

welcome to empowering
homeschool conversations
your authority in
navigating the world of
homeschooling diverse
learners featuring peggy
ployer from sped homeschool
annie yorty from annie
yorty.com leilani melendez
from living with eve
stephanie buckwalter from
e-larp learning and don
jackson from don jackson
educational consulting and tutoring
With over seventy five years
of combined homeschooling expertise,
experiences and perspectives,
this group is eager to
share their wealth of
wisdom to empower your
homeschooling journey.
So grab your favorite mug,
settle in and get ready for

insightful discussions,
valuable insights and practical tips.

Give your homeschool the
power boost it needs to
successfully educate the
unique learners in your home.

Welcome to Empowering
Homeschool Conversations.

I'm your host, Peggy Ployer.

And if you're feeling frustrated,
overwhelmed,
or even a little heartbroken
watching your child struggle with reading,
you're not alone.

Today's conversation is one
you won't want to miss.

I'm joined by Dr. Joe Lagovic,
a nationally recognized... Lagovic,
right?

I said it right?

Lagovic, beautiful.

You did a great job.

Awesome.

A nationally recognized
reading researcher and the
creator of the incredible
Failure-Free Learning Program.

With over thirty-five years of research,
nine published studies,
and millions of hours
helping students just like yours,

Dr. Joe is here to share
real hope and real
strategies for parents
whose children are still
waiting for that
breakthrough moment with reading.

Together,
we're going to talk about why
traditional methods often
fail struggling readers,
how you can accelerate your
child's vocabulary, comprehension,
and fluency,
and practical things you can
do right now at your

kitchen table to unlock

your child's potential.

And if you're looking for

even more support, resources,

and encouragement for your

unique homeschooling journey,

be sure to visit

homeschoolheroes at spedhomeschool.com.

It's a place just created for you,

for families like yours.

Get ready for the

encouraging and practical

conversation that just

might change the way your

child sees reading and themselves.

Let's welcome Dr. Joe to the show.

Welcome.

Well, thank you, Peggy.

It's an honor to be here and

I am so excited to have

this opportunity to speak

to you and to share some

hopefully exciting research

and data and good news to parents.

That's great,

because our parents need so

much encouragement and hope,

because I think they often

look at all the things that

they wish their child was succeeding at,

and it can get really hard.

I remember my oldest didn't

read until he was twelve,

and I put a lot of that blame on myself.

And when he was ready, boy, he was ready.

He was reading at a college

level the next year.

Absolutely.

But it just took him a while.

So I would love for you to

start by sharing just a

little bit of your

background and the passion

that led you to create your

program and do the research that you do.

Well, Peggy, it's as I said,

I am excited to be here and

I'm here for good news, not for bad news.

And and so let me just give

you a brief background.

I'm a former classroom teacher,

university professor,

school psychologist and

special ed director.

I was fortunate at one time

to have a national radio

talk show host called The

Reading Show with Dr. Joe.

I've got well over a dozen

published articles and have

clocked close to two

million hours of direct

instruction with chronically

struggling students.

And, you know,

you being from the Southwest

and in the greater Texas, Oklahoma area,

I know you're familiar with a pillar,

a comedian in the nineteen

thirties by the name of Will Rogers.

And Will was famous because
he had a phrase that everyone knew,
and that was I never met a
man I didn't like.

And I thought that was great.

But he had one that's even better.

And I want to share with the audience.

And that is as we get through,
go through this,

I want you to remember this.

It ain't bragging if you've done it.

It ain't bragging if you've done it.

So we're not talking pie in the sky.

We're not talking wouldn't

it be great if we could.

We're talking about woulda, coulda,
shoulda, done it.

And so I am extremely

excited to share with you

what I've learned in this reading quest,

an ongoing reading quest.

Absolutely.

So I've read through some of
your stuff and you believe
that reading failure is
rarely a child's fault.

Could you unpack that for us?

Why is the instructional
method so critical?

Okay.

Let me just share with you what I,
when I start a talk like this,

I always start with

If there's one thing I want

to share on what I've

learned so far is that I

believe that we are underestimating,

significantly

underestimating the reading

ability of chronically

struggling students.

Now, that's that's my frustration.

But let me share with your

audience the good news.

And I want to say it to you as well,

because you mentioned it

and you were a victim.

And that is the enemy is not the student.

It's not the parent.

It's not the teacher.

It's not the administrator.

That the real enemy is the

instructional approach.

And when you change that approach,

you will change the performance outcomes.

So you did nothing wrong.

And so you don't have to feel guilty.

How's that sound?

That sounds great.

I think parents need to hear

that more and more because, yeah,

the ongoing thought is, yeah,

I did something wrong.

And yet, you know,

you have other children

that prove that wrong.

You know,

I had another daughter that

learned to read when she was three.

So it definitely wasn't me.

No, no.

And it wasn't.

And it's not the parents out there.

Let me put a couple of
things in perspective that

I think that teachers,
parents must know about the field.

And I am, first and foremost,
a reading researcher.

So this is what I have dedicated my,

I hate to say,
close to fifty years of
working in the classroom or
related to education.

But reading is,

Reading is the most
researched topic in all of education.

Literally,
there are thousands upon
thousands upon thousands of
articles being written on

how to teach reading,
how to improve reading.
But if I were to take the
world's twelve leading
reading researchers,
put them in one room,
put them in a single door
so that they can only go
through one way and one way out,
put an armed guard at that
door and told them that
they couldn't come out
until they had a universal
definition of what reading
is and how it should be taught,
they would starve to death
before they ever came out that door.

