

Season 5, Episode 1: Making Environmental Messages Stick

Host: ESF President Joanie Mahoney

Guest: Dr. Benette Whitmore

Dr. Benette Whitmore: How we communicate science beyond the confines of the university or the academic world because it really helps to bridge that gap between all the wonderful work that's being done at ESF with audiences that otherwise may not have access to that information.

I was thinking, why don't I do something that would not only draw on my interest in dialogue and story, but also be helpful to the students. Because I can bring that work to my classes and share it with my students who are going to be doing similar kinds of work.

Food and the environment are really linked and met. Wow. Maybe I could do a podcast about these young people who are interested in the environment and also food.

Joanie Mahoney: Welcome to season five of Campus Conversations: The podcast. I am Joanie Mahoney and I have the honor of serving as SUNY ESF's President. ESF is a small college with big ideas, and this season I'll be speaking with faculty, students, and staff who make ESF mighty. They are the people working to improve our world and sustain the environment.

Today I'm excited to welcome Dr. Benette Whitmore from ESF's Department of Environmental Studies. In addition to her teaching role at ESF, Benette works to reach the next generation of environmental champions through storytelling. In this episode, we're going to talk about how storytelling and fun our effective ways to make messages resonate.

Dr. Benette Whitmore has spent the majority of her career at ESF. She joined the college in 1993 as an assistant professor in the Writing Program. She has since held the titles of Writing Program Director and chair of the Department of Environmental Studies. She's currently coordinator of the advanced Graduate Certificate in Science and Environmental Communication and Public Relations Management. She was instrumental in launching a Digital Storytelling Studio at the college, so it's fitting that the first episode of the podcast in the new storytelling space is here with you, Dr. Whitmore. So thank you for joining me and welcome to the podcast and

Whitmore: Thank you. It really is thrilling to see how this has all come together.

Mahoney: So I was saying it's fun to have an idea and then to see it grow because it started as a space that was carved out and then people saw the benefit of having this available, this digital storytelling, and then it grew into its own

space in Moon Library and now is in state-of-the-art space. This is very quiet in this room.

Whitmore: It really is.

Mahoney: Yes. The team that had to edit and produce this had to do it around a less than state-of-the-art space until now. So this is really cool and I'm glad to be here with you to share it.

Whitmore: Thank you so much. Yeah, it's been really exciting to see how things have progressed and when we first envisioned the idea of a Digital Storytelling Studio, it came out of a course I was teaching in Science Communication where we were involved with Planet Forward, which we can talk about a little bit later if you want. And the students were preparing projects for that to submit to their annual StoryFest. And I just made an assumption at that time that students would know how to create either a podcast or a video. And I was wrong because I think that even though students at that time, which was probably about five years ago, they're doing a lot with their phones, they're doing a lot of video, they're recording things, but as far as developing a storyline that's like a story arc and also doing the editing, they really didn't have those skills. So I was really surprised to hear that.

Mahoney: And when I came to visit you for the first time, you were chair of the department and we saw the space and I immediately saw the benefit as part of an education to be able to do these things in really any field, but especially in one when you're trying to urgently educate people about why all of the work we do here at ESF is important and for students to be able to go out into the world with those skills. What a gift to our students this studio is.

Whitmore:: I totally agree. And there are a lot of job opportunities for content creators now. So students are gaining those skills through the Digital Storytelling Studio. And also your point about how we communicate science beyond the confines of the university or the academic world because it really helps to bridge that gap between all the wonderful work that's being done at ESF with audiences that otherwise may not have access to that information. So that's what I see the beauty of storytelling.

Mahoney: I've found, and I'm sure you have in my career, that most people want to help and want to do the right thing, but when you confine all of the information to science journals and people hear on the news, the climate is changing and there's these massive effects that you're seeing all over the world from a changing climate, but you don't communicate outside of, as you said, the university so that they have some power, some agency and can pitch in. People will do what needs to be done if we can tell them how

to do it. And this reaches a much more broad audience. So I think it's life-changing.

Whitmore: I agree, I think so. And we can give people information, we can give them statistics, but when they hear the human stories associated with climate change or other issues related to the environment, it just makes a much more deep impact.

Mahoney: I wanted to start, though, with you. Where are you from? Where you, because I know you went to college in Canada.

Whitmore: I did.

Mahoney: Were you raised in Canada? Where are you from?

Whitmore: No, I Am from Camillas, New York.

Mahoney: Okay, so you're a Local.

