

EXAMINING ETHICS

TRANSCRIPT – ERIK KENYON: PHILOSOPHY AT THE GYM

I'm Alex Richardson, and this is Examining Ethics, a show designed to bring insights from the cutting edge of moral philosophy and ethics education to the rest of us. When you picture philosophy, you might imagine dusty books, not a weight room full of teenagers. But for my guest today, that's exactly where his latest work began, with a student's joke during a lift that sparked a course and, eventually, a deep dive into how ancient Greek philosophy grew out of athletic training. In Athens, the gymnasium wasn't just for building strength. It was a hub for civic and moral education, where competition, discipline, and the pursuit of virtue went hand in hand. We'll explore how this challenges our image of philosophy as purely abstract, what sports culture can teach us about moral growth, and what it might mean to train for virtue, the way we train for strength. The book is *Philosophy at the Gymnasium*, and our guest is Erik Kenyon. Welcome to the show.

Thank you so much.

Yeah. It's great to have you. So let's start with you just introducing yourself and your work at a general level for our audience.

Sure. Yeah. So I'm a classics PhD. Spent grad school kind of geeking out over texts of Augustine just because I really liked Augustine. After that, got a job teaching at a liberal arts college in Florida. At that point, I guess when I'd started, I was going to the gym a lot in grad school, mostly just to, you know, escape my dissertation. While I was teaching, I would end up getting into discussions with students. And so that led to me being made adviser for a powerlifting club, which is, like, what eventually led to this course. During that time, I also got involved in the pre-college philosophy movement. So I would be teaching undergrads who would be reading, you know, Aristotle, Kant, Mill, Gilligan, this sort of stuff. But then taking picture books and art projects and going out and working with pre-K students. So that really took off, and COVID came and was sort of time to move on. So I decided to pursue that pre-college philosophy full time. So for since 2020, I've been teaching at an independent school in Massachusetts. So I teach sixth to eighth grade Latin, and eighth grade humanities, still kind of doing Augustine stuff and philosophy at the gym stuff and keeping busy with PLATO, which, you know, Alex, we know each other through the philosophy learning and teaching organization. Also a good acronym, so.

You open the book with a story about your own time in the weight room and the student's joke that led to a course and eventually the book. What do you think resonated so deeply with your students that the course took off the way it did?

Well, I guess first of all, you know, anybody who's spent some time doing powerlifting knows that it's mostly spent just sort of standing around and then you every once in a while do something for thirty seconds and then stand around more. So a lot of talking. And one particular day when the discussion got particularly intricate and my spotter, who's a student, just sort of laughed and said, you should teach a course, philosophy at the gym. So, you know, I think he was kidding. But at that point, we were coming up with new gen ed courses and I stopped and said, you know, there are all of these Socratic dialogues set in ancient gyms. Right? Because that's kind of where philosophers were. And when Plato came along and started his own school, he started it at the Academy, which was a gym. And he writes the Republic, which is all about this kind of mental health. And then Aristotle comes along and he starts his rival school at the Lyceum, which is, you know, another gym and talks about happiness modeled after an Olympic victor. So I was like, oh, there's all kinds of stuff we could do. And, you know, at that point, we're trying to come up with kind of quirky gen ed, very liberal artsy things. So I just like, yeah, why not? A class on philosophy at the gym. As for, you know, what really made students wanna take this class? I think it was probably the quirk value insofar as it defies expectations. And so I think, like, the key to a lot of good teaching is a sort of partial overlap with what's already familiar. So, you know, when it comes to this, like a lot of students, particularly student athletes, who get to sign up first and then fill the class, you know, they know all about the gym. And so they take the class thinking, oh, I know about what's gonna go on there. But then when they get there, they find out that, you know, gymnasium is Greek for the naked place because the Greeks worked out naked. It's like, whoa, what's going on here? So, you know, they're kind of brought in on something familiar. They're turned around and it's like, wait, what? But then they find out that, oh, well, what seems like a quirk actually has some substance to it. So, you know, the reason the Greeks worked out naked well, actually, we don't really know originally, but, you know, what they made of it was that it was very egalitarian. So if you were a citizen, you would come here and you'd shed your clothes and you'd shed all social rank, and you just compete. Meanwhile, there are students who are just, like, trying to process this whole, like, naked thing start thinking about, well, I'm in the gym. Like, well, I'm noticing who's wearing Lulu and who's got the newest Nike sneakers and, like, well, what does that really say about us? But now suddenly, they're looking at themselves from this perspective of, you know, some naked Greek dudes two and a half thousand years ago, like, kinda looking down their noses at, like, Lulu. So it kinda shakes them up. It gives them a new perspective and helps them sort of realize what they think of as normal is not necessarily the default. And it's just it was, like, one thing like this after another after another.

