those terms. They have connotation for me, but I'm not sure what they mean for you. So that's the first level of learning.

The second level of learning, once we figure out what the challenge is, we've got to figure out how we're going to address the challenge, how we're going to address the problem, how we're going to improve in that particular area. And in fact, there are no off the shelf solutions. We have to create something.

I think in many ways when we come together to address, for example, the behavioral needs of children and we develop a behavior intervention plan, that's in a type three situation. We're saying,

what's the behavior intervention plan that is going to meet the objectives that we're trying to meet around this particular student? And just because we've got a plan that worked for child A over here, it does not mean it works for child B over here. We have to figure out what that looks like. That's adaptive work and that's ongoing work. Because you try something, it works, you do more of that. You try something, it doesn't work, you adapt, you adjust it.

So in this particular model, what's useful for me as an IEP team is, where are we having our conversations? Again, my opinion, I think that we've put a lot of our energy in the type one and type two aspects of IEP/IFSP conversation, and not addressed some of the type three conversations. One, because they're really complex, they're messy, and in some cases we don't know what to do about them. And we're not ready to go there and say we don't know what to do, and so we sort of avoid them. And so, again, if in fact the function, the purpose of the IEP/IFSP team is to come together and engage in shared learning, one of the questions is, what's the conversation we need to be having? What's the type of challenge that we're facing? Are we in agreement?

You know, one person on the team may think it's a type two situation. Someone else may be thinking, I think it's a type three situation. And if we haven't clarified some of those aspects, we will often be disconnecting around some of our conversations.

So at this point, we've addressed two aspects from my perspective about the key elements of an IEP/IFSP process. One, it's got to be innovative. It's got to be innovative. And that's really what we're trying to do, that we are trying to do something new, something different. Individualized education, that's the key aspect here. Secondly, innovation requires adaptive work. Innovation requires that we come together and we leverage the diverse experience and perspective that we have. We value that diversity, we respect that diversity, and from that learning we generate new ideas, ways of moving forward around improving the learning for this particular student.

So with that, I'm going to move us on to my third element here. And again, this is harking back to what I said earlier. Adaptive work requires that we structure our conversations in such a way that they support adaptive work. We engage in learning conversations. That's really the piece here. And so the other place we want to look at how we improve the process is how do we improve the quality of our conversations as a team? You know, really the conversations we have as a team are strongly, strongly correlated to the outcomes that we're going to achieve related to our purpose as a team. And so we want to look at how do we structure conversations that will support the learning that we need to engage in?

Now again, a book that if you sat in a class that I teach, I teach a number of classes on approaching difficult conversations and teaming and things like that, is that there's a book called Crucial Conversations. I'm sure many of you are familiar with it. Written about 2002, you know, the basic premise of the book is that one of the -- when you are having difficulty achieving certain objectives or outcomes as a group, often the reason we're not achieving those outcomes is that we're not having the right conversation. Or if we are having that conversation, it's not going well. And so that becomes an issue. What is the nature of the conversations we're having as a team? And they identify the characteristics of what they call these crucial conversations, that you could say these conversations stand between where we are and where we're trying to get.

In many relationships, I can think of multiple relationships for myself, where myself and the other person are trying to get is on the other side of a conversation that we need to have. Well, IEP teams, what we're trying to get around improving student learning -- this is true for education in general, but clearly on an IEP/IFSP team, is that where we're trying to get is on the other side of the conversations that we're going to have. And these are crucial conversations. And they identify the characteristics of what they call crucial conversations. These are conversations where there are differences of opinion. We have differences of opinion about what we believe will best serve the instructional needs of this particular student, okay?

The issue we're talking about is an issue of significance. On an IEP team, we have issues of significance on the table. One, the child. That's a significant issue. In some cases, issues are around our competence, you know, our expertise, our identity. These are conversations where there's often strong emotions. In many cases, these are really hard conversations that people don't necessarily want to have. You know, just stepping back in general. Those of us who work in education tend to not like conflict too much, and we often avoid conflict by avoiding certain conversations.