So to say that reading,
that there is a broad range
of opinion in the teaching
of reading is an understatement.

Now, that said,
let me share with your

audience what I believe is
the one universal reading research fact
that you can bet the house on.

It has never been proven not to be true.

Would you say that it's
worth your listening to me
run my mouth if I could
share that one fact with your audience?

Absolutely.

They would love that.

Here we go.

All reading programs work.

So I'm not here

to argue methodology.

I'm not here to argue anything.

All reading programs work.

But.

And I know you're going to ask, but what,

Dr. Jones?

Yes, exactly.

I want to know.

That's an excellent question.

I don't know how you came up

with that question.

Let me tell you what the but is.

But not for all kids.

But not for all kids.

Regardless of the hype you hear,

regardless of what you hear

in the public media,

regardless of what's being

said about back to basics

and all of the other stuff,

let me share with you this.

In all of the teaching of reading,

and I've already shown to

you that it is the most

researched topic in all of education.

In all of those, there has never been,

never, ever, ever,

been a large scale reading

research study to show one

program to be one hundred

percent successful for all

kids in all situations.

I believe that.

So now what that means then is this.

If your child is having difficulty

the first thing you should

do is not look at your child.

The first thing you should do is say,

what's causing the difficulty?

What type of approach is

being utilized that is

preventing my child from

reaching what I consider to

be the characteristics of good reading,

One of my arguments with special ed,

and I'm glad we're talking special ed.

I once had a colleague that

once said special ed is

neither special nor is it education.

I won't argue with that.

But what I am saying is this.

Many, many,

many times what we have is a

situation where we're blaming the victim.

And that's my mission.

Now, I'm going to start to get passionate,

but I've dedicated my
entire life to letting
people know that your child
is not the victim.

Excuse me,
is not the cause of the problem.

Your child is the victim.

It's like this.

Imagine you're in New York
City or Houston.

You're in downtown Houston
and it's rush hour.

You're committing the great
pedestrian sin of jaywalking.

And you rush out into the traffic,
and Peggy, you get hit by the car.

Now,
you are just lying in the middle of
the road.

You are in pain.

You're not sure if you're
going to make it.

And all of a sudden in the distance,

faint in the beginning,

you start to hear a sound

and that sound gets louder

and louder and it's a siren.

And in your mind you're saying, oh,

they're coming.

They're coming to help me.

Got where I'm coming from now?

And all of a sudden when the

ambulance arrives,

it drives over you a couple

of times and yells at you

for being stupid and being in the street.

We're blaming the victim.

The issue is not the victim.

So often,

ninety nine percent of reading

interventions that are out

there are based on what I call the R.D.

model.

Now, I'm based on what's known as the C.S.

model.

R.D.

versus C.S.

Ninety nine percent are in R.D.

One less than one percent is in C.S.,

I know you're going to ask this question,

Peggy.

So I don't know what the

difference is on those.

And I'm pretty certain my

audience doesn't either.

So I'd love for you to tell

us what that is.

RD stands for remediation of the deficit.

Remediation of the deficit.

And what happens is,

is that you go into an IEP meeting,

you go and you spend good

money to have an evaluation.

And what you get then is a

list of all of the things that are wrong.

And not only is it a list of

all of the things that are wrong,

then the instruction is

based on the notion of now

that these are the things that are wrong,
what we're going to do is
we're going to spend all of
our time and energy looking
at all of the things that
are wrong and remediate or
eliminate them.

Yeah.

I don't mind.

And that's why a lot of
parents homeschool because
they don't believe in that.

That's right.

Yeah,
they replace it with curriculum that
does that.

And that's exactly right.

So what's CS?

Yes, exactly.

We'd love to know.

CS stands for capitalize on strength.

Capitalize on strength.

When I was a professor at

the University of South Carolina,

one of the things that I

always argued was having a

different definition of the term LD.

And you know and I know in special ed,

LD stands for?

Learning disability.

learning disabilities.

My definition has always

been that that's a misnomer.

What it should be is learning different.

And when you operate from

the principle of learning different,

then all of a sudden good

things start to happen.

How are we doing so far?

Really good,

because we we actually on our

website offer a test called

Mindprint that actually

maps a child's brain and

gives parents strategies to

how their child's brain works.

So so we are completely on
the same page as you.
And we believe that every child is gifted.
You know,
their their brains sometimes work
differently than a lot of
curriculum developers create.
products for.

So I'm super excited that
you're sharing from this
perspective with us versus let's,
you know, let's buckle down and,
and work on the things your
child's bad at because it
defeats the child.

It actually makes them want to learn less.

Well, and not only that,
and you hit the nail right on the head.

One of the other problems
that you have is when you
start getting into that notion,
you start falling into a
fallacy that really drives me crazy.

The problem that you have is

a lot of times once the

kids are classified as special ed,

what they get is slower.

They get lower and they get less.

And my attitude has been

they don't need slower, lower and less.

They need just the opposite.

They need faster.

They need higher and they need more.

You set the conditions for

success and then all of a

sudden you'll see that happen.

I am on a mission to eliminate.

And I and I and this is I had a.

A nationally recognized cartoonist asked,

can I formulate a cartoon

based on your mission?

Because he was intrigued by

what I call the three bad

R's in education.

Now,

you know the three good R's in education,

which is reading, writing, arithmetic,
correct?

Okay.

Do you know what the three bad R's are?

I have no idea.

The three bad R's are?

The three bad R's are retention, referral,
and rejection.