Whitmore: Yes, I am. A local person. Wanted to have a different experience, so I did apply to Queens University in Kingston and was accepted and went there and did kind of a liberal arts degree.

Mahoney: So you didn't start out in the environmental space in particular.

Whitmore: I will say, Joanie, I was in the first Earth Day. I did participate. I was a young teenager and I remember going to pick up trash at a local space that was outdoors. And so I was really conscious of the environment and I remember driving through places where I would see sort of pollution coming out of smokestacks and it would really bother me in a pretty deep way. So I think I've always been conscious of the environment, but I didn't go to study environmental issues. My career has been mostly in education and also sociology, psychology and more the humanities.

Mahoney: And writing.

Whitmore: And writing, yes.

Mahoney: Which is so key to everything that we do here. Yes, we have had teams of faculty on the podcast in the past and they all talk about how communication is a big part of what they're doing and people have different areas of expertise and passing it off at some point to people with an expertise in communication to translate what this is and write it down and share it is key to the science that's being done here at ESF. But I would describe myself similar to you, I grew up here. I probably participated in Earth Day starting in my teens. I was affected profoundly by the trash, and

you would drive down the highway and see the puffs of black smoke that would come out of trucks and I had the benefit of being in a family with an uncle who was the president of the American Meteorological Society. He was a director at NOAA, and I was fascinated by the works. And then when you can start to see real impacts and it's not just a bad idea and it doesn't seem right, but you can go all the way to this, is quantifiably a problem. Then it became much more of an everyday passion for me. And I would imagine being at a college like ESF and then really learning the things you've learned. You can combine your liberal arts degree in sociology and communication and writing with a real passion for the environmental work.

Whitmore: Yeah, and I think as you mentioned, I'm glad to hear that you're hearing from other people the value of communication in the world and in their disciplines because it is so important. I mean, it is something that is entrenched in all the work that's being done at ESF. And I know that the NSF now, the National Science Foundation, when people apply for grants, they often want to know how are you going to communicate this research beyond your college? How are you going to get it out into the public? And so it is something, I think there's a consciousness that's been created more recently about how valuable that is.

Mahoney: The same is true for the NSF grants asking what impact are you going to have outside of the college and how will this impact the broader community that you're in?

Whitmore: Yes.

Mahoney: So this certainly goes along with that. So you started here in the early nineties on the faculty?

Whitmore: I did. So I started out in the writing program and taught academic writing, the composition courses and also technical writing or professional writing, and I really enjoyed it. And I also ran the Writing Center, which is really interesting to me because this Digital Storytelling Studio is a similar model in that it's the one-on-one sort of attention that people get. And same in the writing center, is that people that want to improve their writing skills would go there and get attention paid to the work that they were doing. So I worked in the Writing Center. I was on the faculty in the writing program, and then the Writing Program became part of Environmental Studies department. So I was really involved with advocating for things to happen in the Writing Program when I was director of the Writing Program. And then went on to become the interim chair of Environmental Studies because we were part of the Environmental Studies department, and Valerie had become the associate provost at that time. So that led me to become the permanent chair of Environmental Studies. And so I really, for a while there, I got more into administration because as you know, it's a pretty heavy role

to have where you're taking care of, trying to create an environment where people can do their best work was always my goal. That's a lot. That's pretty intensive. So I got away from my creative work for a while because I was just really focused on doing that work.

Mahoney: It's time-consuming to be an administrator, and there's a different set of skills I would imagine. I have not been a member of the faculty, but I will say it seems like one of the most difficult jobs to stand up in front of a group every three times a week or two times a week and teach in a way that lands and can be translated by the student. But you take that and go to the administration and it's a whole different set of skills that you need. Did you enjoy your time as chair?

Whitmore: I did. I really liked getting to know the faculty on a different level, and I liked envisioning different possibilities for the department and carrying. I'm really more of an idea person, I think. And so coming up with different possibilities or hearing them from the faculty and then trying to carry through to make those a reality, that's really exciting.

Mahoney: I agree. And I think the vision is one of the most important things that you need to be in a role like that. You need to see where you want to go and then do the work on the daily basis to get there. But it can be frustrating. You do need patients. Sometimes it feels like two steps forward, one step back, but when you turn around and look at all of the progress you've made, it's pretty gratifying.

Whitmore: I totally agree. And I think sometimes it is like you have a vision and you want to achieve it, but there are sometimes obstacles to getting there. So you have to really stay focused and not let those obstacles stop you from getting to where you want to in the end.

