Transcript of episode 52: Developing Critical Thinking Skills

Emily:	00:45	Hey there. Welcome to episode 52. Today I'm talking to Colin Seale. Colin is passionate about teaching kids to use critical thinking skills and he's the founder of the organization ThinkLaw. Our conversation is really interesting and I'm excited to share it with you today. Before we get started, a quick note to say thank you for being a listener and supporting our podcast. If you haven't already connected through social media, we would love for you to join us. We've got a Facebook group that is growing daily. It's called the Mind Matters Gifted Education and Advocacy Group and you can join us and the conversation over there. You can also like our Facebook page, which is Mind Matters Podcast or on Twitter you can follow the podcast which is @mindmatterspod, or my Twitter handle is @EmilyKM_LPC. Okay, so Colin Seale tell us a little bit about you.
Colin:	01:38	So I'm Colin Seale, the founder and CEO of ThinkLaw, where we help educators teach critical thinking using real life legal cases in upper grades, fairy tales and nursery rhymes in lower grades, and lots of hands on practical but powerful tools for teachers and parents to unlock our kids' critical thinking potential.
Emily:	01:58	Stay with us. (Break)
Emily:	02:39	We're here with Colin Seale from ThinkLaw US, Colin, thank you so much for being here with us today.
Colin:	02:44	Thank you. I'm glad to be here.

Emily:	02:46	So you know Colin, we first met, well I guess we first met on Twitter really, but then we first met in person at the NAGC conference down in Albuquerque this year and I attended your presentation and I think the thing that stood to me the most through your presentation was you said, "a lifetime of saying 'you see what happened is'..." That was kind of like what led you to where you are now. Tell us a little bit about your path that kind of got you to where you're developing these curriculum and ideas for how to teach kids critical thinking.
Colin:	03:16	Sure. and I'm so glad you, you brought up that point because I fundamentally do think we need to reframe what we typically look at as disruptors as more of what we need to have as innovators. Because when you think about it, the way we talk about icons in the business industry or in a tech industry where we say that they, they march to the beat of their own drummer, they go against the grain or we literally call them disruptors. It always made me scratch my head to wonder then why is it that we kicked these disruptive kids out of class?
Colin:	03:53	So when I think about my experience as a kid that was growing up, getting in trouble all the time until it got recognized through honestly kind of pure luck that I should have been placed in gifted and talented classes since I was in kindergarten. I had this transformational experience and it really wasn't until I hit college that I realized how inequitable that actually was. It really started to hit home with me when I started coming home for breaks when I was in college. And I realized here I was as this computer science graduate who was student body president at Syracuse university and I had already gotten accepted early for the the, the, the master's in public administration program at the Maxwell school, which is the top school in the country for public administration.
Colin:	04:45	And I realized that every time I came back to my block and I saw a lot of the kids I grew up with just really didn't have those same opportunities. I kept on thinking about this idea that growing up on free and reduced lunch, growing up with a mom who is an immigrant, whole family of immigrants on the first generation in this country, having a dad incarcerated for selling drugs, there was a feeling that the success that I'd experienced through education, may be an exception to the rule. And at some point, my senior year in college, I truly committed to this idea of creating a world where kids like me were no longer exceptions to the rule, but every kid truly had a real shot at being exceptional. And that's really been the driving force behind my work with ThinkLaw. So whether I was teaching middle school and high school math in Washington, D C and in Las Vegas,

Nevada, whether I was working in the child welfare system as an analyst, practicing law at one of the biggest firms in the country, everything I always did really revolved around this idea of how do I solve that problem? How do I commit that problem in whatever capacity I'm serving in right now so that kids like me are no longer exceptions to the rule? So that's been the driving force behind it. And really it's just been an exercise of creativity, exploration and listening to a practical tool that people were really hungry for in K to 12 education today.

Emily: 06:22 I posted a graphic on Twitter last week about revenge education. It's this idea that kids will use the negative energy from people who tell them that they can't do something to do it, just to prove those people wrong. And that's all well and good. And those often are the kids who do make those changes. But sometimes it feeds another tendency to do things like take a course or pick a career for maybe the wrong reasons because of those societal pressures or parental pressures or market demands or whatever, but not because they actually have a passion for it.