Yes.

And they're getting more prevalent too.

Especially now with the big
back to basics movement.

That's one of the issues that I'm not,
one of the issues that we
have right now is that this,
this belief that if a kid
doesn't read by third grade,
then it's too late.

And then you have retention.

Well, that's blaming the victim.

And let me share with you a statistic.

When you retain a child,

You increase by a factor of

two hundred and sixteen

percent that that child

will drop out of school by age sixteen.

So you can't retain.

You have to look at you have

to look at accommodations.

So what you have to do is what's low.

You have to look at what's not working.

And then what can we do to

to supplant that with

something that does work?

So one of the things and

that's one of the reasons

why I call my program failure free.

I started Failure Free

Reading because I was on a

mission and I did the research.

And at that time,

my wife and I had three

children under the age of ten.

I had just quit my job as a

special ed director in the

greater North Carolina area.

We had like seven hundred
dollars to our name.

But it was when desktop
publishing finally started
to come in and you could
start doing things that you
couldn't do before.

And so I went out there and
I started selling my
failure-free ugly print
black and white material.

There's no other way to
describe it because I was
really selling the methodology.

So I would call a school
district and in sales, the
The name of the technique is cold call.

They don't know you, you don't know them,
and you're lucky if you get them.

But I would call a building
principal when I started, and I'd say,
my name's Dr. Joe Lockovich,
and I would like to come out,

and I would like to do a
live demonstration at your
school with the student,
but I'll only do it under two conditions.

Well, that intrigued them.

And they said, well,
what's the two conditions?

The first one I said is I'll
only work with the worst kid you got.

Now that really.

Oh, yeah, exactly.

And then they said, well,
what's the second condition?

And I said, well,
if you don't see a dramatic
change in confidence,
comprehension and
expressive fluency within a
thirty minute period,
I'll walk out the door and
you'll never hear from me again.

When are you coming?

And then I'm going.

And I've done this statement,
the questions, and I have been literally,
I have been in places from
maximum security prisons to
inner city schools to rural schools.

Peggy,

I have been to places I never want
to go back to as long as I live.

But, but,

I have never, ever,
ever left not fulfilling
those two conditions.

So I'll give you an example.

I get a call from the
assistant superintendent of
special education, Bronx, New York.

And he says,

I heard about this claim that you made,
and I'm going to call you on it.

He said,

you willing to come up to New York
and do it?

I said, okay, I'll be there next week.

So I get on a plane.

Fortunately,

the days of having to get in a
plane are over.

Thanks to what we're doing right now.

But at that time, you didn't.

You had to go.

You either drove or you flew
or you were on a train.

Mm-hmm.

So I go in there and I'm
going to a high school metal detector.

I mean, it was South Bronx.

It looked like war-torn Europe.

There's just no other way to describe it.

And they bring me,

I'm sitting there with the
assistant superintendent
and his three associates.

And they said, we're bringing in Raul.

Tell me about Raul.

Well,

he started in special ed with us when

he's sixth grade.

He was a virtual non-reader.

He's African-American Latino,
and he's been with us for three years.

I said, okay.

How's he doing now?

Now,

he's been with intensive remediation
three years, full IEP,
came in as a non-reader.

Guess where he is three years later,

Peggy?

Same place.

Non-reader.

So they bring him in,
and he comes in handsome,
handsome young man.

We're sitting there, and I said,
you're not in trouble.

Well, that was good.

I said,

I just developed a reading approach,
and I'll explain that later

on to your audience what it

is and why it works.

But I said,

and all I want to do is have

you try it out.

Tell me what you think about it.

You either like it or you don't like it,

but that's why I'm here.

He said, okay, I'll do that.

So, um, one of the things that I always do,

and one of my beliefs is,

is that all students should

be pushed to their, to their level.

So I look at him and, uh,

and I'm using the methodology.

I'm talking to him for a few minutes,

but I put down a passage

and I put down critical

vocabulary in that passage, Peggy.

And I go to him and I say, um,

Do you know this word?

He says, no.

Do you know this word?

No.

Do you know this word?

This word?

He said, no, no, no, and no.

I said, well, look at this passage.

Is it too easy, too hard, or just right?

He says, too hard, man.

I can't do that.

So now, he's a ninth grader,

and he's already set the

conditions he can't do it.

So we go through the methodology.

But before we go through the methodology,

I'm looking at the

assistant superintendent

and his three colleagues

who are also looking at the

five words and the passage.

And I can see in their eyes, and you know,

their eyes, they're basically saying,

we've invited a madman here.

we're going to have to call

security because there's no

way on the face of this
planet that this kid's
going to know these words
and read that passage in a
thirty minute period.

This guy's a nut and you made a mistake.

So we're sitting there and
everything that I do is
predicated on the notion
that reading is gaining
meaning from the printed page.

Yes.

As demonstrated by the
ability to read with expression.

If your student or if your
child is not reading with expression,
then by my definition,
they're not reading.

Now, by the way,
if you're reading with expression,
you're also reading with
comprehension because you
can't read something with

expression that you're not comprehending.

Does that all make sense?

Yes.

Yeah, absolutely.

So that's one of the

sidebars that parents can look at.

Is my child reading aloud with expression?

Forget whether or not they get it right.

The question is,

are they demonstrating

expressive fluency?

And if it's

If we're dealing with

parents who have hearing impaired or deaf,

and some are signing,

and I do a lot of work with

that population,

are they signing with prosody,

meaning comprehension?

Does that all make sense?

So I sit there and I say,

do you know this word?