Mahoney: I always call it knocking down the barriers, just whatever the next barrier is, you just have to work to knock that one down. And the focus is important because if everybody's priorities become your priorities, then you don't have the ability to get to the goal line on that vision. So you really need to be disciplined about what's the next step that I need to do to get to where it is I'm trying to go. And I would imagine you did that with this Digital Storytelling Studio.

Whitmore: And there was some resistance, I will say in the beginning, because our first studio was actually in Marshall Hall before we went over to the library and there was a room that we used. We had a couple different conference rooms, and one of them I was thinking, this will be perfect. It was right across the hall from where we are now, and I thought this would be perfect for the Digital Storytelling Studio. And some of the faculty were thinking, oh, I don't know if we want to sacrifice that space to becoming the Digital

Storytelling Studio. Then we give up. Sometimes we have classes in there. And I just was like, I think we can make it happen. It'll work, it'll work out. And those kinds of obstacles we could overcome. And then just thinking about how do we really do this? How do we bring together the equipment we need? So we had Jim Sam helping us. He came over and they had some funding from the technology, the technology end of things, and he was able to provide some computers. Jason Kohlbrenner, this is really funny because at the time he worked at Syracuse University and Brandon from Outreach said, oh, he'd be a good person to advise you on what kind of equipment you should get. So Jason came over, and so we met those many years ago as we were developing the initial ideas, and it was great. And he said at the time, oh, if there's ever an opportunity to work here, I would love to be part of this. And I said, oh, we'll keep you in mind. And sure enough, here he is

Mahoney: Producing this podcast for us

Whitmore: Producing this podcast.

Mahoney: Yeah, I love that story.

Whitmore: Yeah.

Mahoney: Another story that I love and I like to have the opportunity to brag about our students is what you referred to briefly at Planet Forward. So were you the person that started ESF's involvement with the Planet Forward?

Whitmore: I was on the ground floor with it, but I wasn't the one that first heard about it. But I think it's been a really great partnership with them to be involved with Planet Forward, their theme being inspiring stories to move the planet forward. And I think that just really is really reflective of what we do here on a daily basis.

Mahoney: That's perfect. Yeah. So tell people who don't know what Planet Forward is, where it is, and how ESF now intersects with it.

Whitmore: Okay. So Planet Forward is a consortium of colleges that are also dedicated to the idea of using storytelling to convey stories about the environment that are impactful and meaningful to people. And it's through George Washington University in DC. And Frank Cesno is a person that was, he still is a pretty well-known journalist, and he's on the faculty there in their communications area.

Mahoney: He was from CNN, right?

Whitmore: Yes. He's been on CNN. Yep. And so we've been going down, they have a yearly big workshop event, and they have a story fest where we can submit

stories that our students have created in digital format. It could be a video, a podcast, it could be even a written story, like a blog or something. And we've had some pretty good successes. I think we've had at least three winners.

Mahoney: It's incredible.

Whitmore: It's amazing.

Mahoney: And when you look at the other colleges that are competing with our students and our students are coming out time and time again at the top of the heap.

Whitmore: I know. And then really the cherry on the top of the Sunday is that the winners get to go on these unbelievable trips. And so our students have gone to the Galapagos and different opportunities like that. It's so amazing.

Mahoney: And here's this small college that we love that we all feel like we're part of a family. And then we go out into the world and realize over and over and over again how well we compete and what level of excellence is happening here at ESF. It's really encouraging because over and over in a lot of different areas, when ESF goes out in the world to compete, and you see it in our rankings, we come out on top. And I tried to make the point at our last Board of Trustees meeting that those rankings are wonderful and they feel good, and I like to shout them from the rooftop, but it's the people here that are doing the work that leads to those rankings in a lot of our academic and non-academic units, there's excellence. SUNY is recognizing employees all across the college for being excellent at what they do. And it's that results in us having these wonderful rankings.

Whitmore: Yeah, you've captured it so well. It is. What I love about ESF is it's a smaller school, but I don't know, there's a lot of connections being made, and I think even more so between the departments and a lot of collaborations and our students are amazing, as we would all agree. It's like at the top of the list and it's great.

Mahoney: And I think these cluster hires will foster more of that collaboration. We hired 24 faculty in the last year, which is a big number for us here at ESF.

Whitmore: It's such a diverse group. We've come a long way and we continue to grow, and it's terrific.