Colin: 06:53 Yeah, and you're talking about the wrong reasons. There's a hashtag that's been trending on Twitter that is #ILovePublicSchool, and it is actually a very depressing hashtag to follow because it's a lot of parents and a lot of current K through 12 students tweeting about some of their really awful, terrible experiences they're experiencing in classrooms across the country. And a lot of what really motivates me, a lot of what keeps me going and gets me excited about getting up and doing this work every day, is the idea that we have the power to do something different. We have the power to understand that we are the change we've been waiting for. And what I see sometimes is a lot of educators that feel so beat down that we, we lose the idea that we have power. And this is something that's been a long time in the making when it comes to public education. When I first started teaching, it was a year after no child left behind was passed and get this, okay,

Colin: 08:01 I'm in my back to school PD and I'm so excited, right? I'm becoming an educator. I'm going to change the world, I cannot wait, and on the very first day they put some graphs up on the wall and they're saying, "all right, here's the deal. Here's what we're going to do. You see these kids over here?" And they're pointing to the kids that are above grade level or at grade level," forget about those kids. Okay, are going to be just fine. You see these kids over here?" And now she points to the very low end of the spectrum. Kids that were tested at a level I would call below basic. "These Kids, it's useless. Whatever we do is

probably not going to help them anyway. This year I want our focus to be on the bubble kids." And I was like, wait a minute, wait a minute. So you're telling me on my first week in public education that I'm going to ignore 66% of my students and only focus on the set of kids that are on the cusp of being proficient? And that's plan A? Nobody told you to do that. There was nothing in no child left behind, there was nothing in state policy that told you to do that.

Colin: 09:12 But sometimes we over-correct, we find these ways to do things that if we really thought about it, we wouldn't feel okay with it. So a lot of what I try to do, a lot of what energy I'm trying to bring is like, it's us. We're the change we've been waiting for. We've got this. And when it comes to giving our kids access to the kind of critical thinking they need to have transformative opportunities in their futures, we are that front line. We are the only ones when it comes to K-12 education. We are the only ones that can make this possible. And if we decide kids can't do it, it's a certainty that they won't be able to.

Emily: 09:55 Right. You know, you talk about the systemic issues that schools face. What do you think about just as far as like curriculum goes regarding critical thinking, which is really the emphasis of all of the ThinkLaw materials. What are schools getting wrong there? What are they, what are they missing when they're trying to teach critical thinking to kids?

Colin: 10:16 So I think it's a three part problem. First, I'm not sure that every educator actually believes that every single child can handle rigorous education grounded in critical thinking. So the belief gap is where it starts. The second part is, even if a teacher in theory believes that, not all teachers believe that they have the ability to unleash that critical thinking potential. So you know, we talk a lot about like Hattie's theory of teacher efficacy being the number one predictor of student achievement. Well if teachers don't believe that they can, that will be a huge gap in getting there. So the third part is, if they had the belief that all kids can, if they had the belief that they themselves are capable of doing it, it then becomes an issue of resources, time, support. When you talk about curriculum, let's be clear, we still live in an era in 2020 where not every teacher actually has curriculum in their hands that is going to meet the needs of their kids. So now what you're asking teachers to do is either make up their own resources, spend a lot of time tweaking existing resources to get them to connect, and the larger issue that really frustrates and sabotages critical thinking in our schools is that the Bloom's Taxonomy framework that is a part of most teacher education programs where we've got these different, that this staircase of

increasing rigor, right? Starting with knowledge and application and gone all the way up to evaluating and synthesizing, that diagram might be one of the most unfortunate diagrams in teacher prep programs. And I call it an unfortunate because when you see this staircase that says knowledge and application at the bottom, it almost gets you to think you can only start there, and because you have to always start there, maybe once or twice a semester you might be able to get up to those higher order thinking skills.

Colin: 12:33 But that's not actually true. You can start with higher order thinking no matter what type of prerequisite material kids understand. And a lot of times that gives you the why to actually want to dig down and start digging in to those nitty gritty, low level topics you need to get that deeper understanding. So I'll give you an example. In our pre-K curriculum we have a lesson where we start analyzing "Three Blind Mice," and we want our kids to start to do a lot of analysis around, you know, what's hard about being a blind mouse and what are some alternative reasons that they might've been chasing after this farmer's wife. And we do the same sort of questioning for the farmer's wife on her perspective. But to start it out, we asked a question of what's hard about being a kindergarten student? And kids actually could do a really good job of giving you all the trials and tribulations. And then we ask them what's hard about being a kindergarten teacher? And now they're empathizing, they're putting themselves in your shoes. And they're actually surprisingly on point when they start listing a lot of the frustrations and challenges that come from managing a kindergarten class. So when we ask them, you know, what can students and teachers do to help each other out with the problems that they both face? We're asking a pretty complex problem but you don't necessarily need to have a bunch of low level skills to get to that point. So when we talk about our critical thinking revolution, we're not talking about pie in the sky concepts. We're talking about a practical tool that teachers can start to implement on a Tuesday morning in February because that's really what we're going to see change happen when it comes to giving our K to 12 system, much more equitable access to critical thinking.