And he tries to sound it out, and he goes,

yes.

Attorney.

Oh, attorney.

Do you know what the word means?

No.

Have you ever heard it before?

No, not really.

Okay.

Now, do you know,

and has any of your friends

ever gotten in trouble with the law?

Oh, yeah.

I mean, this is South Bronx.

Are you kidding me?

Right.

I said,

and when they get in trouble with the law,

what's one of the first

people that they need?

What comes out of his mouth, Peggy?

They need a what?

They need a lawyer.

Well,

an attorney is nothing more than a
fancy name for what?

Lawyer.

Oh, okay.

Well, that makes sense.

Can you sound this word out?

Well, this word is huge.

I can't do that.

No,

you don't even have to try to sound it
out.

The words acquaintance.

Can you say acquaintance?

Acquaintance.

Do you know what an acquaintance is?

Well, no.

Well, have we just met?

Yeah.

Do you think we could become friends?

Yeah, I think so.

Well, then

I would become an acquaintance.

Oh, somebody you know, a friend.

Oh.

Thirty minutes later, he is reading aloud,
just like I'm going to read right now.

Okay?

He takes the passage and he reads this.

And this is exactly how he's reading it.

The attorney and her acquaintance
were astounded by the size
of the rock singer's house.

The house was large enough
to accommodate over a hundred people.

I said, too easy to her?

Just right.

He says, too easy.

I said, wait a minute.

Wait a minute.

Who just told me fifteen
minutes before that this was too hard?

Who took it from too hard to
too easy in under fifteen minutes?

And he looks at me, Peggy, and he says,

I did.

I said, you're right.

Now, here's where it starts getting sad,
but your parents will relate to this,
too.

Next thing I ask him is this.

What grade are you in?

He says ninth.

I said,

what grade level do you think this
material is?

He says, fifth.

So the first thing he does
is drop it down how many grades?

Yeah, four,

because he's been told that
that's where he's at, I bet.

So now I say to him, Peggy, I say, no,
it's not.

I said, try it again.

You know what he says this time?

Fourth, try it again.

Third, I stop him now at third.

I said, no,

you're going the wrong direction.

And all of a sudden, you see just a subtle,
subtle movement in his jaw.

He says, sixth.

I said, no, go higher.

Now, all of a sudden,
he's getting a little straighter.

Seventh, I said, no, higher.

Eighth, no, higher.

Ninth.

It's a ninth, tenth.

I said, how's it feel to read ninth,
tenth?

And the kid that left that
room was not the kid that
came into that room.

And when I created this program,
I created it as first and
foremost a reading attitude
adjustment program.

Because our kids are beating
the hell out of each other
and out of themselves.

And the only way

The only way you're going to
snap that is by giving them faster,
giving them higher,
and giving them more
because they're their own worst critics.

So you have to prove it to them.

Yes, yeah.

How am I doing?

In a little while,

I'm going to get passionate.

No, no, no.

That's really good.

And it's a good story to

just give parents hope

because I think we think

our child is so bad off.

And yet I think a lot of our listeners,

their kids aren't even to that point yet,

to that ninth grade, tenth grade.

They're maybe struggling in

second or third.

Absolutely.

And there's, yeah.

Yeah.

And so let me share with you

what my research has found.

In my book,

which I'm getting ready to rewrite,

in my white paper I'm doing as we speak,

but I wrote it twenty some

odd years ago and it is as

valuable today as it was then.

And I call the book The

Failure-Free Methodology,

New Hope for Non-Readers.

And what I basically said

and what my research has

found is that there are

three characteristics of non-readers.

And for lack of better terms,

I said that they were PD,

they were ED and they were LD.

LD doesn't mean learning

disabled and ED doesn't

mean emotionally disturbed.

Although when I was first

started teaching,

I was the emotionally disturbed teacher.

Some people still think I'm

emotionally disturbed,

but that's a whole different ballpark.

But let me share with you again,

but I'm going to preface it

because this is the one

that's gotten me the most notoriety,

the most arguments, most, for some people,

it's the characteristic

that literally Peggy makes

the hair stand up on the

back of some people,

especially those in special

ed and a lot of practitioners.

But before I say it,

I'm going to say it one more time.

When I started our talk,

what did I say about all

reading programs?

That they all what?

They focus on the reading and the R&D.

But I all said in terms of value,
they all work.

Correct?

Correct.

Yeah.

Then I said, but.

But not for all students.

Okay.

So I'm not here to put down
a program or a philosophy or anything.

If you believe in it, I believe in it.

Okay.

I'm not your enemy, but for some people,
this is when it really gets scary.

So what does PD stands for a stand for?

It's a term that I've coined
based on my experience,
based on my two million
hours of direct instruction,
based on my teaching,
based on my going out to
meeting some of the leading
experts in the field.

PD stands for the phrase

phonetically deaf.

Phonetically deaf.

And what I mean is this.

There are some kids out

there that if you dedicated

the next one hundred and

twenty waking years of your

professional life,

they still aren't going to hear.

And you go and they go and

you go around the room and

finally say the words cat

and the kid will say,

why don't you tell me so in

the first place?

Yeah.

Absolutely.

Yep.

You see, there's a misnomer out there.

And the belief is it's this

whole issue with this back

to basics movement.

The back to basics movement is some, Oh,
well the reason why the kid,
the reason why you didn't do this,
you never got phonics.

Well, you got a lot of kids.

Let me share with you the research.

There's,
there's the illusion and there's
the reality.

