

Dylan Carnavale: Welcome to the Why God Why Podcast brought to you by Browncroft New Church. My name is Dylan Carnavale. I am the Browncroft staff and producer of the show. I'm joined here by our host, Peter Englert, director of adult ministries at Browncroft and John Iamaio, New York State crew director.

Dylan Carnavale: Why God Why is a podcast where we ask 21st century questions about God that you never thought you could? Today's guest is Aaron McGinnis newly hired director of student ministries at Browncroft. And today's topic, why can't my friends talk about anything serious? Peter and John take it away.

John Iamaio: All right. Wow. Well, we're jumping into the deep end again. That's what we'd like to do here. Why can't my friends talk about anything serious? That's the topic of the day and a good one at that. One of the things that I've discovered, Peter, is I've worked with college students over the years, is that I'll end up, especially the last few years I'm having, I'll start a conversation about something deeper with them and we'll get into a dialogue that may last, I don't know, anywhere from 15 minutes to sometimes an hour or more.

John Iamaio: And I'm just asking them questions about their life and what they think. And sometimes what they think about God and these questions go deep, but then, almost every time now I'm finding at the end of those conversations what happens is, that student will turn to me and say, "Thank you so much. I never talk about this stuff with my friends."

John Iamaio: And I think that's kind of an epidemic that's going on right now. Like there's a lot of talk, but a lot of that talk is pretty shallow, or it's very one sided talk and it's not a real true dialogue. That's what I'm seeing. What are you seeing as you look at this issue?

Peter Englert: I was recently talking to a group of friends, and this kind of made me think about this. We were talking about when you have something in your teeth and you go to a party and then you look in the mirror and after the party you realize I had this thing in my teeth, why didn't anyone say this to me? But in all reality, probably no one noticed because they were all thinking about themselves.

Peter Englert: And I kind of think of that with our lives because we can talk all the time about the ability to ask questions and the ability to hone in. But we are all, and I put myself included, we are busy, we have agendas, we've treated relationships in a transactional way as opposed to, and forgive me, I don't know what it is this afternoon in the fall of just makes me... I think about my sister-in-law from Louisiana and the one rule she told me about Cajun cooking is it's slow and it takes time. And that's just true with relationships. So, relationship gumbo. Here we go.

John lamaio: Yay. Relationship gumbo. That's a hashtag for this episode. Relationship gumbo, take it slow. All right. Anyway, we have a special guest here, which is pretty awesome.

Peter Englert: It is.

John lamaio: Yeah, I'm pretty excited. I met him for the first time about 15 minutes ago when I walked into the room. So, this is really exciting-

Peter Englert: It is.

John lamaio: ... for me.

Peter Englert: It will end. So, the great part about this podcast is I don't think people realize like not everyone do it. Like this is our first deep meaningful conversation. So, you're going to see how well of an expert Aaron is-

John lamaio: True.

Peter Englert: ... based on how he responds to all this.

John lamaio: Great. And what kind of experts we are in engaging deep, meaningful conversation as well. So anyway.

Peter Englert: Well, let's get started. So Aaron McGinnis, he's new to the Browncroft team. He's a director of student ministry at Browncroft. We're very, very excited to have him. Aaron, before we dive right in, why don't you just give us a little bit of a background where you grew up, how you ended up at Browncroft and then we'll start, we're going to give you the hot seat questions.

Aaron McGinnis: I love it. Thanks, Peter. Yeah. My name's Aaron. I grew up, I went to high school at Brockport High School, Go Blue Devils. And then for college I moved all the way out and went to Roberts Wesleyan College about 18 minutes down the road. There I did study communications and interpersonal communication, which is really fun to talk about this stuff.

Aaron McGinnis: And then from there I went down to Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia where I worked both in media making videos and animations and things like that and learning how to communicate digitally with people. But I also then taught filmmaking to students from around the area and from different walks of life.

Aaron McGinnis: I was both in the private schools and I was also in the jails. And got to teach some film making, do film festivals and learn how to tell stories through that medium as well. And now, I'm coming back to Rochester three years later, really excited to be here as a student director at Browncroft to learn how do I

communicate the gospel message to these kids through different mediums. I'm excited to be here.