Emily: 14:20 I had the privilege of teaching in gifted ed programming and I feel like we were always very aware of that Bloom's Taxonomy, but we had no problem jumping to those higher level thinking skills because there was this belief that, you know, that was what those kids needed, and what we would see is that those lower level skills would fill in by doing that higher level work.

But I do agree though that I feel like that's not just good for high ability kids. All kids can benefit from those types of skills.

Colin: 14:49 Without a doubt. And one thing you said that is so interesting reminds me that the belief gap isn't just about teachers, it's also about students. Right? So the simple label of being identified as gifted often made me feel like I ought to be able to do this. And I remember that same attitude being a huge part of what encouraged what I did in the classroom. One year I was teaching a class of seventh graders who were at least two grade levels behind, and I had them for double a double period every day. And they called the class Math Review, when other seventh graders were taking pre-algebra. And I thought to myself, this is never going to work. I am never going to really get this group of children to push themselves in a class that's called Math Review. So I advocated to get the class changed to pre-algebra because I'm like, by the end of the year we're going to get there anyhow. But I, there's just something about this labeling. There's something about like, you know, the way that we tell kids what they're meant to do and how we can kind of reimagine kids' capabilities and, and convince them that there's nothing they can't do. So that's always been a big theme of my, my classroom practices and, and, and I think we ought to give more thought to that when we're trying to figure out how to really push kids beyond even what they think is capable.

Emily: 16:27 One of the other things that you really emphasize with all of this is really talking about looking for nuance in arguments and getting comfortable kind of with, with shades of gray or different perspectives of things. You mentioned perspective taking a moment ago. How do you integrate that and why is it so important for our students?

Colin: 16:46 I have kind of given up on us adults. I think for us, we're done, we are, we're just, we just can't. It's too late. It's too late. So I look at our kids and I see the way they operate, even relative to how you and I might've experienced high school. So when I see kids today, I'm always blown away that when I see kids on skateboards, it's kids of every race and I don't see the same sort of divisions. I feel like these kids today are much more open minded, much more accepting. Kids get to be themselves in ways that just really would've shocked me when I was in high school. So with this, I think it's really important that we give them even more practical tools to continue this sort of mindset into adulthood. And here I really do care very deeply about the quality of the substance of our gifted education programs and advanced academic programs. Because I feel like these are young people who have a pretty incredible weight to carry.

Colin:	18:02	And when I say they're carrying a really incredible weight, they have an opportunity to transform the way we view intellectuals in our country. Because today, so often we see ourselves subjected to a very anti intellectual sentiment. But that's not random. We have an anti intellectual sentiment because so many of our intellectuals are mean. They're Jerks. They make it their point to make sure that you feel stupid in their presence. And I think that understanding different perspectives, understanding nuances, understanding a way to communicate in somebody in language they can understand, it's something that could truly just transform the value that we have around why being an intellectual is a good thing.
Colin:	18:55	So when you think about kids that get very stuck in black or white thinking - it should be this way, I feel strongly about this - but they can't ever really think about the other side or imagine how it might be taken a little bit differently in other context, I think there's a huge opportunity here where it's not just about the academic rigor where, yeah, every state standard in the country requires kids to be able to analyze the different perspectives. But it's about, it's about a better society. It's about better people. It's about this idea that if our kids can be wired to understand that it's not just about being right, but it's about doing right. We'll just have a better world.
Emily:	19:37	People feel like being a quote unquote intellectual means always knowing the answers. And I feel like more than anything, often it's about realizing that you don't know the answers. And I think a lot of adults and also kids don't realize that that's part of it.
Colin:	19:56	Right. And I would go even deeper than that. A big part of the, there's a a type of ThinkLaw learning activity that we use, our early elementary materials all the way up to our our real life legal cases and upper grades, around root cause analysis. Because a lot of times we don't even really think about the problem we're trying to solve before we just start doing it, right? We just, we see a problem and our instinct is to just start solving it right away, instead of digging a little bit deeper and seeing what's really going on. Like, for instance, we have a lesson where we show up some pie charts about the percentage of women that played in high school sports and college sports before title nine was passed in 1971.
Colin:	20:43	And I think it was 93% of high school athletes were male and 85% of college athletes were male. And if you ask a child, why do you think this distinction existed? What do you think the first thing is that they're going to say?