The gymnasium in ancient Athens wasn't just a space for physical exercise. It was also kind of central to their idea of civic and moral

education. So what do the Greeks see in physical training that modern educators might be overlooking?

And in terms of contemporary education, I think, you know, we know that the body and the mind impact each other, right? I mean, this is not news. I think the problem is we don't really follow it in practice. So, you know, Plato's Republic has this whole thing that before you can be a ruler, you need to get your character in line and that starts with this education in athletics and music. The idea is if you're gonna do all these athletics, it'll make you tough. But if you do only that, it'll make you kind of a meathead. If you do the music, it'll give you a sense of grace. But if you only do that, it'll make you kind of wishy washy. So you want this kind of, you know, back and forth. But, you know, fast forward to now, whenever there's a budget problem, like, the first things to go are music and athletics. And this was something that really struck me when we got to quarantine back in 2020. So academic classes, it's once you have this idea of like the academy was a gym, it's hard to unhear that. But you know, our quote-unquote academic classes all just went on to Zoom. But then we shut down athletics. We shut down music and theater. We shut down labs. We shut down parties. We shut down meal halls. And, like, just all those impromptu conversations that happen. So, you know, the fact that we could go to Zoom is amazing. Like, the Internet is amazing. The fact that we have podcasts is amazing. But still, the social connections were just kind of gone. And I think when, you know, you're really in the business of creating flourishing citizens, it just takes a more substantial connection. It takes this kind of embodied connection. And honestly, I think that's something that educators get. The trouble is politicians and administrators maybe don't. It's bottom lines. They just go for whatever they can get away with.

You point out that your students often come to philosophy through their athletic identities. What did they teach you about how moral questions land differently for people grounded in sports culture?

Yeah. Well, I mean, I've taught this multiple terms and, you know, had probably a hundred or more students. And I think in all that time, maybe two of them weren't actual student athletes. So it's basically all student athletes. But this is another one of those kind of partial overlap things since most ancient sports weren't team sports. Right? It's the sort of track and field. It's the wrestling. You know, I mean, wrestling is collaborative, but it's like the oppositional collaborative. So you would, like, compete for your city, but not on a team.

But on your own.

Yeah. Yeah. So I think, you know, when you get into contemporary philosophy of sports and sort of ethical thinking, there's a whole lot of stuff about teamwork. But that didn't really come into play. And

since it is just like, you know, you as an individual are competing, you know, maybe with support from others, the line between sports and gym training gets a little more blurry. And what did tend to come out was a lot of people just talking about being good at failure. And actually not just talking like you were saying, not just seeming egalitarian, but being egalitarian. And I had a couple of times and my editor didn't let me actually keep this in the book. But the contrast between honor students and student athletes was striking. I think particularly at the entry level where, you know, I'd teach a first year seminar for the honors program, and I'd get the kids who have done really, really well at the education system as it existed. And, you know, they write the papers, and I rip them up, and I give them back, and they hear it as really offensive. They're really offended and really defensive. Right? It's like, what do you mean? I'm a very good writer. I got a seven on the whatever. And everybody has always told me. It's like, oh, well, that's great. And, you know, now it's time to go and revise. And so we had to struggle quite a lot about that. You know, not all of them. And some of my honor students are student athletes. But then having a class that's all student athletes. I mean, these were, like, good at failing. Right? They're used to coaches. And, like, a good coach doesn't pat you on the head and tell you you're wonderful. They're gonna point out your problems, and you're gonna fix them, and you're gonna go work on them. So I think in that respect, they were really a joy. The other thing that I didn't see coming so, I mean, some of this stuff, like, yeah. Okay. Whatever. But athletics and transcendence, I honestly didn't see coming. So at the end of Aristotle, he talks about what psychologists today talk about as flow. So this is that idea of, like, you can be doing an activity and everything clicks and it's like time slows down and it's kind of like you're floating. So I was just talking to my class, like, oh, it's like this experience of great music, just sublime and it just washes over you and it feels like time just stops. And I just got all these blank stares. I'm like, what are you talking about? And finally, this woman on the swim team raised her hand and she's like, is it like when you're swimming and you're just like in the zone and just everything works? Yes, that. And then they all got it. And so like I thank her greatly and my section on Plato now starts with this example from her talking about swimming. And this idea of like finding a rhythm. So it's one of those, like, on the one hand, it's very embodied where, you know, if you're not doing it, really, I'm a horrible swimmer. So like I hardly ever do this, and I can tell that I'm fighting against it. But people who can actually coordinate this where their biology, the water, the timing, everything's just right. It's like this experience in time that latches onto rhythms, like numerical relationships that exists outside of, beyond, above time, whatever. I mean, it's this funny kind of thing that by like really embracing physicality, like feeling in your body what this feels like, you get a better leg up on this sort of transcendent stuff. So, you know, looping this back to Plato, he's got this whole idea that athletics and music give you an intuitive feel for wholeness. And that

and he says that's, like, lays the groundwork for later study of math. And so he's got the whole curriculum that's worked out around this stuff. And I think one of my most perfect classes I ever had, I took my philosophy to the at the gym class to the chapel. So I play pipe organ. And so we have this odd presentation where I use the organ to talk about, like, the physics of sound. So you can take organ pipes at different lengths, and, you know, it goes basically eight, four, two and two thirds, two, one and three fifths, one. There's just, like, eight divided by one, two, three, four, five, because that's how sound waves work. And then I had a student give a presentation, comparing classical sculpture to modern competitive physique in the role of fractions in either one of those things. So, the sort of the takeaway from all of this is that we're just hardwired to find whole number fractions compelling, attractive, which then raises all these questions about, okay, why? Like what the heck does that tell us about ourselves? And at that point, you're like, Plato wants to talk. So it ends up being this really neat inroad that I myself didn't see coming when I started teaching this class.

You describe what you call a trifecta of challenges facing modern education. They are cultural, governmental, and economic and these have eroded the place of character and values in schooling. How does ancient moral philosophy help us confront those challenges?

Yes. I mean, no education system is perfect. Right? And I think seventy years ago in The United States, our education system gave students a much clearer direction in life. But it was caught up in all these values that, you know, basically came from Protestantism about working hard, providing a better life for your family, that sort of stuff. And, you know, it has its pluses and minuses. But we've mostly moved away from that. And so now, like, particularly in the public school system, you don't really talk about religion, and with it, you don't really talk about values either. So it just kind of created this vacuum when it comes to, like, well, what am I gonna do with my life? Meanwhile, the costs of education have soared. The job market's been kind of wobbly for, you know, decades now. So by the time students get to college, they're really worried about return on investment and, you know, financial stability. And, you know, I'm not gonna fault that. Like, financial stability is an important part of life. The trouble is we've known and, you know, psychologists keep just reminding us that it's not the only part of life, and it's just there's all this other stuff that you've gotta get figured out too. But we seem to be just out to sea on, like, how are we going to approach that? So the culture wars, I think, in higher ed have been doing this for decades now. But it's been a kind of cold war which has heated up lately with our politics and just, you know, the government going after universities. And so you've got the sort of justice movement and then the anti woke movement. Like we've got DEI, now we're making DEI illegal. Do we pray in school? No. Don't pray in school. I mean, so it's just it's a mess. Right? And I think there's probably no one simple fix to any of it. So

I don't wanna, like, present this book as, like, here's the silver bullet. But I think, you know, in terms of providing resources that can work for us where we are right now, Greek moral philosophy is sort of weirdly well suited to be useful, not like not the only useful thing, but a useful thing. I think particularly because it doesn't fit our partisan divide and it like aggressively doesn't fit our partisan divide. So, historically, Aristotle in particular has been so important for the development of Jewish, Christian and Islamic thought, anybody who's done any medieval philosophy just can't overstate that. So it has really deep roots. But more recently, he's been trending with Marxists. And so, you know, when you kinda come to, like, is Aristotle a Democrat or Republican? It's just, like, the question doesn't even make sense. But if we move beyond all that, I think, you know, where Greek philosophy, maybe Aristotle in particular is useful is that we're all still human. And we can actually make something of that. Like we have a shared biology, we're social animals. We feel and reason in similar ways. We confront similar challenges in life. And so it's the shared humanity that philosophy starts with, and asks like, okay, well, how do we do all those things well? Right? And I think this is the kind of thing where it's not just like handing out answers, but just like framing the discussion. And I think this is the sort of thing that we all need to have more rigorous discussions about, particularly young people who are deciding, like, what they're gonna do with their education and, like, how that's gonna set them up for a successful life. And, you know, even just, like, what does a successful life mean? Like, these are the conversations we need to be having and taking the return on investment and putting it within this broader thing without just falling into this sort of partisan bickering that we're so good at.

You draw connections between ancient philosophical practice and contemporary movements like positive psychology. How do concepts like arete, the Greek for virtue and excellence, compare to modern ideas of purpose and well-being?

Yeah. So I guess maybe two concepts are the most central. So arete and eudaimonia. So, you know, these Greek terms. So arete is something like human excellence, virtue. I like the translation being good at being human because it invites the question like, what does that mean? Which, you know, we then spell out. Basically, it's being brave. It's being disciplined. It's being just. It's being wise. It's being a good friend. And then we have this whole other set of questions like, okay, well what do those mean? And whatever you say about that, the idea is that having those, being good at being human, get you ready for eudaimonia which is like happiness flourishing the best life for a human being. And, of course, there's a whole other discussion of like, okay. Well, what does that mean? So I think sometimes, like, particularly in sort of older scholarship, this can sound kind of self centered. You know, for me to say, like, the meaning of life is for me to be happy. Like, wait. What? Kind of runs up against, like, various

religious values. And, like, there's something to that, but I think this is one of those places context actually helps correct that in two ways. So first, like the gyms of Athens were a public resource, you know, funded by the public the way they did to raise citizens to serve the public good. And so Aristotle makes a big deal about this, that you need small groups to practice the social virtues. So it's kinda like today, if you're on a team, if you're in a sorority or a fraternity, The idea is you can't just become a citizen by going out into the world. You need a manageable thing. And honestly, in Aristotle's ethics, the virtue that gets the longest discussion, like a whole two books is friendship. And there's all this beautiful stuff where he talks about, friends working out together and doing philosophy together and drinking together. It's like, maybe it's not so dry as we thought. I think the other bit that I didn't see coming This is something I learned from my students, particularly one of them who is now an MD, and helped me out on a lot of recent literature on social determinants of health. Is just thinking about how the gym fits within broader thinking of health in antiquity. So when people work on this stuff, basically you can talk about health and disease in two different ways. Like, so one is that you think of disease as a thing, like a virus for an ancient Greek, it might be like a demon or something. So it's either a thing or it's some kind of imbalance. And, you know, today we tend to think of that as like an east versus west thing. But in the ancient western tradition, like, the idea of an imbalance was maybe the bigger idea. And so then about how do you, like, attain health? It's either like, oh, well, you get rid of the bad thing or you have to rebalance the system. And so, you know, Hippocrates is probably the most famous guy here. So, like, he had the four humors, phlegm, blood, yellow bile, black bile, which somehow line up with the four elements. And the trick is to keep them all in balance. And you know, like the particulars of those are just wrong. Like black bile doesn't exist. It's never existed. Today, we think about somebody who's healthy. It's like, well, their electrolytes and their neurotransmitters and, you know, various vitamins and whatever. Like those need to be in balance and if there's not, you're gonna be a mess. So I think the cool thing with Hippocrates that I didn't, that I kind of learned by working through this with students. Is how he talks about the interaction between the individual and the environment. So he's got various, you know, Hippocrates is like the founder of Western medicine, one of them anyway, talks about social determinants of health. So different climates changes within the seasons can all cause problems, you know, that's why when it's cold out in winter, you get a lot of phlegm. But, you know, whatever yeah. It's not actually true, but you can translate. And he responds to this by these different regimens of, like, diet and training and some drugs, which would mostly just make you vomit or something. The idea though is that this is all supposed to get you back into balance, But a dynamic like ever changing balancing act between the individual and the broader environment. So, again, taking Greek philosophy of putting it against this background. When Plato in his Republic says, oh, well, what is

justice? Justice is a form of mental and civic health. We have to understand that there's this whole background, that he's working against. So I think to really boil it down, the big idea from the Republic is that we can enter balance by finding a place within a balanced social environment. So to kind of unpack what you asked about. Today, if we're operating at the civic level and you wanna deal with homelessness as a problem, right? If you think of disease as a thing, well, then it's easy to deal with homelessness. You just take the homeless people and you send them somewhere else. If you think of disease as an imbalance, well, you're gonna ask a whole bunch of different questions. What are the systems that are causing people to be homeless to begin with? And how can we tweak the system to help support? I think at the individual level, a lot of positive psychology ends up saying the same thing. And, you know, they've kind of discovered this in the last few decades through empirical research. So if you talk about skill is what you're good at, interest is what you like, and then purpose is like some need out in the world. Our best psychology right now is, if you want a happy life, you just need to coordinate these things and figure out, you know, a way you can spend your time doing something you like that you're good at, that will actually help somebody else. So I mean, I came across all of this stuff actually collaborating with colleagues from psychology around an effort to revise our advising program. So the college I was at, it was all faculty advisors. And our real goal was to integrate academics and career preparation in a way that wasn't just like kind of silly and superficial. So we worked on all that and I had all this kind of in the back of my mind and then started reading The Republic again. And there are all these passages that I just kind of like glossed over, and I needed to, because just sort of everybody just glossed over them that suddenly just popped. It's like, oh, this makes so much sense. And then, you know, my students who are actually in this position of like, well, I need to figure out where I fit in the world. And, you know, it resonates with them too. And so it just turned into this whole new experience of reading The Republic for me.

Hi. I'm Tucker Sechrest, editor in chief of The Prindle Post, the institute's digital publication of public philosophy. Every week, we try to unearth the ethical questions raised by current events and get at the values hiding underneath our disagreements that never quite make it into the headlines. We're looking to get at the moral matter that gets left unsaid. That's what The Prindle Post is for. And we're looking for some writers to help us do it. If you've got a sharp take on a current issue, should billionaires be buying dinosaur bones, should e scooters require a driver's license, we wanna hear from you. We write for a general audience. No jargon. No SEO bait. Just clear, thoughtful writing that takes ideas seriously. Learn more and submit your pitch at prindleinstitute.org.

One striking theme in the book is the emphasis on practice and training. Not just in the gym, but in developing character, too. What

would it mean to treat ethics more like strength training?

Well, you know, there's sort of a joke today that people talk about practicing a religion or practicing medicine and it must mean that, you know, they're not very good at it yet. But that's only half a joke, right? I mean, hopefully it's a joke for doctors. But I think serious religious people get this, right? There's Ramadan, there's Lent, there's hundreds of similar disciplines where the whole idea is like, yeah, You're in this for life. Right? You gotta get on this. So I think, you know, strength training is a useful metaphor. First of all, because there's not a single way to be in shape. But there are also objective standards. Right? Because, like, human biology is, you know, kind of more or less a thing. So if you wanna be a distance runner, that's one kind of being in shape. If you wanna be a swimmer, that's another kind of in shape. I mean, depending what kind of swimmer. If you wanna be a powerlifter, it's another kind of in shape. So it's fun for teaching ethics, particularly from a pluralist standpoint. So, you know, you can have more than one way. Right? There's different cultures. There's different philosophical traditions. But at the same time, not anything goes. Right? And, you know, you can have that kind of plurality without falling into it's, like, just it's whatever you want. And I think the other thing is that you don't get in shape and then stop training. Right? So one of those bits where, I think, you know, strength training, like, moral training. Kind of more like eating. And this comes up in Plato's Symposium where there's Eryximachus, who's the doctor, he's kind of a pedant, but whatever, they still give him some profound things. And so he's talking about the cosmic power of love, which is this very elaborate thing. And he compares it to farming, which seems like a not very elaborate thing, but I think it's the same kind of thing. It's not like you can just feed the cows once and then you're done feeding. You gotta keep feeding the cows. Right? And so, yeah, bringing it back, I think just character development. You know, it's not a box that you check off and move on. And, you know, seriously, like, we get all these college students who are wrestling with these huge ideas and whatever they've decided when they're, what, 20. It's like, I'm not gonna hold them to this when they're, like, 40 or 50. And, like, honestly, I'd be kind of distressed if they thought the same thing thirty years later. It's like, come on. We can all grow. Right? These are all lifelong pursuits.

You suggest that philosophy itself can be thought of as a kind of spiritual exercise or mental discipline. What does this idea open up for non specialists or even skeptics where academic philosophy is concerned?

So I came around finally to just distinguish between two kinds of rigor. And I think, you know, philosophy needs to be rigorous. But there's the kind that you get in grad school which tends to go really narrow. Right? And you spend your time just kind of arguing with

footnotes in German, and that's what you do. Right? And it's I mean, I love it. It's beautiful. But then when you come to teach and, you know, particularly to advise, particularly in a liberal arts context, it really requires you to go broad. And this is not the kind of thing you do when studying philosophy in grad school. But I think it can be done just as rigorously. It's just a different kind of skill set. Right? So the question is, like, where does philosophy fit? And I think there may be more basic question. It's like, what is philosophy? I kinda like this idea that it's a disciplined approach to questions that matter whose answers are, you know, unclear, at least at the moment. And so that's a kind of movable target. And, you know, honestly, philosophy used to cover a lot more ground than it does now. You know, if you're reading Plato and Aristotle, they're doing physics, they're doing biology, they're doing psychology, they're doing rhetoric. But, you know, as time goes on, people made enough progress in those that they kinda handed them off and they became their own specialties. So today, you know, philosophy, like contemporary philosophy proper is, like, much more narrow. The tricky thing is that, you know, while education's been doing this, kind of the world in general and maybe kind of knowledge as a whole has become more and more fragmented, which just brings up these new questions about, like, how do all these different specialties fit together? And, like, how do I, as an individual, navigate all this stuff out there in the world? So I think this is one of those bits where it's sort of older conception of philosophy that's much more kind of all over the place, can actually be useful. Right? So it's like skills to help you think on your feet, to run a question rather than away, to be flexible in your beliefs, Change if the situation changes. That's the kind of thing that the world can use a lot more of. And then, you know, the ancients can actually help us with this as we move into the future.

You've taught some of this material, not only in college classrooms, but also in venues like middle schools. What have younger students shown you about the relevance or maybe irrelevance of Greek moral philosophy?

Yeah. So, you know, as I mentioned, my book's discussion of Socrates, begins with this set in the gym, Laches, which raises the question, you know, what is bravery? And I mean, I guess I've been doing this independent school thing for five years now, and I think this is the one that keeps coming back. And in that time, I've had this great opportunity to work with an even broader age than just middle schoolers. So starting with our four year olds. You know, we'll go in there. We'll give them sort of games to play blindfolded. We'll have them discuss picture books. We'll have them paint pictures of times they were scared and talk about, like, oh, well, were you safe? Were you brave? For what it's worth, bikes. Like, learning to ride a bike. That, like, that that comes up a lot. So, you know, I think for a four year old, bravery is bikes. But the great thing is that their conception of bravery and the discussions just, like, develop and

mature, like, as they do. So, my school also runs a summer camp. We have a ropes course. I'm one of the facilitators. And, like, yesterday, I was running the giant swing. So this is it's kind of like a modified zip line where you can decide how high you wanna go. Had a couple of kids who were terrified of heights. And, you know, I shared with them, like, I am too. Like, I'm happy to be the guy running the thing on the ground. I'll help you. I'll keep you safe, but, like, I am not going out there. But, anyway, before we get into this, you know, the kids are all discussing, like, I'm gonna go this high. I'm gonna go higher than you are. And I said, okay. Let's think about this for a second. So maybe we got two people. One of them goes not very high at all. Doesn't seem very impressive, but stops there because she's really just terrified of heights. Another one goes as high as possible because she thinks this is fun. Now, which one of them is being the more brave and which one of them do you think actually needs the more praise? And then we had a discussion. And then we actually went and did the thing. Right? And then kind of recapped. And sort of as a last thought here, one of my eighth graders who just finished last year ended up like really just gravitating towards this idea. He kind of became our mental toughness guy and had like end of the year projects where he would weave together ideas from like bits of the Laches and some later stoic stuff that we'd read in Latin class. But then you talk about pushing through his own failures on the basketball court and then relate this to ideas of leadership and purpose in Viktor Frankl's Holocaust memoir. And I think, like, the really beautiful thing about this is that in all of this, he used his own voice. So it was like wrestling with these ancient texts helped him strengthen his own ideas. And, you know, this is the kind of learning that I've been aiming for all along.

This has been a conversation with Erik Kenyon about his new book, *Philosophy at the Gymnasium*, available now from Cornell University Press. Erik, thanks so much for coming on the show.

Yeah. Thanks so much, Alex.

Examining Ethics is hosted and produced by Alex Richardson and brought to you by the Janet Prindle Institute for Ethics at DePauw University. Our editorial assistant is Chiamaka Ndubwuokwu. The views expressed here are those of our guests and don't reflect the position of the institute or of DePauw University. Our show's original theme is by Bailey Rent and Ty Wemhoff with additional music by Blue Dot Sessions. You can learn more about today's episode and check out supplementary resources at examiningethics.org. As always, you can contact us directly at examiningethics@depauw.edu. Thanks for listening, and we'll see you next time.

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