When we talk about difficult conversations, and for those of you who do mediation and facilitation out there, you'll probably recognize that the truth in some of these statements is that IEP teams, let me just step back, really are bringing people together to have difficult conversations. And these are difficult conversations why? Because what we're talking about, high stakes. We're talking about student learning. Emotional, yes, we're talking about issues about which we have strong feelings. Differences of opinion, absolutely. However, I believe that's what's at the heart of the IEP process and the IEP team that says, we're going to bring people together who in fact will have different opinions about how to serve the learning needs of this child. And in fact, we believe there's value in that.

Again, my experience working with teams, which is always interesting, on the one level we say we respect and value diversity of opinion. In fact, we say that's one of the key values that brings us together as a team. And I always jokingly say we only respect diversity of opinion until it shows up. And then when it shows up, we're not quite sure how to deal with it. So again, IEP teams coming together, have difficult conversations, hopefully with the goal from those conversations to engage in shared learning, supporting adaptive work, moving us towards innovation.

When people have difficult conversations, what you got to realize is there's almost always more than meets the ear. Again, looking at it from a mediator's perspective, most conflict is not about what we think it's about. You know, often what people are saying is not what's most important. Often people come to the process withholding information for multiple reasons. I'm not sure I want to share this perspective with my team. In the difficult conversations, one of the fundamental things you've got to look at is how do we make it safe for people to bring pertinent information into the conversation that will inform us as a group, in this case on how to meet the learning improvement needs of this particular student?

Now a couple things to talk about. I'm just going to put all of these up here briefly if you'll just give me a second here. Every conversation that we have has a structure to it. And again, for those of us who do mediation facilitation, that's sort of our stock and trade in looking at structures of conversations and looking to structure the conversation the way that will be more effective. And the structure of the conversation will often invite people to engage, or it will also inhibit people's engagement. I'm not sure if you've ever had the opportunity, but have you ever been in a conversation where no one tells you this, but you realize that as the conversation's moving forward that there's probably certain things you shouldn't say? For whatever reason, the structure of the conversation is telling you certain things are okay to share here; certain things are not okay to share here.

Now we approach, in my experience, most difficult conversation -- again, difficult conversations, differences of opinion, high stakes, strong emotions. Prepare to tell other people things that are important to us about that particular topic. Now my experience is, and again this is a generalized experience and based on the nature of the work that I do, is that if I sit down and talk to, and since Marshall is on the line, I'll use Marshall as an example, I'm sharing a conversation with Marshall about an issue. And as I listen to Marshall share his perspective on the issue and if I'm listening to him, I realize, whoa, he's got a real different perspective than I do. He's really coming from a different point of view. I mean, he really sees this very differently than I do.

And depending on the nature of the issue, what I will often do is I will drop into a very predictable paradigm. And the paradigm looks like this. Well shoot, I know I'm right and it's obvious that Marshall and I couldn't both be right, so sorry Marshall, but you must be wrong. One author refers to that as the universal human paradigm, that once I determine that Marshall is wrong, my job is to fix him. It's to convince him that he's wrong. And typically I convince him he's wrong by convincing him that I'm, quote, right. You know, my perspective --

MARSHALL PETER: Greg, this whole thing seems to hinge on me being wrong. I wonder if maybe you could develop a different example.

GREG ABELL: No, I'm going to go with that example, Marshall. It's just really working for me right now. [laughter] And so once that's the model, I have ceased to be really interested in what Marshall has to say. Why? Because I've determined he's wrong. I've determined maybe his thinking is faulty. I've determined that maybe he hasn't really thought this through very clearly. And so, you know, in service of Marshall, I'm going to let him know what he really needs to know, and that's my particular perspective, okay?

So often we need to think about how do we enter these conversations. What's our purpose? Now there's a couple models out there in the literature that I want to share that I think increase our understanding about this particular process. In the book *Difficult Conversations*, I referenced it earlier, it's by Stone, Patton, and Heen. Comes out of the Harvard Negotiations Project.

They say that when you engage a difficult conversation, that you're going to engage it from one of two stances. And the first stance they refer to as a telling stance. Now how do you know someone's in a telling stance? Well, one, they'll kind of let you know this way. Let me tell you what you need to understand about this situation.