Emily:	20:55	Boys like to play sports more.
Colin:	20:57	Exactly right. And that, that's typically where you start. But when you start going through this process of the root cause analysis, and you start saying, well, well why do boys like sports more than girls? Presuming that's even true. Look, why would that be true? Well, maybe boys are getting more exposure to sports than girls. Well, why is that? Well, maybe girls are being pushed into other things. And at the end of it, you might have a fourth grader saying, you know what the real issue is? Target. Target, what do you mean? Well, if you go to Target and you go through the toy aisle, they have a separate section for girls, toys and boys toys.
Colin:	21:36	But if target would mix it up so kids can just take whatever toy they wanted, then we'll have more opportunity. Kids will feel that they have more freedom of choice. And I'm like, interesting. Never would have got there, never would have thought about that. But that's what happened when you start digging deeper and really obsessing with the problem instead of just throwing out solutions willy nilly. And what's been so interesting about this is that the deeper we've gone into this, the more I've realized this has powerful implications for teachers, for school leaders. You look at your classroom data, how often do we say things like, Oh, I guess I should start doing more centers. Oh, we should just change the schedule. Oh we need to make sure we do this. But it's like, wait, but have you really diagnosed a problem for real, for real?
Colin:	22:22	Have you really dug in? Have you asked the right questions to even identify what we're really solving? So when I think about a critical thinking revolution, I honestly started this as a program. I was going to create equity for students. What I didn't realize was how many adults were super excited about getting concrete resources for critical thinking in their own lives in their own jobs for their own leadership. I'm actually keynoting a child welfare conference in the middle of February because guess what, when you making on the spot decisions around child safety, critical thinking plays in there too, and I'm super excited to see what the opportunities look like to continue to expand our mission beyond K-12 education because there are so many ways that this idea of critical thinking being a luxury good is truly holding our society back.
Emily:	23:16	Yeah. I think one of the things that I really love also about the materials and curriculum is that, you know, you use the fairy tales in nursery rhymes at the younger grades, which is very accessible for kids. They are familiar with that, but then when

you get into the older grades, you really dig into real life law cases. You know, things that like have actually happened in our country, and requiring kids to kind of look at it from that perspective and I think grounding that in reality. When I think back to my education, I think back when I would've maybe had those opportunities and I kind of I guess go naturally to some of my like social studies classes and you know when you're doing some of those things about things that have already happened in history but are very well known and you already know the outcome, it's really easy to say, you know what was right or wrong about that situation.

Emily: 24:06 But I think you also pull from some that are maybe a little bit maybe well known or maybe are well known to adults but that kids probably are less familiar with. And I feel like that gives them something like it's a real problem. It's not just like, Oh, we're going to do this activity for critical thinking. It's like we're really gonna look at this and figure out what's going on here and what's the right solution.

Colin: 24:22 I'm glad you bring up this point because in many ways we actually try to avoid a lot of cases that kids will know a lot about. Purposely just try it to like not bring them up because we want our kids to just start getting more into the funk. And getting into the funk sometimes means that they can't come in with a lot of preconceived notions and ideas.

Emily: 24:43 Right.

Colin: 24:43 For instance, there's a case from like the pony express days, so we're talking 18 hundreds and there was a lot of danger for mail carriers, and because of all this danger, they passed a law saying that like you couldn't do anything to impede the progress of the mail. Which makes sense given a lot of the inherent risks involved in delivering mail in those days. But one day there was a mail carrier who was suspected of murder. A police officer saw the mail carrier was on his route, arrested the mail carrier, and then guess what? The police officer got arrested for violating this law about impeding the mail. Should that police officer be convicted or not? So let's go back for a second. And let's think about this idea that a lot of our kids are groomed to find the right answer and give you something that's clearly black or white. So it might be tempting to say, well, he broke the law. If you break the law, you do the crime, you pay the time. Sure. But then again, what would the world look like if you couldn't arrest a murder suspect when you saw them? What should the police officer have done? Like, Hey, can you do me a favor? Tell