John lamaio: Wow. Wow, dude. I'm communications major too, this is going to be great.

Aaron McGinnis: Great.

John lamaio: This is fun. Yeah. Anyway, and we'll talk, we'll let people, Peter deal with the Bible stuff anyway. So, you and me can just talk about the communication stuff. Anyway, no. So, you're someone who's jumping into this world of young people.

John lamaio: Obviously, you're not that far removed from your college experience yourself, but you've dedicated your life now to saying, Hey, I want to invest in this younger generation. That's what you're all about at this stage, which is, so super, super fun stage to be at. As you think about that and you look at conversations that people are having now, do you see people who are not really able to have deeper conversations?

Aaron McGinnis: I do see, I mean, it's funny you say that. Just last week we had our kickoff, so students came in Wednesday night, fun stuff. We went to dinners, and I got to hear some of the dinner conversation around the table and I went over to the sixth grade boys and I'm like, "Huh, what are they going to be talking about?" And it was kind of your... what we would probably think about.

Aaron McGinnis: They were talking about video games then they were talking about like drinking culture, which was very interesting to me. And I tried to shift the conversation, "Hey, what are your hobbies? What do you like to do?" But what I found there it was that they really enjoyed talking about things they've seen or things that they do that don't really connect to themselves, but that could be experienced by TV shows or talking favorite baseball players, things like that.

Aaron McGinnis: So yeah, I am seeing that. But it is funny when you do have deep conversations with these students, they do get into it. It's like a light bulb goes off and they're like, wait, you're actually asking me about something like deep within me. I'm sure I'm ready to engage in these conversations.

Aaron McGinnis: So, you have both an arm, you have the kids who are talking about things that, little surface level. We're jet skiing on the top of the water, and then, but when you do go deep, you find that they have a real appreciation for scuba dive and in those waters. So you get both. But

Peter Englert: Well, I'm curious because I think some of our listeners, we don't take for granted that we probably have every age listening, with a sixth grader sometimes, like how does that even happen to go off the deep end? Because I think sometimes people drop in a really deep question, all of a sudden it's this

big surprise. Or the sixth graders not answering or even a senior college student, what's been your experience and how that conversation lands there?

Aaron McGinnis: Yeah. No, it's so true. Because you can't, especially with these kids, if you haven't established a relationship with them, you can't just drop a question. Why do you think you don't have a good relationship with your mother? That's a question that a sixth grader could not maybe not even comprehend. Right?

Aaron McGinnis: So, you have to ease your way in. It's funny, my last job filmmaking, we often tried to have kids tell deeper stories about themselves through filmmaking. So, instead of through a conversation with me, we told them, "Hey, what's the story that represents your place in life right now?" And you'd have very interesting things come up. You'd have eighth graders making a film about depression and that's a conversation you can't just go out and have. Right?

Aaron McGinnis: But because we use a different approach, to having them tell their story and have them go deeper, they were able to engage with it a little bit more. So, it's usually story telling, hey, tell a story, a time where your brother made you feel mad or something. And through those you can kind of go around the minutiae, I'll say pf it.

Peter Englert: Well, just kind of, let's keep going with this because I think about, 30, 40, 50 years ago, and I think you can lobby the same complaint. We lived in the suburbs, we all did our own thing, but no one knew what was really going on in families. And now it's a little bit different.

Peter Englert: So, I guess I'm curious from your standpoint, from when you were a college student and a high schooler to now and even back, what do you think is the same about this topic versus what's different?

Aaron McGinnis: Something I think that is for sure the same. We're all humans and we all have a desire to connect relationally. But I don't think we're taught how to do that well. And I think it's always very scary, no matter your age, no matter where it's scary to engage in those conversations. So, often we grow up and if we don't have mentors, if we don't have someone pushing us towards those conversations, we just never have them.