Mahoney: I know I saw a social media post that had a whole bunch of photos, and it really does take, take a step back because started out working, I'm a lawyer and I started out working in a law firm and then as an assistant DA, and I was one of very few women. And pretty much every role I've had in my

career, I've been outnumbered significantly by men, but not here at ESF, our student body. I mean, one of the first touch points here was that ESF was graduating the highest percentage of women engineers of any of the engineering programs in the country. And now this list of new faculty is dominated heavily by women. And there's women chairs here, women in leadership roles,

Whitmore: People of color too. International people.

Mahoney: Yeah, I know.

Whitmore: Fantastic.

Mahoney: I love it.

Mahoney: I feel very lucky to be here with all of you at ESF.

Whitmore: Well, we are lucky to have you.

Mahoney: Thank you.

Whitmore: Yes.

Mahoney: So then after you left the role as chair, what was next for you?

Whitmore: Well, so then I had to regroup because I went back onto the faculty and the faculty are expected to do research. My research is not like most people on this campus. I call it creative research within the humanities realm. And so I started to think about what do I want to do? I was really excited because as I had said before, being entrenched in the administrative role, it just didn't give me the capacity to be doing much in that area. And I've always really enjoyed writing dialogue. So I was thinking, why don't I do something that would not only draw on my interest in dialogue and story, but also be helpful to the students because I can bring that work to my classes and share it with my students who are going to be doing similar kinds of work and also maybe get my students involved. And I have had a couple of students involved in the podcast, which I can tell you about later.

Mahoney: Oh, I really want to hear about that, but I don't want to brush past that. Because that moment where you have served the college well and you're being relieved of those administrative duties and then having a moment to think is such a gift.

Whitmore: It was.

- Mahoney:** So many people just go through what we refer to as the rat race, and they just never get that transition to say, alright, now I'm going to have a different set of pressures on my time. What do I want to do? It would be valuable for all of us to take time
- Whitmore:** To reassess.
- Mahoney:** To reassess, yes,
- Whitmore:** Yes. And not to feel that you're at the end of the road. You're really at the beginning of the road, just a new road.
- Mahoney:** Exactly. Which way are you going to turn?
- Whitmore:** Which way will you turn?
- Mahoney:** So that then has morphed or deliberately resulted in you having your own podcast. When did you write your books?
- Whitmore:** So I've been writing children's books for quite a while, and so I started really as my children were growing up, I was writing books that were really age appropriate for them. I've published about seven books and some with major publishers like Random House and Bloomsbury that does the Harry Potter series, and also with some smaller publishers that are environmentally focused or just more niche kinds of publishers.
- Mahoney:** So is the podcast then an extension of that conversation you were already having?
- Whitmore:** So I had written scripts. I wrote 35 episodes of a TV show for PBS called Pappy Land.
- Mahoney::** I know Pappy Land!
- Whitmore::** Yes. Oh, it's so funny because we went to dinner with a candidate and one of the faculty from Upstate came and she said, I saw that you wrote for Pappy Land and I just had to meet you. It was so funny.
- Mahoney::** My kids were little when Pappy Land was on, and certainly I remember that. So I didn't realize your role as a
- Whitmore:** I was a writer. So I was a work for hire, so I didn't come up with the concept or anything, but through the work that I was doing, I was doing some video editing at a local station, and then he remembered that I was interested in how one things leads to the other. He knew that I was interested in writing for children, and he said, oh, we're kind of behind the eight ball and would

you be able to come in and help us with these scripts? And I said, sure, because I love to write dialogue. How fun. It was really fun. So they would give me what's called a treatment, and a treatment is kind of a summary of who the characters are, what the theme is, what the main plot is, and I would just kind of flush out the dialogue and I would crank these things out. Joanie and my kids were small. I don't know how I did it.

Mahoney: I know!

Whitmore: I would just go into the room and click, click, click. And so I did that and it was great. Well, anyway, fast forward. That was a long time ago,

Mahoney: Right? I know. My son is 28, so it sure was. It

Whitmore: Was a long time ago. So fast forward to this idea that I had of this podcast, and I thought, I'm going to approach WCNY as the local PBS affiliate and see if they might be interested in broadcasting it. They remembered the station manager, Ron Lombard, remembered that I had worked on Pappy Land and he said, we'll give you a shot at it. So I worked with Jason and Tyler, it's been kind of a producer of the podcast too, and envisioning this. And we put together the first episode and we actually recorded it at WCNY, but then came back and Jason edited it and they loved it, and they said, okay, we're going to start this community FM station and we'd love to feature you on this station. And we said, okay, great. So now we're in our second season and it's been great. We've had over 150 views on our social media.