		me when you get off your shift? I'd love to make an appointment so I can arrest you for murder.
Colin:	26:03	Right? So when we start playing it out, you realize that this isn't necessarily a place where there's a right and wrong answer, but it's a place to get us starting to think about, huh, there's something to this, there's something to this, and I start to develop a habit of being a little bit more skeptical, a little bit more likely to question, is there something more here that I should be exploring? Might I be missing something? Is there a different angle? Is there another way to look at it? And if our kids can get into those habits early on, whether they want to be engineers or lawyers or doctors or start their own business or create their own technology, that nuance will take them so far.
Emily:	26:43	Yeah, they've got to be able to realize how to look beyond just the surface level.
Colin:	26:50	It also creates this habit of inquisitiveness. Because one of the things I talk about a lot with critical thinking is I think in K-12 education, when we talk about critical thinking, we often reduce it to a set of critical thinking skills. But we struggle to actually talk about the idea that it's really about habits and mindsets like intellectual maturity and inquisitiveness and really being able to like have this almost as an instinct to be able to look at things deeply and to be able to like figure out why things are happening around you. For instance, in one of my parent workshops, I often bring up the example of, you go to the grocery store, you're checking out what does the cashier usually say to you?
Emily:	27:36	Paper or plastic.
Colin:	27:37	Okay, what else would they usually say?
Emily:	27:39	My producer Dave over here is trying to tell me like obviously I'm missing it, but he gets it.
Colin:	27:44	Did you find everything you were looking for? And I remember I do a lot of grocery shopping with my daughter who's seven, and I'm like, so Rose, do you know why they asked me that? And she's like, because you always forgetting stuff and you have a bad memory? I'm like, partially, but think about it. And why do they ask that same question hundreds of times every day to everyone that comes in here? And she's like, ah, maybe if you are having a hard time finding something? Like, good that's a good idea. Something like, yeah, I've been looking for this, but I

couldn't find it. Then they just would send a bag person to go get it because that's more money for them and it's me being more satisfied because I got what I wanted. The idea of appreciating why things are happening is so important because critical thinking is a precursor for innovation.

Colin: 28:30 If all we do is ask "what and how to," and we never ask "why and what if," we'll never get that next thing. And that's really something that when you think about the kind of agility and flexibility that our kids are going to need for their futures, it's almost like mandatory that they ought to be able to walk around and truly understand how to productively have that habit. That reflex of asking why and what if.

Emily: 28:59 You know, you mentioned parents. What are some other ways that parents can kind of integrate this into their daily conversations with their kids to kind of support this at home?

Colin: 29:09 This one kinda hits close to home. It's a little weird to actually say it out loud, but I think a lot of parents that, in the public eye and anyone's determination, we would call them like great parents. Sometimes end up doing an unintentional disservice to their children. And when I say like great parents, a lot of times when we put a lot of structures in for our kids, a lot of routines, when we set up a lot of things for them, we could unintentionally be creating a space where they're really not in an ideal situation to thrive, specifically when it comes to the idea of productive struggle. So when I think about what parents can do concretely when it comes to critical thinking, I think about the idea of purposely being less helpful. And that could be a hard thing to do because every part of your instinct wants to answer a question when a child gives it to you. But my answer for a question for my children, it's always to put it back on them.

Colin: 30:20 Daddy, why do you have... This is funny because I have a complicated family. So my daughter's like daddy, like why do you have all these people that you call mom? Why do we have so many grandparents? Well, why do you think we have a lot of grandparents? Put it back on her. She's picking up on it. She's like, ah, I don't know, but I'm opening up the door for her to start to think through this more deeply. A story from one of my colleagues who her ten-year-old asked her mom, "is Zootopia real?" And the funny part of having a 10-year-old that asks you if Zootopia is a real place, is you might think, well maybe I don't need to save for college for this one. What you really ought to think there is to just ask, "well, why do you think Zootopia is real?" And your child tells you that, well, I just feel like the way

that they're being kind of mean to the predators in that movie, and they're like doing that stereotype thing that we learned in school, it just looked a lot like real life. So I, I just wanted to know if it was real. And it turns out he wasn't trying to ask if it was real. He was trying to ask, "is this a satire?" But he doesn't have the vocabulary to say, "is this a satire?" But if all we did was like, "no, of course it's not real," not only do we shut up that curiosity, but we take away a real learning moment and a time for us to recognize the brilliance that our kids bring to the table.