Aaron McGinnis: I mean, I remember I worked at a summer camp as a counselor and I was on the leadership team and I remember, I was in a bunk bed. All guys, there's four guys college age and we talked about, we were talking about stuff that just didn't, TV shows. We're talking about our favorite sports team. And then one of the guys that's like, "Why don't we ever like get into those conversations?"

Aaron McGinnis: And we're like, ah. And I think it's because we're just scared to ask about some of, what's going on in someone's heart, what's going on in their mind. So, I think

that just across border, if you're a grandparent, it's probably scary to ask your grandkids those questions, right? Or your own children, those questions.

Aaron McGinnis: So, I think it totally crosses ages. It's just a human condition. I believe. Things that are different is the ways that we communicate now are completely different from 20 years ago. I was thinking about today, I used to get on an online forum. This is before Facebook and it was a forum and I would do a lot of communication with friends through that. And that communication looks so different than my conversations with friends at school in person.

Aaron McGinnis: So, now with social media, the way we talk is just different. So, if we don't understand the way kids are talking, then we might talk right past them and them right past us. So we do need to engage in learning about these new ways that kids are talking because, but there is no replacement for face to face relationship.

John lamaio: Yeah. That's a great point. That's a great point. And Peter and I, often on this podcast at least once, it seems like some conversation comes back to social media. Somehow what we're discussing, it comes back to that, because it's such a huge driving force in our culture right now. It's just a major thing. I don't know that we've fully grasp. Yeah. I don't think we've truly grasp what that's doing to us on our emotional level, mental level, all of that.

John lamaio: One of the things I notice about social media is there's kind of this age of outrage that we're living in. So, kind of the more crazy something is, the more it's kind of put out there. What do you think about that in terms of how that sets conversations up?

Aaron McGinnis: Yeah. So I mean, we've all seen it. We go online and you just see like your uncle saying something like... I do have to say that, it's fascinating the way social media where I like to think of it. For example, you and I, John, we just met. But if you sat us in a chair right across the table from each other, like right now, we're going to see each other's expressions. We're going to connect on things. I can see you smiling. And I'm like, this is a friendly dude.

Aaron McGinnis: But when you go on to social media, first of all that's taken out of it, the human perspective's taken out of it. But I also like to think about like this, if you give someone a megaphone, they will talk completely different than if they were just sitting across from someone, you're in a crowd, you give someone a megaphone, they're like, "Whoa, there's power. I can turn this thing up and just blast it to so many people." You're going to get a different communication style.

Aaron McGinnis: And that's what happens when you go on social media. It's like giving someone a super powered megaphone and they're like, "Wait, I can just blast my opinions across and then," this is where it changes. If I am sitting in a chair next to you, John, and I say something pretty polarizing, you're going to be distant from me,

you might not want to talk to me. I'm going to see that. Wow. I did not get rewarded for that.

Aaron McGinnis: I cannot form a relationship with this person anymore, but if I do that same thing on social media and I yell and what happens is you get comments, you get people liking it, sharing it, you get rewarded for this outrage mentality, which just doesn't happen in face to face communication. So, it gets addicting. You're like, wow, all these people love me. I have this huge following, like half the people hate me, but it's kind of fun because they're still engaging with me. So yeah, that's where I think we see a lot of the outrage cultures happenings.

Peter Englert: How do you think we deal with, because one of the things that's on my mind, in some ways, we have more information on people's feelings than we ever have before. But we know people less than we ever have before. I think about my life, I post about my daughter and I post about my wife, just post about church.

Peter Englert: So people know a ton about me, but they don't always know me. And I kind of look at it as a continuum because on one hand you have people that they're on social media and I wish I had a better word. They're stalkers. Like they're just there. They want to know what's going on and in real life they're quieter in the background. And then you have other people that kind of what you just described. I will tell you everything on social media and you sit down with them and they're like the nicest person in the world.

Peter Englert: So, what is it now about the face to face conversation that's been so difficult to have? I mean what are you seeing, and I know we've been talking about a director of student ministries. I mean, you're someone right now. I mean, do you have deep conversations with your friends or are you finding like, oh, well we're just responding to social media, what someone posted there?