Mahoney: That's great. I see you on social media, but tell people about the podcast. What is it called, and then what is the theme?

Whitmore: So it's called Funky Foodies, and I came up with the idea because I've been interested in food science and food studies, which is becoming a really important discipline. I know the Falk College at SU has a major in Food Studies and our own Environmental Studies faculty also study this or they work, they collaborate with other people that are interested in food studies. And food and the environment are really linked in many ways and so on. So I thought, wow, maybe I could do a podcast about these young people, these tweens who are interested in the environment and also food and how can I bring that together? Well, the other cool part of this was I reached out to a food blogger called Budget Bites, and they're interested in, you really have to visit their website because they have wonderful recipes that use minimal ingredients. So it's inexpensive. The woman started it when she was in college and didn't have a lot of money to spend on food. And so anyway, she's built this, she's out of Nashville and she's built this incredible blog and they have over 500,000 viewers. Yeah, I had asked her, would you want to partner with us on this podcast? I don't ever let anything stop me. You know what I mean? I'm like, why not? Why not? I love that.

- Mahoney:** I mean, if she says, no, you're exactly where you started.
- Whitmore:** Totally right.
- Mahoney:** So why not ask?
- Whitmore:** But she did say Yes.
- Mahoney:** Excellent.
- Whitmore:** So they've been pushing out our weekly episodes, and that's been getting us a lot of attention. It's been amazing. Plus they give me a recipe that connects with the theme of each episode. So if you go to the website, which is funkyfoodies.org, they can see each week there's a new recipe that they could even try out. And they're kid-friendly so kids can make them and their recipes that kids would like.
- Mahoney:** I love it, and I love the social media around it. That is, I don't know who's doing your social media, but it's really compelling. It really makes you want to tune in. It looks like fun.
- Whitmore:** It is fun. And the great thing about our social media is it's being handled by a student from ESF, Sammy Cavalier, who is now in the program of science edit at Syracuse University that we're kind of
- Mahoney:** Partnering on
- Whitmore:** Partnering on. So she started last year and she wanted to continue. So she's still involved with it. So it's really great.
- Mahoney::** That is great. And I am aware of this program that you just referred to, but our students can work on a master's at Syracuse with a path toward becoming a science teacher, and they get a discounted tuition rate at Syracuse.
- Whitmore:** Yes, they do. So after graduating here, they have to have a certain minimum amount of number of credits in the sciences, and then they can go to SU and in a year become certification-ready for New York State to be certified as a teacher. So it's a really quick program, and they do get a reduced tuition.
- Mahoney:** And that's great because I mean, our students have to be really well prepared for that, and it serves a real need broadly for science for science teachers. That's a great partnership too. And I hope that we're doing a good job, make a note of it, but we need to make sure that our students are aware of that opportunity.

- Whitmore:** I think many of our students are interested in going into teaching, and it's great because if they already are living in Syracuse, they don't have to give up their apartment, they can the end of the spring start with SU.
- Mahoney:** I know some of the partnerships that we have by virtue of our proximity with Syracuse, are really valuable to our students.
- Whitmore:** They really are. It's such a benefit.
- Mahoney:** I was talking to Professor Malmshemer about the three plus three with the law school also, and I would love to go back and be able to do college for a million reasons. I know, but not the least of which is that kind of thing because we all did it sequentially. Right. Nobody probably cut off any time for you.
- Whitmore:** No, no, exactly.
- Mahoney:** Me either. Me either. So I want to pivot back here to ESF. So that's all sort of on the side, but you bring it into your teaching.
- Whitmore:** Yes, I do.
- Mahoney:** And you're getting your students involved?
- Whitmore:** Yeah. So I teach a course called Creative Responses to the Environment. So that course is really about what are the different ways using the humanities that we can communicate information about the environment, whether it's photography, film, I know comics. I heard that you had a connection to that course.
- Mahoney:** Yes. I was thinking that when you were talking. I have a son who is a Syracuse University student, got a minor here at ESF, but then went on and took even more classes here because he loves ESF and that interest of his is in the environment, and we probably would've been a better fit for him. I mean, he enjoyed his experience as a Syracuse student, but he just took a class, one of his last classes that he needed to earn his bachelor's. He used his elective to take a class using comics as a communication in this environmental space. He loved it. I mean, when people would come around our house and just be visiting, he would tell them about this class and how interesting it was. And unlike anything he had seen before, and he loved it. And because he was taking it as a final elective, he just needed the credits to finish his bachelor's. He was transferring it back there, so he only needed a C or better to transfer it. But I think he got an A in the class because he just absolutely loved it. And he would have done more of it if it had been available. And it's so gratifying to see that spark in your kids.