So when I'm approaching Marshall in our conversation with this idea that I am right and he is wrong, typically I'm going to take a telling stance. Why? Because I've made a judgment. You're wrong, okay? And I'm coming often from -- they use the term hubris. I've got a little arrogance here. I'm going to say, Marshall, I know the truth here. I know this right here and I'm going to tell you where you're wrong. And so often people in a telling stance are coming across with a sense of judgment, a sense of almost arrogance. You know, if you just knew as much as I knew about this topic, if you had my experience, my knowledge, my education, my perspective, whatever. We often come with a sense of

pretense, a lot of assumptions being made about what other people are saying, what they're thinking before we fully explore it.

And I want to stop right here and say there's nothing wrong fundamentally with telling people what you think in a difficult conversation. In fact, it's not just not wrong, it's essential that we tell each other what we think. So we're not talking about that. What we're saying is that what's problematic is this telling stance, which is actually an orientation, which basically says there's your perspective and there's my perspective. And since they're different, there's only room for one. And my job is to fix that problem by telling you that I'm right and to basically leave one perspective on the table.

Now the shift that they would advocate, and I think, you know, for me I think this is one of our most critical learnings, both in life in general, but also particularly in the context of the IEP/IFSP is that we've got to shift our stance in those conversations from a telling stance to a learning stance. Which takes us back to what's my purpose for engaging on this team? Well, if my purpose in engaging on this team is to convince the rest of the team why I know more than they do and why my perspective is the right one, it's a telling stance.

If on the other hand my purpose for engaging this team is to leverage my learning and knowledge with their learning and knowledge so as to create something new, i.e. innovative, then I got to take a learning stance, which has very different characteristics. Which means I don't enter the conversation with judgment; I enter the conversation with curiosity. So I'll just use Marshall one more time and then I'll back off of Marshall here a little bit. It's to say, I'm really curious about why he thinks the way he thinks. I don't come in and say, that's crazy. I come in and think, that's kind of interesting. That's kind of curious. I don't understand that. Tell me more about that.

I think that one of the key attributes and characteristics that we need to develop in general around our more complex problems and challenges, and specifically on IEP teams, we've got to increase our capacity for shared curiosity about what people bring to the conversation, how that informs us, okay? With curiosity comes what we call -- they say a humble stance. And that says while I may know a whole lot, I may have credentials, I may have expertise, I may have lots of experience, what I fundamentally don't know is what you know. And it's humble to the extent that it says while I don't know what you know, and I may not agree with what you know, if I knew what you knew, I would know more. It would add to my -- we're going to use a term pool of understanding. We'll come back and revisit that in a moment.

Okay, so there's this stance that says I only know what I know, and there are people around the table who know and bring knowledge that I don't know. I want to understand that. It requires presence. Again, presence is really key to curiosity; I'm present to what learning is possible here, what innovation is possible here. You know, and fundamentally a learning stance invites us to step back and acknowledge what we say we believe. Again, we'll come back and refer to this also. We say we believe that we respect diversity of opinion. Again, once it shows up, though, so many teams don't engage in respectful behavior. In fact, the behavior becomes often sort of demonizing, dehumanizing kind of behavior.

So the question becomes, I think for me, a key element of the IEP team, IFSP process: innovation that's fueled by adaptive work, adaptive work which is fueled by learning conversations. Are we learning? We are not engaging in adaptive work if in fact we're not open to new learning that comes from that particular context.

Building on this particular model, looking at a second sort of paradigm for looking at this, this comes from a book called Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together by William Isaacs. And Isaacs takes a conversation, and I find this a particularly useful model as a facilitator, as a trainer, as a mediator just for thinking about intervening in conversations and helping people become aware of the kinds of conversations they're having.

But he takes the conversation and he creates, in essence, a flow chart. And on the flow chart, he identifies what he calls choice points. And he says that groups, teams, dyads, whatever, when they're having a conversation, they enter choice points in the conversation. And depending on what people choose to do at various choice points, they will -- it will determine the outcome of the particular conversation.

So I'm not going to pick on Marshall anymore. Since the only other person I know out there who's on the call is Noella, I'm going to pick on Noella for a moment. Noella and I are having a conversation. Conversation comes from, I believe, the Latin converser, which means to take turns or turn together. But a conversation would be Noella's talking, I'm talking, she's talking, I'm talking.

