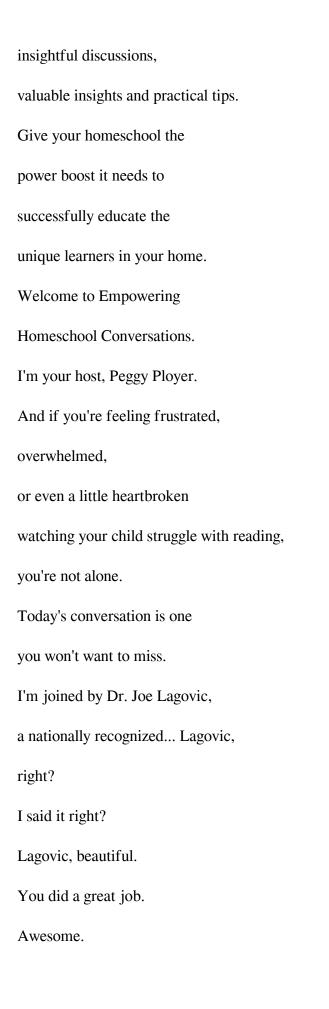
welcome to empowering homeschool conversations your authority in navigating the world of homeschooling diverse learners featuring peggy ployer from sped homeschool annie yorty from annie yorty.com leilani melendez from living with eve stephanie buckwalter from e-larp learning and don jackson from don 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



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

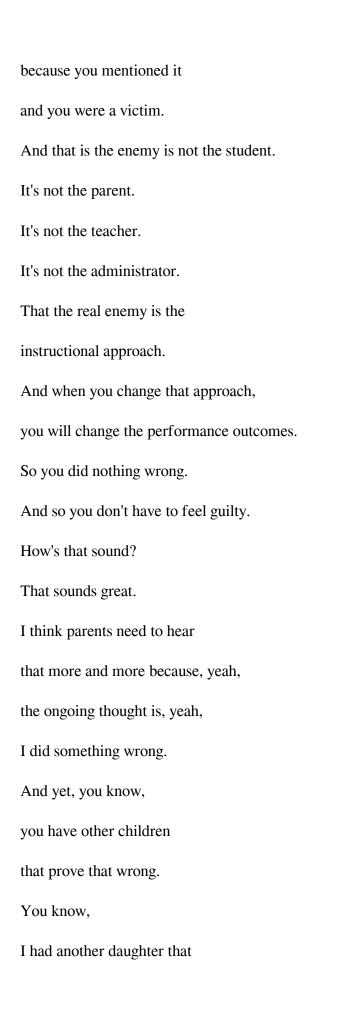
and in the greater Texas, Oklahoma area,

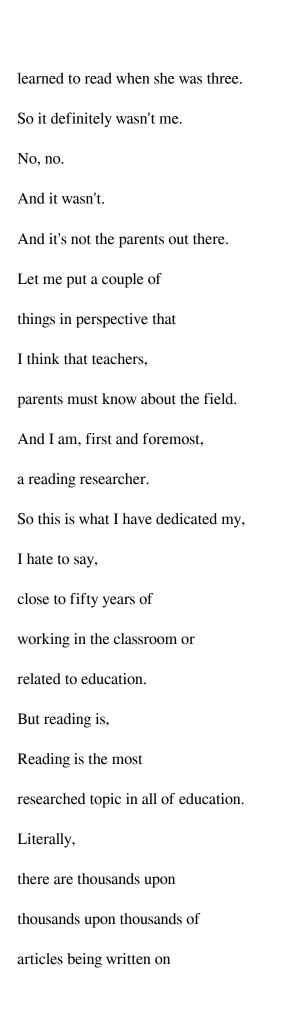
I know you're familiar with a pillar,

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,





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.