- Whitmore:** It sure is. Wow, that sounds really exciting. I heard about the course and I was hoping that it would fly. I know it was a summer course, but I think they had a pretty good enrollment and everything too. So it's great.
- Mahoney:** I know my son loved it, and he now is in law school and wants to start an environmental club at the law school and would like to intern in law firms that have a specialty in environmental work. And all of that came because we talk about how great it is for our students to have these partnerships and these opportunities at Syracuse. But the reverse is true. He's a student at Syracuse and earned his minor here and found his passion here. And now that is the path that he's on. And that is something the chancellor at Syracuse has recognized too. It's really valuable for them to be able to tell potential students that you have access to this, to
- Whitmore:** ESF. It's reciprocal. It really is.
- Mahoney:** And we have a national reputation that it's a value add at Syracuse certainly as well.
- Whitmore:** Yeah, I agree.
- Mahoney:** So what's next for you?
- Whitmore:** Okay, so I will continue with this season because now Jason is working on editing each of the episodes. So I think we're on number seven. There's 10 episodes altogether. So I was able to secure a literary agent, which is very difficult. I read that one in 6,000 people get an agent. It's very competitive.
- Mahoney:** Wow! Congratulations.
- Whitmore:** So I was able to get this great opportunity to work with an agent, and I had pitched to her the idea of taking the podcasts and transitioning them, recast them into a novel. So I'm going to be working with an editor once I get it to a certain point, and then we'll try to send it out, see what happens.
- Mahoney:** And do you have deadlines now that you have an agent and an Editor in waiting?
- Whitmore:** I got a new puppy, Joanie, so this is derailed everything. My original goal was to have everything done and ready by the beginning of October. I'm about halfway done. I think I'm maybe by end of October if I can find the time to really focus on it. And then, yeah, but the agent doesn't tell me you need to get it done by a certain time.
- Mahoney:** Okay. That's what I was wondering, because it's got to be difficult to be creative on demand and that's what I have heard in that space with literary

agents and authors that are missing deadlines. And I think how can you on demand be creative?

Whitmore: No, that would be hard for me, I think. Yeah, because it's the first book of this, what could be a series. I don't think there's the pressure. I think if you get a book out and people are wanting more immediately, then you probably do have more of those pressures.

Mahoney: Well, I hope then that you have those pressures in the future.

Whitmore: Yeah, me too. I look forward to the pressures.

Mahoney: No, that's really great. So keep us posted on that.

Whitmore: I Sure will.

Mahoney: And before we conclude our conversation, I feel like we could talk for a lot longer, but how about your new dog?

Whitmore: Oh, well, I got a little Corgi puppy from an organic farm that was out in Canastota. It was just kind of a whirlwind of a situation, but yeah, but he's really sweet. I'm just crazy about him, but they're very demanding. I don't know what to say.

Mahoney: The only Person that comes to mind immediately with Corgis is the queen of England, and she probably had a staff to help her with her Corgis.

Whitmore: I'm sure.

Mahoney: So you just need to hire a little staff to help you with your Corgi.

Whitmore: I'll work on that. then I'll put a little ad out on Instagram and see what I get.

Mahoney: What is his name?

Whitmore: Freddy.

Mahoney: Oh, that's very cute. And how old is Freddy?

Whitmore: He's 15 weeks.

Mahoney: Oh, a real puppy.

Whitmore: It's great.

Mahoney: That's like having a new baby around the house.

Whitmore: It so is.

Mahoney: Are you sleeping?

Whitmore: He's sleeping through the night. He's really a good puppy, but still, I've been really trying to focus on his training and so

Mahoney: Make him be the kind of dog people want to be around.

Whitmore: Yeah, right, exactly.

Mahoney: Very nice, very nice. Good luck with Freddy. Thank you. Good luck with the Funky Foodies.

Whitmore: Thank you so much, Joanie. I really appreciate it.

Mahoney: "F" seems to be a theme for you. I don't know if you've noticed that.

Whitmore: Yeah, I know. I thought so. I sort of picked up on that myself.

Mahoney: So that can feed your thoughts about what the name of your new novel will be.

Whitmore: Oh, thank you.

Mahoney: Good luck and thanks for everything you do here at ESF.

Whitmore: Oh, thank you. I really appreciate the opportunity. So thanks.

Mahoney: Talk to you again soon.

Whitmore: Sounds great.