Aaron McGinnis: Yeah. Well, going off that last part, it's funny, a lot of my friends are not super active on social media, which is interesting. And actually when I made the decision three, four years ago to like kind of take a hiatus from it, my first thought was like, "Oh, I'm not going to be in the know of what my friends are doing. I'm going to be missing out on their lives." And that's kind of not even a loving thing to do.

Aaron McGinnis: But what I found is that you form deeper connections with the people around you. And even when I would go back, so, I left Rochester for three years and then I wasn't really on social media, so, I did not really know what was going on with some of my friends back here.

Aaron McGinnis: But just yesterday I ran into one of my good friends from three years ago and he ran up, gave me a hug, and we immediately left off right where we were, before and I didn't know anything about his last three years, you would think like, Oh, I'd be so behind. But, our relationship still continued. Even over that span of

time. What was it, you said something else that triggered a thought? What were you I was like, Oh, that's good.

Peter Englert: I'm going to listen back to this podcast and like, Peter, why did you talk too much? Which is what I... so, I do think there's this continuum of someone that's present on social media, but they're not sharing versus someone that shares everything on social media but doesn't share that in person. And I don't want to overstep stereotype that either, but I just have noticed that in my life. I don't know. How do you respond to that? Do you see that too?

Aaron McGinnis: Yeah. You definitely see the people who a post day, like, oh, I know exactly what they're doing in the morning, evening and night. And then maybe you go up to them and it's like crickets when you try to talk to them. This is my thought on that is that people, and I mean I'm susceptible to this too. If you spend your time communicating through social media, I mean, this could go, it might've been ham radio back in the day or something and now, I don't know.

Aaron McGinnis: Then you learn to talk in that language. And then when you try to translate that to in person communication, it doesn't translate. It's not the same type of communication. So, it's hard to have engaging conversations. Also, something, this idea of knowing about people sexually came up last night in a conversation, in English we just have the word know, like, Oh, I know about P. I saw his post of Haley. Is that your daughter's name?

Peter Englert: Yeah.

Aaron McGinnis: She's so cute. I know that he's a pastor. I know P. So, that's what it sounds like an English, but in Spanish you have two words for know, you have [foreign language 00:18:36], which is like, oh, I know facts about P. And then you have [foreign language 00:18:40], which is, oh, like no, and I understand him and I have a relationship with him and I think we need to, as a culture focus more on knowing in relationship rather than, I know where you went on vacation, I know the names of your daughters.

Aaron McGinnis: That's good enough for me. I don't have to have in person conversation with you because I have stayed connected. And the truth is we're kind of being lied to. We're not connected to people that we only connect with, by what you said, stalking through their stuff. So, yeah.

Peter Englert: Well, I want to, before John's gets some great questions, but I just wanted to stop you because you talked about there's some conversations that don't translate well on social media. What are some examples of that?

Aaron McGinnis: Oh, conversations that don't translate well on social media, like conversations we'd have in person that you can not have. Okay. Yeah, absolutely. So, an in person conversation could, if I were talking to you P and I was talking about

your daughter, a social media conversation, we'd be like, Oh, so cute. Where did you get that outfit? Or like who did you see there?

Aaron McGinnis: In person conversation that you wouldn't have on social media is like, "Hey, when you bring your daughter to these events, how does that change your experience? And does it bring you more joy and what's tough about that when you have to bring your daughter to a work event?" Like boom, immediately. How are you supposed to have that over social media, text after, text after? No, you have to respond in person, you have to respond to their body gestures and everything to have those conversations. So, yeah, it's just a different way to communicate.

John lamaio: Yeah. As I hear you talking, I'm like, wow, this is really, really meaningful. And I think what you're communicating is there's a certain dynamic that happens when you're face to face with people that you just can't get any other way. I think there's also a dynamic, not only in what we communicate but how we listen as well. Like there's just such power in listening and just saying, "Hey, would you tell me more," like that question itself. "Can you tell me more?" Like seems to open up doors. Like people are not used to having anybody ask them that question. What's your experience with that?