And if we're having a conversation about a difficult or challenging issue, or an issue about which we have opinions, we engage in what Isaacs calls deliberation. And deliberation means to weigh out. That as I'm listening to the other person's perspective, I am weighing it out as compared to my perspective. I'm looking at where does this stand against what I think? You know, how does it relate to what I'm thinking?

Now in that deliberation process, we enter the first choice point. And again, I think that for us to be effective in collaboration and working interdependently, one, we've got to increase our curiosity. Two, we have to increase our awareness of what we do at this first choice point. Again, that idea of self-awareness, emotional intelligence.

But I just go on -- it says that we're going to do -- we're going to make one of two choices at this point. One, we could choose to suspend judgment. Now my conversation with Noella would look like, I don't think you really know what you're talking about. I'm not sure I agree with what you're saying. However, I'm going to suspend judgment. So suspending judgment does not mean you don't make a judgment. Suspending judgment recognizes that I'm making a judgment; I'm beginning to draw some conclusions here that may be premature. I'm not going to go there. I'm going to suspend judgment and invite a conversation.

The second choice that we make if we don't choose to suspend judgment is to defend ourselves. And our defending ourselves would look like, I don't like what she's saying. I don't like how she's saying it. I think she's wrong. I need to defend myself from her. Now my experience, and I think it's strongly culturally embedded, particularly in our culture, is that there's a default response that we make at that first choice point. We move to defend. I hear information that doesn't jive with my information and I feel threatened by it. I hear your perspective, your opinion, and I feel threatened by it. What is the definition of conflict? Perception of incompatible difference or threat, okay? Resources, major values, using one particular definition. But I move to defend.

Deborah Tannen up at Georgetown University wrote a book in the mid-90s called *The Argument Culture*, where she basically says we -- focusing primarily on the United States, we've become an extreme argument culture. We take complex issues, we move to the extremes, and we argue the extremes. And since she wrote the book, it's just become more a significant aspect of how we have become, I think, in many ways dysfunctional as a society around really complex issues.

So as a team, are we having conversations where we're able to suspend judgment, explore options? Or do we quickly move to defend? Now in Isaacs model, if we move to defend, we enter a second choice point, where we're going to have what he calls a controlled discussion or what he calls a skillful conversation.

Now in looking at the words, it doesn't make -- it's hard to distinguish what he means by those, but the word discussion in Isaacs' language comes from the root word *discoter*, which means to strike

apart. And a discussion is fundamentally a debate. And in a debate, what's the outcome of a debate? Well, there is a prevailing side, a side that, quote, wins. There is a winner or a loser. You know, at the end of the conversation, one side will have prevailed. And so in a formal debate, whether it's an academic context or a legal context, there are structures to that.

But in what I call and what often happens in teams, we're not having a structured debate. We're having an informal what I call street brawl debate. And that's where the conversation really gets pretty unsafe. Because in these kinds of conversations, you know, I may start by attacking Noella's ideas, but if that's not sufficient. If I really need to win the argument, I will often move to what? Attacking her. I'll attack her confidence, her intelligence, and those kinds of things. I'll move to that kind of a conversation.

The second thing we can have, we can have a skillful conversation, which fundamentally -- he uses the term dialectic, which is a philosophical structure of argumentation, but basically it's just a darn good argument, you know, where you're advocating your point of view and, you know, you're really kind of taking apart the other person's point of view. And you know, I have a friend, he's a retired litigator. He loves that kind of conversation. He says I just love to argue, and just for the argument's sake. The point for me, and I'm not going to go into detail about this, is that we often are not expanding our thinking in that kind of an argument. We're just pretty much defending and advocating our predetermined point of view and perspective.

And so here's the fundamental question for me, is what kind of conversation are we having as a team? Are we having conversations where we are feeling the need to defend ourselves from the rest of the team? And again, to the extent that we focus much of our improvement in the IEP/IFSP process on compliance issues, it feels to me that that's because the process has ceased to feel safe. It's ceased to be a place where we can come together and engage in a safe conversation where in fact we will acknowledge and respect diversity of opinion so that we can learn from that and create something new.