Emily: 31:51 Thinking deeply about it, but we see it through our own lens.

Colin: 31:55 And a lot of times these are the same issues happening in K through 12 classrooms. So if I'm sitting at a table and there are five seats at the table and two are taken, what fraction of the seats are not taken? And the correct answer would be three out of five three-fifths, right? But if I took the test and I put two fifths is the answer, and I asked a teacher that marked it wrong, like, "Hey Ms Seale, why did I get this wrong?" A teacher's response right there tells me everything I need to know about whether this is a teacher who really understands how productive struggle works, or one who can stand to improve this practice. So if I ask you why I get this question wrong and your answer is to tell me, "well, if you read the question, it says how many seats are not being taken? You put how much are being taken? So the answer should be three fifths and not to fifths," that is a guaranteed way to just steal a lot of glory and a lot of learning from our kids. If instead I came up to you and said, "Hey, why did I get this wrong?" And you told me, "why don't you go back to your seat and figure out what you got wrong and come back to me later," that could work. Or if you said, "why don't you tell me what you did?" Maybe that could work too. All I know is that at some point I need to be able to walk through this as a learner and say, how much is not, "Oh, Oh!" I need my light bulb moment, and if you deny me the chance to get that light bulb moment, it's like stealing learning. It's not fair. It's not your role because that's where the growth really comes from.

Emily: 33:44 The other thing I can envision is how beneficial this type of learning is for our neurodiverse and twice exceptional learners, ADHD kids, right, who have, but they have this amazing divergent thinking that sometimes, you know, just kind of gets shoved to the side in a typical classroom. Or you know, those kids who are maybe on the autism spectrum and they're able to really analyze and dig in and look at things, you know, very deeply. Maybe some of those kids who maybe don't feel as

successful in those, those lanes that we have predetermined. Kind of like what you were talking about at the beginning, you know, it's like this is a way to get all kids and have them all be able to feel successful.

Colin: 34:22 I'm with you 100%. I'll give you a quick example. There was once a seventh grader who she had a lot of challenges. We had to do a lot of structures for her as part of her IEP. Very, very bright young lady. And I remember one day we were doing the question about a discrimination suit, and it was right, right when I first started ThinkLaw. And the question was asked, "what would be worse: if you throw a stick at somebody because they're Asian, or you throw a stick at somebody because they are wearing a purple shirt?" And the whole class is saying the Asian will be far worse because you know, that's racist and you can't control what race you're born in, and racism is bad. And then this one girl raises her hand and says I think the purple shirt will be far worse.

Colin: 35:13 And a lot of kids kind of look surprised, but I'm being patient. And I'm like, all right, so what makes you say that? And she explained that there are racist people in the world. We know that racism is a thing and that racists tend to do bad things. But if you're out here throwing sticks at somebody because they're wearing purple, your issues might be far more serious. And I stepped back and we all stepped back and we realized like, what are we missing when we fail to give our neurodiverse minds a place in our schools to be able to show and demonstrate their brilliance. Like what are we missing? What insights, what magic, is not being included? When we teach a lot of our kids that a lot of what they struggle makes them deficient. This is hitting home personally because last Wednesday I was diagnosed with ADHD as an adult, and as a child who went K through 12 education, college, grad school, and even in a workforce, struggling, I spent my whole life being called irresponsible, careless, not paying attention to details, feeling so like helpless.

Colin: 36:31 And realizing that one, why was it so easy for them to call me lazy, to call me a hot mess, instead of thinking like, what could I have used? What could have helped me to manage these struggles? What supports would I need? And when I think about this idea of reaching kids like me in the classroom, and thinking about like just, I mean just how differently would the world look if there were no stigmas attached to kids meeting more support in a classroom.

Emily: 37:02 Yeah. Yeah.