Aaron McGinnis: I actually have a specific example for that. Like, exactly what you're talking about. I was applying for this job as a camp counselor. I was going to play sports, and teach kids, and I was like so excited and one of the representatives came to interview me and he asked me about like my relationship with my family and my relationship with God.

Aaron McGinnis: And I remember when he was talking about my faith, I just had things to spit out. Oh, I read, I grew up in a Christian home and that's it. And then he just sat there, nodded and was silent and kept nodding, like keep going, keep talking. And I remember thinking, "Oh crap, like I gave you all the things that I had ready to spit out." Right?

John lamaio: Yeah.

Aaron McGinnis: Like I used the whole arsenal on my Batman belt. Now, you're asking me to go back to the bat cave and get more stuff that I haven't touched in years. And I remember after that, he just waited and listened and was patient. And then I kept talking, and then I thought he was going to interrupt and he didn't interrupt. He let me keep going, and I kept talking.

Aaron McGinnis: And it revealed stuff inside of me that I didn't even know was there. Because I never talk about, we're not taught to just sit and listen and have someone present stuff that's deep within them. So yeah, listening is huge. I mean, even just the simple act.

Aaron McGinnis: Right now in our culture, silence is something we hate. We get in the car and it's silent. We throw on the radio, so we hear something, we're sitting in the room with our own kid or our own parent, and it gets awkward. So, we throw on a TV show, right? Even with your spouse, I hear this more and more like you go to bed at night and instead of talking, you throw on the office, our parks and recreation and I'm guilty of that as well, and we just can't deal with the silence.

Aaron McGinnis: But so, when students say like, "Oh, thank you so much for listening to me." It's because we're comfortable with silence and then they present more and more about themselves that we would have never known if we hadn't just sat and listened. Yeah, it's very crucially important.

John lamaio: Yeah. So, as you're describing that one moment, I'm watching your face as you're describing that, and you're visibly, there's an emotion attached to you describing that. What were you feeling in that moment of this guy is letting me talk? What were you feeling?

Aaron McGinnis: This is my exact linear emotions, he let me talk. I'm like, this makes sense. I'm being enthusiastic. I answered the question. Then he waited and I thought, this guy is weird. Like that was my first thought. It's like this is not normal. And so I'm like, I got to come up with more stuff.

Aaron McGinnis: So, I start saying stuff and then I realize halfway through that I'm like, wait, there's value in what I'm saying now? Like both for him and for myself just to learn. And at the end of that conversation, I felt like, wait, that was a really good conversation and I was really glad he asked me.

Aaron McGinnis: So, I went through, there's, almost this culture shock curve, where at first, I don't know I went through this like, wow, what is happening? This is not normal. I'm not okay with this too. Like, wait, there is a lot of value. And that kind of came up the surface and was like, they all came up on the other side and thought, wow, that was really needed and helpful and I should be doing this more with my friends.

Peter Englert: I'm curious, is there a topic or question that you wished people would actually ask you about or that you wish people would ask you about more? I'm going to throw that to you John too, so-

John lamaio: Wow. And then I'll throw it at you, Peter, just for fun.

Peter Englert: Just for fun.

John lamaio: Yeah.

Peter Englert: So, Aaron, I mean, because I think, I wonder with all of us, no matter what our age is, I wonder if we go through these relationships and we're like, literally asking, waiting for someone to ask but we can't bring it up or something like in your life, going to, is there one area or one question that you're seeing please like can someone just, and now all of a sudden now everybody's going to listen and they're going to ask you, but it is what it is. So, go ahead.

Aaron McGinnis: Oh man. I think I have many areas where I wish people would ask me. I think for a long time, one of the questions that I never got asked, and I think a lot of men don't get asked is like, "Hey, do you have a best friend?" Or like, why is it difficult for you to have a best friend or someone that you can go to? I don't know. Like how are you dealing with that?