So again, we go back to that first choice point. If we chose not to move to defend, but we chose to suspend judgment, that invites a conversation, using Isaacs' language, of reflective dialogue. Again, dialogue as compared to debate and dialectic, is a conversation of shared learning. It's a conversation that says, you know, let's take our diverse perspectives, let's get them on the table, and engage in shared learning.

I referenced earlier in the book *Crucial Conversations*, they have a great metaphor. I really like it where they said whenever you engage another person in a difficult or crucial conversation, you bring to the conversation what they refer to as your, quote, personal pool of understanding I think is the term they use. Now what's in my personal pool of understanding? Well, it's everything from my life experience that's informing me about the topic on the table, so to speak. And what's in your pool of understanding? Well, it's everything that's informing you. It's everything from our culture, our background, you know, our gender, our experience, our education, our X number of years living on the planet.

Well, here's the important thing. It doesn't matter who you're having the conversation with. When you're engaged in a difficult, challenging conversation with someone else, you are always operating from different -- different pools of understanding, sorry, different pools of understanding. I mean, I joke I've been married 35 years. My wife and I grew up in the same area, went to the same high school, known each other for almost 40 years. And yet we can come together around conversations and as similar as we are, as similar as our backgrounds are, we are often operating from very different pools of understanding.

So here's the question. Is the conversation going to be a conversation where we say, well, gosh, we got to figure out who's pool is right here? Is it your pool or my pool? You know, is it the SLP's pool, the parent's pool? Is it the psychologist's pool, the general ed person's pool? Or is the purpose of the conversation to take those individual pools of understanding and merge them into a deeper, shared pool of understanding. That's the fundamental function of dialogue. How do we create a deeper shared pool of understanding?

Now we have to realize that when we create this deeper shared pool of understanding, it does not mean that we are all of a sudden in agreement on everything, absolutely not. What it does mean is at the end of the conversation, we will, one, we will find things about which we agree, clearly, and we have never had a conversation, where, you know, some things about which we found some points of agreement. Two, depending on the issue's complexity, we will find issues about which we remain uncertain. We don't know. And at the end of the conversation, we may get to the point where we're going, fundamentally we will never agree on that. We are not, quote, going to resolve that difference. It is a fundamental difference out there.

And so, but we're engaging our collective dialogue so that out of that -- I'm sorry, out of that pool of understanding, we are generating new ideas. That's where innovation comes. Going back to my

first point, innovation, generative dialogue, generating innovative new ideas comes from a conversation where we have taken our diverse pools of understanding, created a deeper shared pool of understanding out of which come new possibilities that we haven't covered before.

MARSHALL PETER: Greg, do you want to take a question now particular to this slide, or would you rather take them all at the end?

GREG ABELL: Whatever is fine. We're doing fine, so if you want to throw one in now, that's great.

MARSHALL PETER: So we had a question about how you think parents' emotions fit into this conversational structure.

GREG ABELL: Well, that's another piece of it. I think that -- I think parents' emotions are a significant part of the conversation that in a process that where we focus on the technical aspects of an IEP, we don't always look at the emotional side of it. I mean, if you look at there's a model out of difficult conversation, which I'm not presenting here, where they're saying if you're having a difficult conversation with someone else, it's fundamentally three conversations occurring simultaneously.

It's what they call the what happened conversation, which is sort of the substantive side of the conversation. It's the feelings conversation, the emotional side. And the identity conversation. And that often we need to determine, are we having the right conversation? And too often what they would say is that we leave the emotional conversation off the table and we do so at our peril.

Now what I would respond to the questioner is this: it's not just the parents' emotions. There's a whole lot of emotion on the other sides of the table if you want to use that. We're talking about conversations around which there are -- again, one of the characteristics of these conversations: difference of opinion, strong emotions, you know, high stakes issues. And so, again, I think part of the process to be a civil, compassionate process, where it's going to feel safe, you know, to engage in shared learning is a process where we're going to need to as a team be able to engage and be with the emotions that are out there.

And make it safe to acknowledge those. You know, my experience is that when we don't acknowledge the emotions of those in the process, I'm not just talking about parents, you know, their ability to engage in the process becomes diminished. So Marshall, I'm not sure if that answers the question or not, but that's my first take at it here.

MARSHALL PETER: Great, thank you.