When you start looking at
chronically struggling kids,
which is my population.

Okay.

I'm working with the kids
who are in the bottom ten percentile.

I'm working for special ed,
limited English speakers, you name it.

When you look at those kids,
what they find is this.

You ready for this?

You find that seventy
percent of those kids,
especially when they're in grades three,

four, five and higher.

Seventy percent.

Now that's greater than half, right?

Oh, yeah.

Seventy percent of those

kids had adequate basic decoding skills.

Yep.

I believe that.

And what they found were

thirty percent of those

kids were good decoders

with poor comprehension.

Forty percent of those kids

were strong decoders, strong decoders,

but very, very slow readers.

Yeah.

Seventeen percent couldn't do it well.

And nine percent had sufficient,

significant,

poor word recognition through decode.

Now, am I anti-phonic?

No.

But I am anti-phonic first for some kids.

If you're a parent of a deaf
or if you look at deaf kids,
one of the things, look,
I'm going to teach you how
to ride a bike one of two ways, okay?
Both ways are equally effective.

So I'm not here to tell you
one way other than the other.

I'm just,
but there are two totally
different ways of achieving the end.

And what's the end?

Riding the bike.

That's our goal.

Okay.

It's Saturday morning and
we're going to the garage
and I'm going to lay every
bike part out on the garage
floor and I'm going to start to drill you,
Peggy, in wheels, spokes, handlebars,
gears, brake pedals.

And Peggy, I don't care if it's an hour or

I don't care if it's a day.

I don't care if it's a week, a month,

a year.

You ain't getting on that

damn bike until you tell me about wheels,

spokes, handlebars, gears, brake pedals.

I got a question to ask, Peyton.

Is there another way that I

could teach you how to ride that bike?

Just to get on it?

Get on it.

And once you get on it,

and once you feel...

what it feels like to ride that bike,

I'm going to quickly tell

you about handlebars, gears,

and brake pedals.

The first is a skills approach.

The second is a process approach.

My methodology and my

approach is process oriented.

I get them on the bike immediately.

I get them to experience

what it feels like to read
with meaning from the first,
and I'm not saying it, again,
I'm going back to ain't
bragging if you've done it,
from first day.

And we do it through an
approach in which we use
comprehensible text.

And let me also share with you, we use,
and my program is based on
a notion called VPR.

And VPR is a new acronym for
And it stands for visual
pattern recognition.

Have you ever heard of that?

Yeah, I have.

Okay.

And what that means,
and I want your audience to
understand this,
that visual pattern
recognition is an innate ability.

We're born with it.

We don't create it.

We're born with it.

It's an innate brain-based

ability in which the brain

makes sense out of what it sees visually.

It actively seeks recurring patterns.

And the more recurring the pattern,

the more it recognizes it.

A sight word is a pattern.

Yes.

A phrase is a pattern.

And what we find is our kids

actively see this.

Now,

let me share with your audience a

couple of things.

Number one,

the opposite of phonics is not

whole language.

Whole language and phonics

are just like skills of

riding the damn bike.

They're two different things,
and they have strengths,
and they have minuses.

Yep.

Pluses and minuses.

The opposite of that also is
not flashcards.

Because what you get when
you utilize flashcards is
what's known in the trade
as a splinter skill.

Are you familiar with that term?

I'm not familiar with the term,
but I do understand it
because it's not associated
with anything.

A splinter skill to the
audience is a skill that
your child develops because
it's taught over and over and over again,
whether it's sounding words out,
whether it's seeing a word on a flashcard,
what you'll find in

splinter skill is that when
you ask them to do that specific skill,
they can do it.

But they can't generalize it.

So what you have is a
situation where they can do
a whole stack of flashcards
and then see the same word
within the passage

And they don't recognize it.

That's a splinter skill.

And the same holds true for sounding out.

And just like you have kids
who have flashcard stack splinter skill,
you have other kids who you
put a passage in front of them.

They can sound the words out
with ninety five,
one hundred percent accuracy.

So they get it all correct.

You follow me?

Yep.

But.

You watch them as they're doing it.

They're reading aloud.

They don't pause at commas.

They don't stop at periods.

They read with a monotone,
expressionless voice.

They get all the words right.

And then when it's done,

you look them dead in the

eye and you ask them, what did you read?

And they look you back and they say,

I don't know beats me.

Because they're thinking

that reading is getting the

words right as opposed to

gaining meaning from the printed page.

Right.

Exactly.

Now, let me give your parents three words.

Okay.

Reading is relating.

Reading is relating.

You cannot read for meaning

something you cannot relate to.

Yes.

Okay.

So if your child can't relate to it,
they can't read it for meaning.

And your job then as a
parent is to ask this question,
why can't they relate to it?

And what can I do as a
parent to help them to
relate to that concept so
that then when we read it,
they'll understand it.

Is this helpful?

Right.

Yes, exactly.

Because the words on the
page don't mean anything
unless they are
comprehending and they're
internalizing it.

Because they're going to
forget it very quickly

unless they know what
they're reading about.

You can't retain something
that you have no background
knowledge or something to
hook it to in your brain.

And Peggy,
that's why I love talking with
you because you've
automatically triggered ED.

Now, PD is phonetically deaf.

ED is environmentally denied.

And what you just said is
exactly what we're talking about.

Reading is relating.