Aaron McGinnis: Is that hard for you? Is that what people are telling you to do? So, that was an interesting one for the longest time that I had never been asked. And actually that group of guys I was talking about earlier in the cabin with the bunk beds, that was kind of the question we were asking is like, why can't we be really good friends and let each other know like, hey, I want to spend time with you and if you're doing something I'd love to tag along and I want to know about your life.

Aaron McGinnis: So, that's a question. I mean, I have a lot of other interests in my head. Like I love when people talk to me. I almost coached track and field for my job. So, I love when people ask like, "Oh, what do you think about my injury?" I don't know, like there's so many topics and that I would love to share about that. We probably go on months, years without anyone asking us. Actually let's throw it around. You guys might spark some ideas for me of questions. I'm like, oh, of course. Yeah.

John lamaio: No man, those are good questions. And that's a great question that you intro there, Peter. That's a really good one. My initial gut reaction is this, as you asked that question, my feeling is what do I yearn for most? It's people when I give them the easy answer back go, no, okay, great, but for real no.

John lamaio: Rather than me just saying, when they say, how are you doing? You can tell when someone's asking you how you're doing. Just for kind of fun because they have to, because it's a social thing that we do. And I have a pre-program response for that. And I realize that internally I have a pre-program response most of the time for how you do, Oh, I'm good, I'm busy, I'm better, dah, dah, dah, whatever.

John lamaio: I do, I fill in those blanks. But I what I yearn for, I think is people go and we know some of those people who will do this. We'll sit down and go like, okay, that's nice answer that you just gave there, but how are you really doing? Like really what's going on in your life? I think that's what I yearn for more than just anything else? How about you Peter?

Peter Englert: Yeah. I feel almost hypocritical like saying this, but I feel like I'm in a lot of conversations that I just wish people would ask me like, "Well, what do you actually think?" And I just find that so tough because and the reason I think it's hypocritical is because I'm trying myself to not just say what I think, but ask people what they think.

Peter Englert: And there's like this reciprocity where, I'm that and like 200 on that where, without naturally, but it's nice to be invited to do that. And then, I totally agree with you too. It's what's really going on, like, because I'll say my standard fine. And then all of a sudden after that, what's really going on? So.

Aaron McGinnis: Yeah. There you go. This is what I would say. I've made it a point. It's so funny. I've made it a point in my own life because I think it's from my communications major that I learned, this is like, I've made it a point in my life to learn about a lot of things to connect with people on.

Aaron McGinnis: So for example, I went to just a young adult gathering, right? I ran into someone, I was there with my fiancée and I was talking to this girl who knew a little, she was doing architecture. And usually that conversation would go like this, like, "Hey, my name's Aaron. What's your name?" "Oh, Emily." I'm like "Oh, what do you do in town?" "Oh, I'm an architect." "Oh, that's so cool. Where do you go to church?" "I go here." "Great. That's cool." And then it would end.

Aaron McGinnis: But I've found out it'd be like, Oh, they're building something on the downtown mall that's supposedly going to really affect the way traffic flows. What do you think of that architecture program or that architecture project? And they're like, "Oh, that's actually something I'm working on." And I'm like, "Oh, how do you think the colors of walls affect emotion?" And they're like, "Oh my gosh."

Aaron McGinnis: So, and then they go into it. And so if you can find something that someone's passionate about and ask more than just what do you do? But question it so, Peter, for you, a question could be like, how important is one on one conversation in ministering to someone's family? Or I don't know. What's the topic you love? What's a hobby even that you love?

Peter Englert: You know I read a lot. And, Dylan, our producer's doing basketball, but all five, six of me. But no, I get, yeah. To have that follow up. I mean, John, what are some stuff for you that, just natural passions. You are pretty buff, so you go to the gym.

Aaron McGinnis: Yeah, of course. So, people automatically assume that. Yeah, no. Anyway, no I don't know if there's like one thing that I'm like, oh man, would you ask me about this? In terms of hobbies or anything? I don't know. I mean, I do enjoy the outdoors, so people generally, once they get to know me a little bit, they know that about me.

