

KEYNOTE SPEAKER · ARLINGTON, TEXAS

Danny L. Ross

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER | CLINICAL SUPERVISOR | AUTHOR | VOCAL ARTIST & STORYTELLER

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In person and virtual

SIGNATURE KEYNOTE

Before You Pour

Get Your Tail Down From Those Monkey Bars

> "We've normalized chaos. We've normalized anxiety. We actually embrace it. And then we land hard."

Why This Talk Exists

This is not a talk Danny read about. This is a talk he lived.

Danny spent years in the most intense, delicate rooms a community can have: crisis response, district-wide belonging work, the rooms where people are hurting. Three major school districts trained district-wide. A national crisis where he was the one called in for community repair.

And then, life happened. In the span of a few years, Danny lost his sister, his mother, and his brother. While grieving three losses, he was still functioning at 100%, probably 150%. He took a bereavement specialist position while his own family was declining, because he's "so eager and wants to be the best at what he does." He delivered a keynote the day after his mother passed away, because he knew he should be taking time for himself, and did it anyway.

THE VOCALIST'S CONFESSION

"As a musician, you can sing in all the languages, and not really truly feel, but you know how to show expression."

THE THESIS

"I feel like we've changed that into what we call professionalism when it comes to the day-to-day."

He stepped back. He recalibrated. He found his voice, and his signature talk. In October 2026, at the Texas Council of Community Centers in Austin, he came back.

THE COMEBACK

"Life gave me something to say. Pain, overfunctioning, working through difficult times — somebody needs to hear what I have to say."

The Talk: The Monkey Bars, the Swings, the Music Theory of Rest

Every person in the room remembers the playground and knew the risk-taker: the kid who climbed too high, who wouldn't come down, who jumped off the swing. It isn't a metaphor you have to explain. It's a memory everyone already has.

The Merry-Go-Round
Spinning, out of control, holding on for dear life.

The Monkey Bars
"Get your tail down from those monkey bars." Climbing too high, refusing to come down.

The Swing
Up, up, up, not knowing how to get down, so we jump. It's exhilarating. And we land hard.

THE MOMENT THE ROOM BECOMES THE PROOF

"Maybe it's just me; maybe I just grew up differently." The room says, "No, you are not." That's the moment Danny realized his story was theirs too.

THE MUSIC THEORY OF REST: A VOCALIST'S FRAMEWORK, NOT A BUSINESS ONE

QUARTER REST
Maybe I just need to go to the car.

HALF REST
Maybe I just need to take a half day.

THE LINE THE ROOM LOVES
"You may need to go to the car before you cuss somebody out."

START HERE · SCAN TO WATCH

See Danny in the room: the 60-second sizzle reel

Stage presence, storytelling, and the room responding. *"Ain't nobody told you to get up there. You chose to be up there."*

Danny L. Ross

10,000+
PEOPLE TRAINED

10+ yrs
ONE DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP

3
DISTRICTS TRAINED DISTRICT-WIDE

The Record

Keller ISD	District-wide training for staff and counselors, 10+ years.
North Texas ISD	Crisis response and community repair after a national event, 2021–2022, with returns through Oct 2022.
Cleburne ISD	District-wide, multi-year: 3 rounds across 5 shows.
Also	Texas Council of Community Centers (returning April 2027), Children's Health Dallas, ACH Child and Family Services, LSSCA.

When the News Trucks Left

A North Texas district made national and international news after a racially charged social-media incident targeting Black students. Community trust was broken. Danny was the one called in: not a consultant, not a trainer, but a licensed clinician with a grief and crisis background, brought in for community repair with staff, parents, students, and executive leadership. He was asked back throughout the school year.

> *"No yelling or shouting — but open dialogue and deep engagement."*

> *"The nervous energy that started the meeting had turned into a collective power that was inspiring."*

Parent attendee, guest column in the local community paper, 2021

What the Room Said

Not testimonials Danny collected. Real evaluation forms from real participants across two districts, Sep–Nov 2022.

He holds the room
"Great energy" · "Engaging speaker" · "The passion in his words" · "The speaker was amazing"

He creates safety
"Thank you for giving space for this" · "It was nice to have a place to discuss topics that might be hard"

He's authentic
"Being a practitioner makes it so much more relevant" · "I loved how authentic your experience led the conversation"

They leave changed
"This workshop was empowering" · "I'm taking away that I need to get to know my students deeper" · "Great reminder of My Why!!"

They want more
"Wish we had more time" · "More of it" · "More singing!!"

Validators

"His ability to connect with a room of educators and leaders is unparalleled."
Scott Kessel Exec. Dir. of Student Services

"Our staff walked away equipped, empowered, and truly seen."
Dr. Kristi Rhone Cleburne ISD

"A powerful, transformative experience that speaks directly to the heart of leadership."
David Kemp Executive Leadership

"He has an uncanny ability to develop systems and procedures, based on data and best practices..."
Tishara Jackson Shaw, EdD, LCDC Intentional Hearts

Signature Keynotes

Before You Pour
EXECUTIVES · DISTRICT LEADERS · CORPORATE TEAMS

The monkey bars. The swings. The music theory of rest. Get your tail down before you pour from an empty cup.

Grief in Real Life
HEALTHCARE · MENTAL-HEALTH SUMMITS · COMMUNITY LEADERS

The career you left, the family that shifted, the role you took that you didn't need. Naming hidden loss, with tools that hold.

The Messages We Carry
EDUCATION CONFERENCES · YOUTH-SERVING ORGS · CONVENTIONS

Be strong. Don't make noise. Carry it yourself. Rewriting inherited scripts and building belonging people can feel.

When the News Trucks Leave
DISTRICTS IN CRISIS · COMMUNITIES AFTER TRAGEDY

What to do after the coverage ends: crisis response, community repair, and belonging after trust is broken.

Books: Buried Messages · The Messages We Carry: A Workbook for Black Men · The Messages We Carry (full book in progress)

Before you pour, let's talk.

To hear more about the investment, honor yourselves and your people: set up a meeting, send an email, or visit the website for more information.

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