You have kids that are
coming into classrooms and
reading material with a
significant deficiency in
general background knowledge or

You have a lot of kids who
are coming into the
classroom where English is

the second language,
so they're coming in with
pronounced cultural
deficiency because they
have not experienced what
First generation English
only students experience.
Does that make sense?
It does because I used a
Singapore based math
program for my middle child
and they talked about
prawns and he turned and
looked at me and he goes,
I can't get this math problem.
I have no idea what that is.
And I changed it.
I said, okay,
let's take this many superheroes and this,
and he got the math problem
instantly because he could relate to it.
And so, yes, it's just that simple.
Let's continue because we're

doing beautifully.

Is this helpful?

Yeah.

Yeah, absolutely.

And what's the third characteristic LD?

And LD doesn't stand for

learning disabled.

It doesn't stand for learning different.

LD stands for language

deprived or language denied.

Oh, yes.

Now,

I'm going to give your parents and

give them a one word.

one word secret to

dramatically elevating the

reading comprehension of their child,

regardless of grade level,

regardless of anything,

would you say it's worth, again,

me listening to me run my

mouth if I can give your

parent that one word secret?

Absolutely,

everything you've had to say is

nuggets of gold, so keep going.

Are you ready?

Here we go.

This is the key.

This is what I've done.

By the way,

I'm married for forty three

years with a very tired

looking woman who is still

going to get rid of me.

We have five children.

Those five children gave us

fourteen grandchildren.

They all live within five

miles of our house.

We found that the biggest

misnomer out there is that stupid phrase,

empty nester.

We have no idea what that means.

But from the day we first found out,

when my wife found out that

she was pregnant with Tess,

I capitalized on this one

word secret and I taught it

to my kids and my kids

teach it to their kids.

You ready?

Yep.

Vocabulary.

Yes.

Vocabulary, vocabulary, vocabulary.

Now let me share with this.

This is not just a secret to

success in school and comprehension.

It's a secret in life.

Yeah, it absolutely is.

Let me ask you this question.

And you said that you have

an assessment test that you

share with parents, which is great.

And I have an assessment.

I call it a reading attitude assessment,

where it's a quick online

assessment to see how your

child feels about reading

and how they think.

That's awesome.

It's fun.

But when it comes,

wouldn't it be great if

there were an assessment

out there that we could

give to entry-level adults, for example,

that would serve as a

predictor for how well

they're going to do in an organization.

And on the basis of this,

we can predict who's going

to be the CEO all the way

down to the floor workers.

Wouldn't that be great?

Yeah.

Do you know we've had that since?

Really?

And you want to know what it is?

Sure.

It's a vocabulary test.

Researchers found that when
they gave a vocabulary test
that the CEO had the greatest vocabulary,
as opposed to those who were, um,
At the lower ranks.

Interesting.

So we are by design a highly
verbal society.

Absolutely.

We are judged the moment we
open up our mouths.

And I want parents to
understand this because a
lot of times your child is
given an IQ test.

You're thinking that your
child is limited here.

Let me share with you this.

And I say this all the time.

If your parents and you
could imagine being on a
sidewalk in any town USA,
and you're walking the length of a lawn,

and that lawn has a white

picket fence as its border.

And you have a little stick,

and you're walking along.

You go from one picket to another,

to another, to another.

Does that make sense?

And you just keep on,

and all you can see are the pickets.

And I want your parents to

understand this.

This is my gift to them.

If each picket was some

facet of intelligence as we know it,

and we have this whole block of pickets,

conventional IQ tests

probably measure six pickets.

maybe ten.

Wow.

We're beating ourselves up

and beating our kids up.

Do you know, I'll give you an example.

I'm going to date myself and

I'm doing it for impact.

This has been a long time

since I've said this and I

do not mean it in a

condescending way and I

don't mean it as a slur but I'm trying to

I'm trying to show you to

illustrate a point.

Okay.

And when it comes to

intellectual disabilities,

cognitively challenged,

they used to use a term

that fortunately we never use anymore.

And you know the term, it's the R term.

Right.

Okay.

Now, do you know that

When I first started teaching many,

many years ago, in the trade,

they talked about the

six-hour R. Have you ever heard that?

I haven't heard that at all.

Do you know what they were saying there?

The kid was only R the six

hours he was in school.

Interesting.

You take him outside of school,

And he was making money, selling things,

doing whatever he was.

Yeah.

Because it all had to do

with the comparison

academically than what the

child's true capacity was.

And that really doesn't

measure a child's ability

to succeed or not succeed,

how they do in a classroom.

It has nothing to do with success.

It's been proven over and over again.

let me give you an example a

personal one my wife uh we

lost I lost my

father-in-law about four or

five years ago and and it

was it was quite a shock
and and and he was um just
really a really nifty guy
and uh and and he was a by
traded tool and die maker
and so he um but he was not
He was not formally educated.
At that time, he had, at best,
a high school education.
And he always equated my
degrees with intelligence,
that I was the smart one
and he was the tool and die maker.
No.
So I asked him one day,
and I'll never forget this.
I said, Frank, I said,
Man, I mean, tool and die.
When you have to make that die, he says,
oh, yeah,
you've got to make it to
specific specifications.
You have to be,

that thing's got to run on

that machine for a million times.

You can't lose anything.

It's got to be within one

ten thousandth of whatever it is.

And I said, and you created these things?

He said, oh, yeah, that was easy.

I said, no, wait a minute.

How'd you do it?

He said, oh, it's easy.

He said, they tell me what they needed,

what the specifications of the dye,

what it had to look like,

its appearance and everything.

And he said, then I'd go to sleep.

I'd go to bed that night.

And in my mind, I would blow that.

And now remember,

we're talking about

something that fits in the

palm of your hand.