GREG ABELL: Okay. So I want to, before I move on to the fourth aspect here, just quickly we've talked about innovation, we've talked about innovation driven by, again, this notion of adaptive work. The key aspect of adaptive work is requiring new learning. And we've talked about adaptive work facilitated by learning conversations versus telling conversations, where in fact we're looking at are we structuring our conversations such that they will facilitate the generating of new information and new ideas?

The last piece I want to look at is -- well, actually I want to leave a couple quotes here, particularly as it refers to shared learning. Individually intelligent people can collectively make stupid decisions from shallow pools of understanding. And that's actually one of my favorite quotes is that you can get the smartest people around the table around complex challenges, and I don't care how smart they are, if they're not willing to leverage their individual knowledge into collective knowledge, they're not going to make good decisions.

And the question is: are we making these conversations safe enough for us to share critical information in that particular process? And you know, you can laugh at the quote at one level, and often when I share it in a group setting, people will laugh at it. And I go, it's funny at one level; it's tragic at another level.

And if you look at a couple of examples, you look at the Challenger accident and look at what was the root cause of the Challenger accident when it blew up, I mean, people often say, well, the root cause was that the O-ring failed and gases leaked and the gases exploded, and it exploded. I go, yeah, but that's not the root cause.

The root cause when they finally finished their investigation was not the O-ring failed. It's that they knew the O-ring was potentially going to fail, management had been warned by engineers, and that information did not get to the right people, right people that were engaged in that information, and they made a decision to launch the shuttle in conditions under which they shouldn't have launched. Individually intelligent people, absolutely really, really smart people, but not making good decisions because NASA had a culture of very siloed information flow and connections where information did not flow.

The measure of a group's intelligence is the depth of its shared pool of understanding. Again, the intelligence of an IEP, IFSP team is how do we take and leverage our individual knowledge, information to create shared knowledge and information?

The last piece I want to focus on, and this is one that we're spending a little energy in our state looking at, is too often we look at the IEP process as being an IEP meeting. You know, and I understand because of logistics and time. I mean, I've been in the system and understand the ramifications of it. But again, I think there's a distinction between the IEP meeting and the IEP process. And in my mind, the IEP meeting is a singular event in an IEP process, and that if we're going to improve the process, we've got to look at the process outside the context of just the specific meeting.

You know, too often we come together, and again I realize because of time and logistics and the complexity of it and say, we're having the IEP meeting and we decided we're going to do everything that has to be done in that process in this IEP meeting. In some cases, we schedule 30 minutes, 45 minutes to have this conversation. So the term that I've just put out there is there is an IEP lifecycle, and that the cycle has multiple points in it where in fact we could look to improve the overall process and outcome of that.

And I just from my own experience just sort of jotted down why I thought were some of the aspects or the events within this lifecycle. You know, the lifecycle often starts before the child's even in special education with pre-referral work. I guess now in some cases we call it RTI, where we're gathering information about a student. You know, this student is not maybe meeting objectives, not learning effectively, and so we're saying, well, we're going to do some things. We're going to try some options. We're going to try some interventions. That's a first learning event. That's the first learning event actually for the IEP team if you think about it, where we're coming together to say, let's try some modifications to what we're currently doing.

Now if that's not successful, if that's not achieving results, then we'll often make the child a referral and say, let's do some more intensive evaluation and assess if, in fact, this child's eligible for specially designed instruction, eligible for FAPE. And so we do a referral and we make a determination. That referral process is a huge learning process, where we're hopefully learning about this child, his or her history. You know, we're doing a deeper dive into learning about his or her learning and all those kinds of issues. Maybe there's a medical evaluation that's going on with that. And we determine that in fact the child is eligible for services, and we create this IEP and we have an IEP meeting. And we have an initial IEP meeting that says, are we going to agree that this child is in fact needing specially designed instruction? Are we going to trigger that with this first IEP process?

And we could say we're done, right? Well, no, we're not done. We've just finished the first cycle of the IEP lifecycle. Because then we got to implement the IEP. And in the implementation of the IEP, we

are engaging in what? A whole other level of learning, because basically the IEP says we're going to try this for a year with the idea that we believe if we tried this, this is going to be successful and this is going to move the student along in improving his or her learning. We're going to implement it. And we don't know for a certainty if it's going to be successful, but we're making our best professional team recommendation and we're going to implement that.

