

Leadership Focus with Ainsley Rose & Andre Mamprin



Introduction

- This segment of **24h for Change in Education**, brings together **Ainsley Rose** (veteran Canadian educator) and **Andre Mamprin** (Canadian leadership and systems consultant) to explore why education is so hard to change, what real innovation looks like, and what kind of leadership the current moment demands.
 - **Andre** traces his path from systems engineering in oil & gas, manufacturing, banking and now large-scale healthcare systems.
 - Over 20+ years as a consultant, he's become obsessed with leadership and with one core insight: **humans drive value and change**, not systems on paper.
 - From his vantage point in the corporate and public sectors, he sees education as “one of the least disrupted human enterprises” despite enormous pressure on other systems to transform.
 - He asks why, if we all depend on its output, education remains so structurally resistant to change.
 - **Ainsley** comes from the other side of the fence: 53 years in education, from teacher to principal to system leader and long-time consultant, including leadership retreats in Québec that he's now been running for 19 years.
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The Challenge of Change

- From that lifetime of experience, his verdict is blunt: **we need to rethink school from the ground up.**
- He saw the COVID shutdown as a once-in-a-century chance to break the pattern of age-graded boxes, seat-time and teacher talk—but the system rushed back to “normal” instead of reinventing itself.
- A major thread is **missed opportunities and structural resistance.**
- Ainsley laments that despite countless brilliant school innovations worldwide, schools next door often ignore these exemplars instead of adapting them.

- Part of the explanation is **ego** and status in education: innovators are usually generous, but many others struggle to adopt and credit ideas that originated elsewhere.
 - Unlike tech, where clients **demand** the latest and open-source culture lowers egos, families are still lukewarm about radically different school models, so systems feel less pressure to move.
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Innovation Strategy: "Brush Fires" & Disruption

- From here Ainsley offers his **"brush fires to bonfires"** model of change.
 - Instead of grand reforms and ministerial mandates ("Thou shalt implement the new curriculum/assessment"), he argues for starting with **two** willing teachers who pilot, experiment, fail, adapt and slowly attract colleagues.
 - These small "controlled burns" spread curiosity and proof of concept far better than top-down directives.
 - Mandates, he says, "don't matter" if people don't truly own the change.
 - Andre adds a **systems and disruption lens**. Comparing education budgets in Alberta with the enormous healthcare enterprise he works in (tens of billions and massive data systems), he explains how complexity, politics, antiquated structures and vested interests all lock in the status quo.
 - He points to **Reggio Emilia** as a historical example of community-led disruption—tearing down an unsatisfying school and rebuilding around a tree and children's interests—and notes how that and Montessori began as radical, child-centred experiments that later solidified into brands and dogmas.
 - For him, we're now at a "forest fire" moment as a species: complexity is out of control, and **AI is the biggest disruptive force of our lifetime**, making current business and operating models quickly obsolete.
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Future Vision & Purpose

- The conversation veers toward **purpose and a positive vision of the future**, a theme that has run through the whole 24 hours.

- One of the top goals of schooling today should be to graduate students with a **positive outlook on the future**—yet almost no schools make that explicit.
 - Ainsley connects this to pedagogy: schools focus too much on **what** to learn (content) instead of **how** to learn, and teachers still do too much that students could do themselves.
 - His two mantras:
 - Shift from “what to teach” to “how to learn”.
 - “Teachers should never do for kids what kids can do for themselves.”
 - He argues we must put learning back into students’ hands, fuel their natural curiosity, co-construct success criteria, and stop turning school into a passive “teacher talks, students regurgitate” system.
 - Kids come to school full of questions, and by Grade 3 they’ve mostly stopped asking “why” because they’ve learned the pattern.
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The Activist Mindset

- From the workplace side, **Andre** links everything to **purpose, curiosity and an “activist mindset.”**
 - He describes meeting a 15-year-old at a Future Summit on AI who already has a clear purpose: to become a fashion designer using AI and strong math skills to run his own business.
 - For Andre, that’s the model: a young person with (1) a positive vision of the future and (2) a deep, personal sense of purpose.
 - Without those, neither students nor adults have the energy to tackle big problems.
 - He suggests that true **educators** (as distinct from people who just “teach content”) are people driven by purpose and passion for their subject and for human beings.
 - They both underline that schools currently **do not explicitly design for purpose and positive future vision**, even though that may be their most urgent responsibility in a world of climate anxiety, polarization and AI-driven uncertainty.
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Leadership & Empathy

- Andre connects this to **storytelling and political leadership**: we're starved of leaders who can paint a compelling picture of a preferable future and invite people into it.
 - Schools could—and should—fill that void.
 - Regarding “**new forms of leadership**”, Andre's answer is simple but demanding: leadership must explicitly integrate **empathy**.
 - In a world where AI is trained on the often dark content of the internet, empathy, emotional depth and human connection are precisely what machines cannot authentically replicate.
 - Future leadership, in his view, is about courage to disrupt the status quo **plus** the empathy to truly care about people as we do it.
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Closing & Indigenous Wisdom

- The segment closes as **Susannah** joins from Hawai'i, bringing in the **aloha** spirit and the shared question of “what does it mean to be a good human?”.
 - Andre links back to **indigenous knowledge and reconciliation** in Canada, reading a land acknowledgement that honours First Nations, Métis and their relationship to the land.
 - He stresses that indigenous wisdom has walked this path before us; we don't need to reinvent everything.
 - Collaborative innovation like **The Next Learnerspace**, which framed learning around five core dimensions—self, community, nature, technology and leadership—and brought together cohorts of young people worldwide to explore them.
 - His parting thought: many people on the call are already those “innovators in small corners of large ecosystems,” lighting brush fires that, with time and support, can become bonfires.
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Key People Mentioned

- **Ainsley Rose** – Canadian educator with over 50 years of experience as teacher, principal, system leader and consultant;

- Co-creator and leader of long-running leadership retreats in Québec; long-time collaborator and friend of yours.
 - **Andre Mamprin** – Canadian leadership and systems consultant; background in systems engineering, oil & gas, manufacturing, banking and healthcare;
 - Works with large-scale enterprises on organizational renewal, leadership and ecosystem thinking.
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URLs & Resources

- **Leadership focus segment video:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OJuS0JnO04M>
- **24h for Change in Education (event site):** 🖱️ <https://24hforchange.education>
- **The Next Institute (leadership & ecosystems think tank where Andre has worked / led neXt Lab):** 🖱️ <https://imaginethenext.com> Bold and Visible
- **Future Summit – AI & innovation in Western Canada:** (Good overview of the event series Andre mentions) 🖱️ <https://betakit.com/future-summit-aims-to-help-build-an-ai-advantage-for-western-canada/> Startup Ecosystem Canada
- **Reggio Emilia Approach:** (the Italian example of community-driven school redesign Andre cites) 🖱️ <https://www.reggiochildren.it/en/reggio-emilia-approach/>
- **Montessori movement:** 🖱️ <https://www.montessori-ami.org/>
- **Alberta Health Services:** (the very large health system Andre is working with as a comparison for complex educational systems) 🖱️
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca>