

PHEBE HIBSHMAN

Author · Director · Educator

Author - *The Classroom Students Crave - The New Paradigm for K-12 Education*

Creating the safe conditions for Optimal Learning

theclassroomstudentscrave.com

SPEAKER SESSION

Safe Enough to Try: A Theatre Director's Playbook for Safer, More Connected Classrooms

Available as a keynote, a 60–75 minute interactive breakout, or a half-day workshop.

THE SESSION

Teachers are burning out, students feel unseen, and “safety” too often means hardware and lockdown drills. But the most protective force in any building is connection — and few people build connection on purpose better than a theatre director. For 25 years, Phebe Hibshman created rooms where strangers felt safe enough, within minutes, to take real risks together. This interactive session turns the director's toolkit — ensemble-building, presence, ritual, structured debriefing, and reading a room in real time — into concrete practices for belonging, engagement, and de-escalation. Grounded in school-safety research, including U.S. Secret Service NTAC findings and The Violence Project, it shows why classrooms where students feel known are classrooms where warning signs surface early. Attendees leave with strategies they can use Monday morning.

WHAT ATTENDEES LEAVE WITH

- A way to establish psychological safety in the first five minutes of any class
- Theatre-based debriefing and de-escalation techniques that calm conflict instead of escalating it
- A connection-and-reporting culture aligned with behavioral threat-assessment best practices
- Sustainable presence practices that protect teacher energy and reduce burnout

IDEAL FOR

K–12 teachers, administrators, counselors, social workers, SEL and school-climate leaders, and youth workers. No theatre experience required.

ABOUT PHEBE

Phebe Hibshman is an author, theatre director, and educator with more than 25 years of experience. Classically trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and a member of Actors' Equity and SAG, she performed professionally and worked with the Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger before spending decades leading, directing and teaching youth across independent, public-arts, and faith-based schools. She brings a working artist's instinct for human connection to the urgent question of keeping students engaged, seen, and safe.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The Classroom Students Crave - The New Paradigm for K-12 Education -

Creating the safe conditions for Optimal Learning is a practical guide to teacher wellbeing, student belonging, classroom craft, and school safety. Copies are available for signing, and the author welcomes bookstore and author-table arrangements.