And the implementation process is where we learn. AND we have ongoing learning events, some formal, some informal. We have conversations with each other. Special ed teachers have conversations with general ed teachers, and you know, parents are providing us information and the speech and language pathologist is providing us information. And then we need to sustain that particular process and we have another meeting.

You know, and in a year from this first IEP meeting, we're saying, it's time for us to sit down and do what? Review our learning for the past year. And from that review of learning, saying, now based on that learning, what does the next step look like? And we're going to come together. And that review of that learning ought to be a synthesis of a whole lot of conversations as those learning events have gone along.

And in my mind, the IEP meeting itself is where we formalize what we've learned in a document of a plan of what we're going to do next year. It isn't where we engage in all the learning conversations. It's where we formalize and document what we've agreed based on what we've learned makes sense to move forward.

So I think finally, as we look at the IEP process, again coming back and visiting is it an IEP process? Or are we focusing all of our energy in a meeting, going back to what I said earlier, that's going to produce a legally defensible document that we can make sure the boxes are checked and the 35 pages are completed and it's compliant and moving forward?

I want to just end with a couple thoughts, and then we'll open it up for questions. This is a quote that's actually been just a profound quote for me in the last couple years. It comes from an article called Relationships Within the Schoolhouse by Roland Barth. It showed up in an article in Ed Leadership in 2006. He says, one incontrovertible finding emerges from my career spent working in and around schools. The nature of relationships among the adults within a school has a greater influence on the character and quality of that school, and on student accomplishment, than anything else.

Now I use that a lot because I do a lot of work with school teams, but just apply that to our context. The quality of learning of our children who are on IEPs and getting those services is strongly correlated to the quality of the conversations we as adults are having in designing that particular program. And he goes on to say that the quality of all student learning is strongly correlated with the quality of those conversations, and I happen to believe it's true just from my own experience.

So the question is, are we as a team bringing adults together who are having quality conversations of shared learning that will fundamentally not have us feeling better as a team about ourselves, but will fundamentally produce an IEP designed to improve student learning?

The last thing I want to just leave us with is the question of where are we in or out of integrity? And I started with a comment that I believe that the IEP process has gotten out of integrity. And what I mean by that, to be in or out of integrity, is that the process itself is not aligned with our commitment, that we're committed to bringing people together to engage in shared learning to produce a plan that will improve that student's learning. And yet if our energy has been put into, quote, creating a legally defensible document, I'm sorry, I'm not part of an IEP team with my purpose to create a legally defensible document. Do I want to be legal and compliant? Absolutely. That's not my number one purpose.

And so we become out of integrity. Integrity is when our intentions, our actions, our speaking are all in alignment. And I think that the process -- the IEP process has gotten out of integrity, and that it's up to us to figure out, how do we bring it back into integrity? Not for us as the adults in the system. For the students, our kids, our students.

So the question I would just have us begin thinking about and have you reflect on and based on the thoughts that I've shared here, where do you see that we're currently in or out of integrity with the IEP/IFSP process? Where do the four elements that I've identified maybe inform us about where we are in or out of integrity? And the fundamental question for us becomes, how do we bring the process back into integrity?

So with that, I want to thank you for participating. I'm going to turn it back to Marshall. I don't know if there are questions out there. We are about 12:35, so Marshall, back to you.

MARSHALL PETER: Greg, that was absolutely fascinating, as we expected. Terrific job. So here's how we'll spend the rest of our time. If you have a question, then you'll press star-6 to be unmuted, and then please mute yourself again after that. In a few minutes, we're going to ask you to take probably 20

seconds to give us some quick feedback on the webinar, and then wrap up with announcing our next webinar and giving you details on the topic, the presenter, and when it will be held. So either type into the chat box, or if you've got a question for Greg, press star-6 and please proceed. [pause] Anyone have a question for Greg? [pause]

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Greg, can you give us the definition, the single definition of conflict? Perception of an incompatible --

GREG ABELL: Yeah, thank you. The definition -- this is one that I was introduced to years ago. I believe the source is Morton Deutsch, a social psychologist, Morton Deutsch. And he calls it the ingredients of a conflict. He said conflict occurs when one, two, or more people interact with each other. Based on the interaction, they perceive some level of incompatible difference or threat to their resources, needs, or values. So two or more people interact with each other, perceive incompatible difference or threat to their resources, needs, or values. Based on that perception, he said they behave in ways that will either escalate or deescalate the conflict.