Colin:	37:04	So that's kind of what I'm here to grappling with still as an adult and try to figure out like how do I make sure that kids don't have to do so much just to make it through, but can actually get the supports that they need because adults are more aware of what it means to be twice exceptional.
Emily:	37:24	My benefit that I had was I had a mom who was a special educator who advocated for me and got me diagnosed as a kid. But now as an adult for you. Yeah. I imagine there's a lot of processing going on.
Colin:	37:37	Yeah. I mean, I'm going to be honest, I've been struggling with a lot of resentment over the last week or so because I understand that like what I've been able to do before this diagnosis. I understand that between being a lawyer, like a, a gap closing teacher starting this organization with ThinkLaw where we're working with schools in 23 different states and having a book published. I mean these are all things that are like is not like I had some severe deficiencies that completely held me back, but at the same time, you know what it feels like to have to spend hours every single day just being afraid that I'm forgetting something? To end all of my team meetings with like a five minute moment of silence just to make sure that nothing is being forgotten? To sit there and write a book but then have like two paragraphs to finish and take three weeks to do two paragraphs.
Colin:	38:41	Like it's so incredibly frustrating and hard and it's taken so much effort. I don't know. I'm so excited that you're out here raising awareness of what twice exceptionality is and I'm hoping that 2e finds its way into more of our general education classrooms so that it becomes more of common knowledge rather than more of an esoteric sort of topic but, would have been great 30 years ago but here we are.
Emily:	39:09	Well, and you know, don't forget the reframe. All of the things that you've been able to do. When you told me this, there was no part of me that was shocked, you know? But I think also the reframe is, why do you have those ideas? How do you have that motivation and that drive to go and pursue all of those different avenues, and Oh, I was in education and now I'm going to go to law school and now I'm going to write this book, but I had this passion, but what gives me those ideas are my divergent thinking. It is the ADHD. That's what drives that creativity. You wouldn't be you. You wouldn't have been able to accomplish those things without that. Is the societal and environmental factors that caused you to internalize those negative messages about yourself as a kid?

Colin:	39:54	I think about that a lot in terms of my background and I feel like a lot of times people that that survive the struggles in childhood, they, they grow up and they say, Hey, look how far I got despite all of these struggles and I'm with you 100% that I look at a lot of what I've done is because not despite. And I think that that can be something that definitely ties into professional success, but it really sucks to miss something really important for your children. It really sucks when you completely space out on something that's incredibly important in your household or in your family.
Colin:	40:34	So again, still grappling with it. I'm understanding that it's just kind of part of the complications of, of what makes me me and definitely I'm not feeling any shame at all about where I'm at. And to be honest, I'm kind of excited. It's almost a moment of awakening. I remember when I first started being honest about being the child of an incarcerated parent. Being able to say that out loud in public spaces, it created other like spaces for others to feel validated in their experiences. I didn't realize how common it was. That other people are in the same exact boat as me. And saying some things out loud does give people a lot of comfort. And I'm kind of leveraging into that as like part of the privilege of why I'm here, why I have this platform and what I can do to make a positive impact with that.
Emily:	41:30	So your book "Thinking Like a Lawyer" is coming out through Prufrock Press and it's available for preorder, but it's going to be released on April 30th, right?
Colin:	41:38	That's correct.
Emily:	41:39	And so where can our listeners find you?
Colin:	41:41	I tweet a lot @ColinESeale on Twitter. And if you want to like look into the work we're doing with ThinkLaw we always are sharing out different blogs about the critical thinking revolution and practical tips for teachers at our website, ThinkLaw.us. And the book is something that I'm really excited about because whether you're a parent, whether you're a school counselor, whether you're a K to 12 educator there's so many practical resources in that book and so many good examples of how from test prep to math or early childhood education, we can really start to think about a way that critical thinking does not have to be a luxury good. Anybody could teach it. Anybody can learn it and we'll truly start changing the narrative on who gets access to this crucial 21st century skill.
Emily:	42:35	Colin, thank you so much for your time today.

Colin:	42:39	Thank you.
Emily:	42:46	What is it that kids need from school to succeed in their lives? The one thing that every single student, gifted or not, needs to become an adult to help shape their local and global community. It isn't cursive or spelling or a college prep course load. It's not algebra two or to be fair, probably even algebra one. But every single kid should leave school with the ability to engage in thoughtful perspective taking, an openness to new data and facts and a drive to seek the truth. When we teach our kids to be critical thinkers, we create the foundation for everything else that they choose to be. I'm Emily Kircher-Morris. See you next time on Mind Matters. (music)
Dave:	44:32	Thanks again to our guest, Colin Seale of ThinkLaw.us. Thanks to our growing Patreon family for helping us keep the lights on and for providing the transcript for today's episode. You'll find it, along with helpful links, at mindmatterspodcast.com. For Emily, I'm executive producer Dave Morris. See you on the next episode of Mind Matters. (music) [inaudible].