Aaron McGinnis: So, when I hear that, my next question would be like, oh do you like going hiking on mountains or do you like long trails? What parts of nature really make you feel alive? Things like that. This is the funny, this is the same house where I had the architecture conversation, but we are sitting in a group. People were talking about, I don't know, we don't know.

Aaron McGinnis: But I asked the question because there's half girls, half guys and I'm like, "Hey, this is a random question girls, but what part of your makeup do you do that you think probably no one notices?"

Peter Englert: Wow.

Aaron McGinnis: And each one of them had a very specific answer and we went and we talked about why they do their makeup. We talked about, what they see on social media or what they see that makes them want to do that part of their makeup. And it was this really rich conversation about makeup routines. So, it sounds ridiculous, right? But they got to share their thoughts and two weeks later a girl comes up to me and she's like, "Man, I've just been telling everyone about that conversation we had."

Peter Englert: Really?

Aaron McGinnis: So, I don't think you really need to nail that one thing that someone's thinking about. But just hearing people's ideas and then dignifying them and saying, wow, you've thought about this, that's a really valuable idea. They feel just great. They've taken something from inside themselves, presented it on the table and you've affirmed it. And so there's value in that. And I think it's incredibly rewarding for someone to feel that way. But yeah, the conversation about makeup ended up being a really good "Conversation."

Peter Englert: So before we get to our last question, we'd be remiss to say at the time of recording this podcast, you're engaged, you're about to get married, how do you have serious conversations? How are you navigating that? I mean, I'm sure some of our listeners are either dating engaged. I don't know, just love to hear from you.

Aaron McGinnis: Oh, I love it. See, like that's a question and I love that you asked me. So, yeah, my fiancée, her name's Kelsey, she's amazing and she's actually going to the university of Rochester for school counseling, so she's actually having these conversations as well.

Aaron McGinnis: So, all of these questions, this topic of the podcast today, I got to talk with her earlier, but it was interesting in the beginning of our relationship, it's like, "How do you get to these topics?" And one thing we found really helpful... Well, first we just talked about like our families. We even drew out our family trees, and

we even, indicated where divorces were, where there was a strange relationships, right? Things like that.

John lamaio: Genogram. Is that what you're talking?

Aaron McGinnis: Genogram. Yeah, exactly. I mean, we just filled one of those out and that led to a lot of great conversations. "Oh, well my aunt, her and my mom had a tough relationship", things like that. And then there's a specific ride when we were thinking about moving back to Rochester and we were thinking about, what does that move mean for our friends?

Aaron McGinnis: And we were driving and it's eight and a half hours. So you're like, all right, we got to talk about something. We have eight and a half hours. And we ended up asking questions and analogies and this is what I mean. I would say things like, "Okay, your best friend in Virginia is moving away. If that relationship was a house, in what condition is the house?" And she went and said, Oh, like, I mean it could be any relationship, but you could be like, Oh, it's a great house, but there's no windows and the draft is coming in. Or I feel like she has her own room that she stays in and isn't willing to explore the rest of the house.

Aaron McGinnis: So, and that will work with students too, or people that you haven't had deep conversations with. If you get around it, it's less scary to talk about things in terms of analogies. One of my favorite, this is the last one, I'll say, one of my favorite was this camp that I was a counselor at. We got into Bible studies and the thought of Bible studies is like, "Oh, we're probably going to go deep. Right?"

Aaron McGinnis: But the first question they asked us was this, they asked us this if your faith journey were a football game, where would you be? Are you the quarterback running the show? Are you sitting on the bench just waiting for your opportunity to shine? Are you sitting in your room watching the game on TV? Because you're too scared to let anyone know that you want to play football or have you thrown the TV out of the house because or maybe even like maybe you don't even know if football is the game you should play. You want to play baseball. Right?

Aaron McGinnis: And so, we got a variety of answers and when people can engage with that analogy, you get some interesting stuff. And I mean this was the first conversations I had with these people. I immediately knew where they were at. So you can ask that in terms of faith, in terms of relationships with your kids or with your parents, anything.