MARSHALL PETER: And then -- thanks, Greg. I have a question from Jim Gerl. Greg, I get your point, but some of us are -- get nervous when we hear people talk about minimizing the role of compliance. Compliance shouldn't be the goal, but I think that compliance is still an important part of the process, and it is there for a reason, right?

GREG ABELL: Absolutely, Jim. And I appreciate your comment. And I want to be really clear because I appreciate what you said there. I am not minimizing the importance of compliance. I think one of the primary aspects of compliance and the regulatory side of this is that it creates a context in which we can engage and begin to build trust around that particular process. So it's not about minimizing compliance. It's balancing our emphasis of compliance with an emphasis on the adaptive nature of the work. And so I don't think we need to minimize one in order to increase the other. I think that we need to increase our focus on the adaptive, innovative side of this to match with some level, I think, the compliance side.

I think we focus on the compliance side because basically it's a lot -- it's a lot easier. It's technical in nature; we can solve it. I think we avoid the more adaptive because it's messy and in fact we have problems that we are, quote, not going to solve. You know, I go back to Bernie Mayer's, you know, conversation at the CADRE conference in the fall is that, you know, we're dealing with conflict around special education that we're not going to resolve because it's enduring, stubborn conflict. But we got to come together and reach agreements in the context of that conflict. And I think that compliance gives us

a structure for reaching agreements. And yet I still want those agreements to move us forward productively around our key purpose, which is improving student learning. So Jim, I appreciate the question.

MARSHALL PETER: So I'm going to move us forward then, Greg. Again, thank you. Thank you very much. So we're going to put up the closing poll very quickly and ask you, if you would, to provide us with some assessment information. It'll take just a minute to get this. And then I'll finish up with a quick overview of the next webinar. And I'm sure that if everybody was in the room, we'd be hearing applause. So you should all be able to see the three polls. Noella is getting those set up for us right now. So just give it another few seconds to get the input.

I think at our peak, we had right around 220 to 225 people around the country who were tuned into this, and I -- so I really appreciate the high level of interest that we had. Okay, so it looks like it's stopped moving, so Amy, I'm thinking you've got a screen grab. And so now let me move on and I'll tell you about what our next webinar will be. I might also mention, this webinar has been recorded and so we will -- you will be able to, should you want to, watch it again yourself. But it's also something that if there are colleagues or others who you believe would be of interest, it will be available and watchable at your convenience.

So our next webinar is going to be on November the 14th, and that will be again at 11:30 Pacific. And it will run approximately an hour and 15 minutes. This webinar will be focusing on the many different types of apologies, and the effective timing, delivery, emotionality, and sincerity on apology. Our presenter, someone else who we just have enormously high regard for, is Nina Meierding. Nina has assisted in the resolution of thousands of disputes, has conducted training throughout the world. She's consulted and trained many groups and individuals in the area of conflict resolution, cross-cultural issues, management skills, and negotiation.

She is an adjunct professor at Pepperdine University School of Law, Southern Methodist University's Dispute Resolution Program, and at Lipscomb University. She has a strong background in the field of special education, has a master's degree in special ed, and has worked as a special education -- as a special education teacher, lawyer, parent-student advocate, mediator, and she's now the technical - - she is now the technical mediation partner for the Wisconsin Special Education Mediation System, which if you will recall is one of the four special ed mediation systems that CADRE has identified as being exemplary.

So more information about Nina and that webinar will be available on the CADRE website. And then once again, thank you, Greg. A tremendous presentation. We're getting lots of positive feedback in the comment field, and very much appreciate you and your willingness to share your expertise with the country.

GREG ABELL: Thanks, Marshall, I appreciate it. It's been fun.

MARSHALL PETER: Okay, take care, everybody. Thank you very much. Bye bye.

GREG ABELL: Bye.

MARSHALL PETER: Thanks.