Right.

All right.

He said,

I would blow that dye up in my
mind to where it was thirty stories high.

And then I would just walk
around inside the dye and
go up and down the
different flights of stairs
until I knew how to create it.

I said, what?

That's fascinating.

You did what?

Okay.

Now, I'm sitting with a man who,
in my opinion,
in the world of nonverbal intelligence,
is a freaking genius, right?

And he's beating himself up
in his life because he had
a limited vocabulary and
thought he wasn't as smart
as the other guys.

Makes no sense.

Let me continue.

So what else did I find?

And this is for the parents or for you.

This is Frida Ebert's work.

She's a tremendous

researcher out at the

University of California.

And she said, text, T-E-X-T, text,

the print,

does matter in the teaching of reading.

And what she found was that,

and what I found,

and that's why one of the

unique features of Failure

Free is that we have

pioneered not only visual

pattern learning,

visual pattern recognition

through serial learning,

But we have also patterned

through the utilization of

comprehensible text.

Now,

let me share with you what I mean by

that and to parents as well.

And this is really important

to the parents.

What my research has found

is that traditional text,

the way most people write,

It carries with it what I

call reading comprehension

roadblocks for our kids.

It prevents them to be able

to easily understand it

because there are

roadblocks that the writer

used in a normal,

typical situation that is

not easy for our kids to relate to.

So what are the roadblocks

to reading comprehension?

Uncommon names, dates, and places.

Mm-hmm.

Yep.

Figurative speech.

Oh, absolutely.

Yes.

Idiomatic expression.

Mm-hmm.

Abundant use of pronouns.

Yes.

Awkward sentence structure.

Mm-hmm.

And here's the biggest one.

Inappropriate or not enough repetition.

Ah.

And I want to share this.

What my research has found as well,

and Chuck Hargis, University of Tennessee,

he did work.

He found that as the

literacy level of kids decrease,

the need for this

particular skill

proportionately increases.

And that skill is repetition.

The lower the ability level,

the greater times they need

to see something in order

to recognize it independently.

Traditional reading material

is not repetitious enough for our kids.

Yeah, I believe that.

Especially with the back to

basics movement,

where they're saying we're

only going to show the kid the word once,

they either sound it out or they don't.

And let me also share one

more thing to your parents too.

Again,

I go back to the notion of it ain't

bragging if you've done it,

but you also have to look at research,

okay?

I'm going to give you a

research based viable alternative.

And that's all I'm providing

is alternative to,

to a phonics based

instructional approach.

Are you ready for this?

Yep.

No, I'll tell you what,

I'm going to give you two
words and you're going to
give me the third.

Okay.

Okay.

Dick and Jane.

Dick and Jane.

Are you ready for this?

It is probably, would you say,
fifty million is a pretty good number?

Oh, yeah.

Is it big?

Lots?

Yeah,

especially when you're talking about
people, maybe.

Fifty million people.

You ready?

We're taught to learn to read.
through Dick and Jane.

They learned to read with expression.

They learned to read with comprehension.

They learned to read with confidence.

They learned to read with pleasure.

Would you agree?

Yeah, absolutely.

It was relatable.

You ready for this?

Let me ask this question.

You're doing real well, Peggy.

Do you know when phonics was introduced

during the Dick and Jane

process to the students?

Probably when they were

maybe in third or fourth grade.

Never.

Never, really?

Okay.

I just know that when I

started reading in the

mid-seventies that they

started a whole word and

that made it even more confusing.

So what am I saying?

I'm saying that there are
viable alternatives.

So if your kid isn't doing
well on this path,
there is an alternative
path available to them.

And as a parent, your question should be,
okay, the good news is my kid's failing.

And it's good news because
now I know one way that doesn't work.

Right, exactly.

Now what's happening in
schools is just the opposite.

You get people who say the
only way to fly is back to basics.

We're going to teach them the basics.

When they don't get the basics,
then we're going to give
them a tiered intervention.

We're going to give them
some supplemental work.

And guess what the supplemental work is?

More of the basics.

When that doesn't work,
then we're going to put
them in small group.

More of the basics.

Then we're going to give
them one-on-one of the basics.

Now,
what happens with that and where I get
angry with that is it's painfully slow.

And then we're going to lose
a lot of these kids.

Right.

Because they are not a
necessary condition of
learning how to read.

Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

Yeah, absolutely.

And yeah, they,
the kids get more and more
frustrated and then they just, they,
they shut down and they may,
they may still physically be there,

but mentally they're not anymore.

So I asked this question,

what would happen if we took,

if we took critical

academic vocabulary and put

it into a highly structured

format in where we introduce

the words and put the words and phrases,

the phrases into sentences,

sentences into paragraphs, and we talk.

one page of a story one day

and then continued it the

next day and the next day

and the next day and what would happen.

And as I said before, as God is my witness,

and I know that's a strong

statement to make to you

and to me as well, as God is my witness,

I couldn't find a student

or an adult that didn't

have an immediate and

successful reading experience.

And that's why I called it Failure Free.

That's awesome.

Well,

I would love for you to talk a little

bit more about the program

and what parents can get

for resources if they head

to your website,

because our time is unfortunately up,

and I know a lot of them

are just getting kind of a

hint of what you're talking about,

and you just have so much knowledge.

So I'd love for you to talk

about what they'd find on your website.

Well, here's the nice thing.

There are three different programs,

and we have a self-pacing, online,

multisensory program

format,

but also there are scripted lessons

that the parent chooses to

teach their child.