John lamaio: Dude, that's a really wise idea. I love that using analogies and I think that really brings us kind of full circle into kind of how we normally end our combo. And that's bringing it to Jesus. Like what would Jesus say about this question? So

Peter and I are going to go first and then we'll let you back clean up. So to speak to you as an analogy.

Peter Englert: Can I answer his football question?

John lamaio: Sure.

Peter Englert: This is going to go back to our [foreign language 00:36:44] episode.

John lamaio: Yeah.

Peter Englert: I'm a kicker and I'm a linebacker stuck in a kickers body.

John lamaio: Kickers body. There we go.

Peter Englert: Yeah. Thank you David Akers. So, as I was sitting here, you know, I find it fascinating, like I think that sometimes Christians and followers of Jesus are so insecure and so, what they do is like when they read about Jesus, it's all about his declarative teachings. And I'm going to go completely off the cuff here. So, there's probably going to be some scholar that calls me up.

Peter Englert: I remember Jesus's questions to people more than I remember his teachings. And the funny thing about Jesus is, you want to talk about, why can't my friends talk about anything serious? I think if Jesus was here, he'd be like, well, you're probably not asking enough questions. And, I think about the woman at the well, how He engages her in questions and you think about Nicodemus and we remember John 3:16.

Peter Englert: But that happened in a course of a conversation with questions. And I just think that Jesus' questions at times are so much more powerful than his teachings because it's a reminder of Jesus being personal and being involved and that's how we should live in our lives.

John lamaio: Yeah, that's a great one, Peter. And actually my mind first went to that woman at the well illustration too, that story of Jesus encountering this woman who He wasn't supposed to talk to. And she is essentially in the course of the story, trying to get them veered off into other directions. She doesn't want to go there with her life. She wants to go any way other than go into really the core of what she's about.

John lamaio: But Jesus gently brings it back and he brings it back with an analogy. He's like, I have water that never runs out. And she's like, well, just tell me where that water is because that's where the kind of water that I want and Jesus like, okay, let me tell you any, and he unveils who he is to her in a way that she can really connect with.

John lamaio: But he did that. You're right, Peter, by asking questions, by using analogies, by truly caring about her enough to say, "Yeah, I know you want to distract about this, but I want to push in a little bit and ask you really... He told her something that freaked her right out. He was like, "Yeah, why don't you go back to your husband?" And she's like, "Oh, I don't have a husband." He's like, "Oh, you're right. You got five husbands already." And, she was like, "Oh my goodness."

John lamaio: And he knew that was the core of what she was dealing with. So He went there. I don't think we need to be afraid to go there either, but we need to do it with love. And so, that's how I would approach and I think Jesus would approach this situation. Aaron, you get to bat clam.

Aaron McGinnis: Yeah, there you go. So, clearly Jesus wasn't sitting just in the temple, writing letters, sending them off, never meeting with people. He's in their houses, forming relationships, asking questions. And you always get the sense when Jesus is talking to the woman at the well [inaudible 00:39:57]. So anyone that He loves them and wants them, he's not condemning them.

Aaron McGinnis: I mean, the woman who comes and cleans his feet, who's a sinner, He is forming relationships with them and He's giving answers to questions. He's asking questions, getting the answers, dignifying them saying, "I love you basically through his actions." So, it's all about relationship with him. And then from that relationship he's able to ask those hard questions that we're scared to ask.

Aaron McGinnis: But if we followed Jesus' example, forming relationships, getting time with people, learning about them, asking tough questions, after we form that relationship, you'll see some life change and people will be very thankful that you had this conversations with them. So, yeah.

Peter Englert: Aaron, I'm so glad that you came on this podcast. It's a joy to kind of get to know you. And as we close today, I just want to remind all of you that you can catch the episodes and see all of our updates at www.whygodwhypodcast.com. We are on social media and this, a little reminders sharing is caring and we hope that you share this episode on social media and text people.

Peter Englert: And the last thing you can do to help raise us up in the podcast world, if you could review us, whether it's on Google play or Apple podcast app, that we greatly appreciate it and we hope you have a wonderful day and we hope that you're engaging your friends and your family in more serious questions.