We use what we call a

blended learning philosophy
where we preview the material,
we introduce the vocabulary,
we read that part of the story to them.
It takes about five to ten minutes.
Then they go online with
exactly the same thing that
we were taught,
and then there are
downloadable PDFs for paper
and pencil reinforcement activities.
We teach twenty seven
stories of increasing
complexity that we take the
student from zero point
zero all the way up to mid
fifth grade in our Joseph's readers.
For those parents out there
who have kids that are,
I can read some third, fourth,
fifth grade, we have Verbal Master,
which is an accelerated
vocabulary program that

takes you all the way from

mastery of sixth grade all

the way up to SAT, ACT.

And then for chronically,

cognitively delayed kids on the spectrum,

we have Life Skills,

which is a school-to-career

transition program.

And it's based on four themes,

twenty one stories, independent living,

how to how to drive a car,

getting the facts on drugs

and how to get a job.

Now,

what the parent can do is when they go

to W.W.W.

dot failure free dot com.

And they can go through the page.

And at the bottom,

there is a sample lesson

that they can try.

And it's pretty self-explanatory.

I do, however,

ask the parents to stay

there and watch how they do.

Because one of the beauties

of my methodology is if it works,

you'll see it right there.

I mean,

I don't care where they're coming from.

You'll see you'll see if

it's a good fit within the first couple,

two, three lessons.

In addition to that,

there is on the Web site,

a parent can sign up for a

free consultation.

I am very willing to talk to them.

but I don't want them to

waste my time if they're

going to go in there and

they want to do it then

let's do it and we can set

up we can set up a

condition in which in which

uh we can do it but don't

waste my time by putting
your name on there and and
then not doing it because
my time is valuable um how
do we do so far let me
share with the parents real
quickly language language
language language you're a
language teacher first
you're a reading teacher second
You're a content teacher
third and you can't change the order.
Reading is relating.
The other is input precedes output.
What that means is this.
There's a huge, huge,
huge difference between
what your child can
understand and what your
child can express.
Do not water down what
you're getting into their
system on the basis of what

they're expressing.

Just like you learned with

your twelve year old.

Everybody is different when

they when when it comes out

is is one thing.

What you have to do is get it in language,

language, language, language.

Read to your child that night.

Watch their eyes.

The eyes are the mirror of the mind.

if they don't understand,

then you have to ask the question,

why can't they understand it?

If you want to know if this

is suitable for them, read a passage.

And if they don't,

if they do understand it,

then whether they can read

it or you read it aloud is

the whole thing.

You are a language teacher.

First, you are a reading teacher.

Second, you are a content teacher.

Third, there is absolutely no reason.

And I don't care if your kids are,
are on the spectrum.

Now,

My goal is to help you to
achieve allowing your child
or young adult or,
and if they're Down syndrome,
I got a lot of Down
syndrome kids that are
adults that it's ready for
them to learn how to read.

Okay, they can go back and read.

Life skills is perfect for them.

But the bottom line is our
goal is to allow your child
to read for meaning with
expression commensurate to
their cognitive ability.

Okay.

And that's important too.

So if you've got, God willing,

if you've got some kids
where you know that they're
developmentally delayed,
the bad news is they're
developmentally delayed.

The good news is,
is that they can still have
a successful reading
experience commensurate to that level.

That's very cool.

Yeah.

So let's have realistic expectations.

Yes.

And I require for
failure-free to be successful,
I require a developmental
age of about five, maybe six years old.

Okay.

Okay.

If they have a developmental
age of five to six years old,
we're cooking.

And if a parent is looking

for something to actually,
if you give me twenty
minutes a day and then we do the software,
thirty minutes a day, we're saying,
I'll give you one study.

We just did a study in North Carolina.

OK, this will wrap it up.

And what we found was we
took kids on the North
Carolina end of grade
reading assessment who were
testing below the tenth percentile.

And their average percentile
score was six percentile points.

After thirty minutes a day,
self pacing for about thirty days,
their post test was thirty
five percentile points.

Wow.

really good.

Yeah, no, that's awesome.

And so, yeah,

I would just encourage all of

you to check out Dr. Joe's site.

We'll have that link in the show notes,

failurefreereadingonline.com.

And yeah, check all that out.

I'm super excited to just

introduce this resource to

our families and for just

all that you had to share.

And even the kind of change in

in thinking us parents have

to make in order to get on

the right road to help our

kids with reading success.

So thank you just for sharing,

not just your expertise,

but your heart for

struggling readers and their families.

It's really easy for parents

to get discouraged,

but you've reminded us over

and over again that there

is a way forward and we

just need the right tools

and right mindset.

So thank you.

We're ready to help.

I'm here ready to help.

It's

It is an honor to have this

opportunity and to share

the good news with your parents.

Yes, absolutely.

Well, thank you.

And thank you to all of you for listening.

If today's conversation has

stirred a new hope in your heart,

don't stop there.

Be sure to visit Dr. Joe's

site at Failure Free Reading Online,

as well as...

Come join our community at

Homeschool Heroes at spedhomeschool.com,

where you can find resources, support,

encouragement,

and a community that

believes in your family's journey.

Remember,

your child's story isn't written yet,

and every step you take

today brings them closer to

tomorrow's success.

Thank you for spending time with us today.

And if you're encouraged by

this conversation, please subscribe,

leave a review,

share this episode with

another parent who needs a

little extra help.

And until next time, keep leaning in,

keep believing,

and keep empowering your

homeschool journey.

Take care and God bless.

Bye, everybody.

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