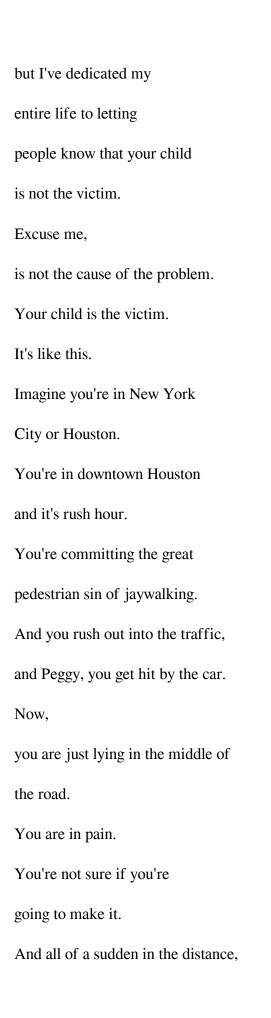
Many, many,

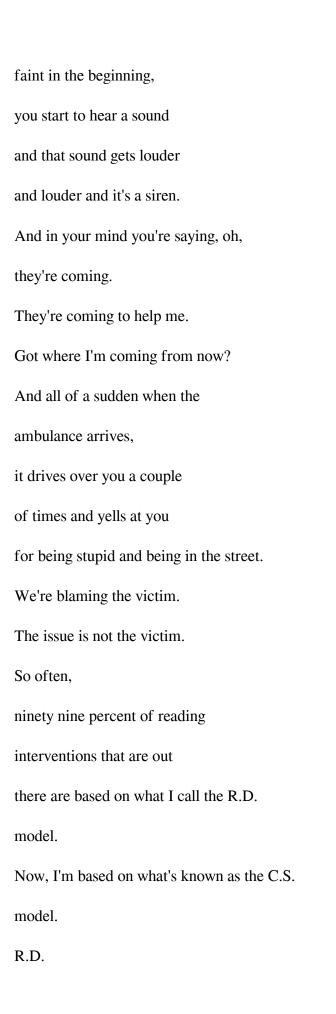
many times what we have is a

situation where we're blaming the victim.

And that's my mission.

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



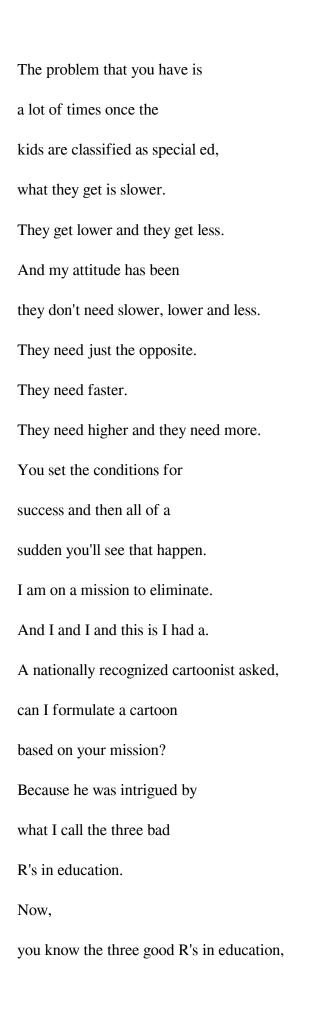


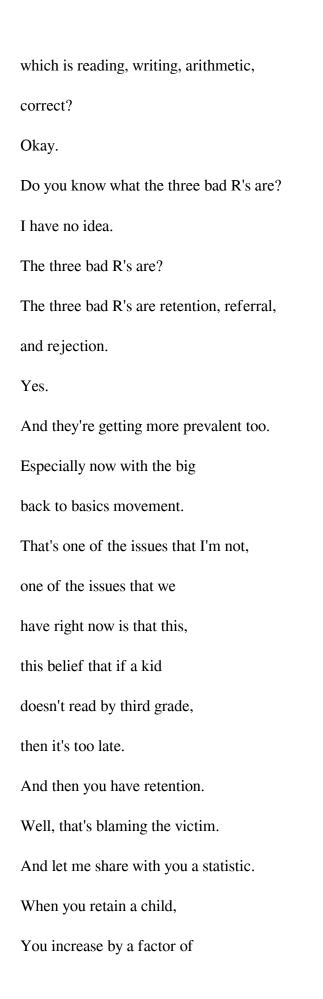
versus C.S. Ninety nine percent are in R.D. One less than one percent is in C.S., I know you're going to ask this question, Peggy. So I don't know what the difference is on those. And I'm pretty certain my audience doesn't either. So I'd love for you to tell us what that is. RD stands for remediation 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.





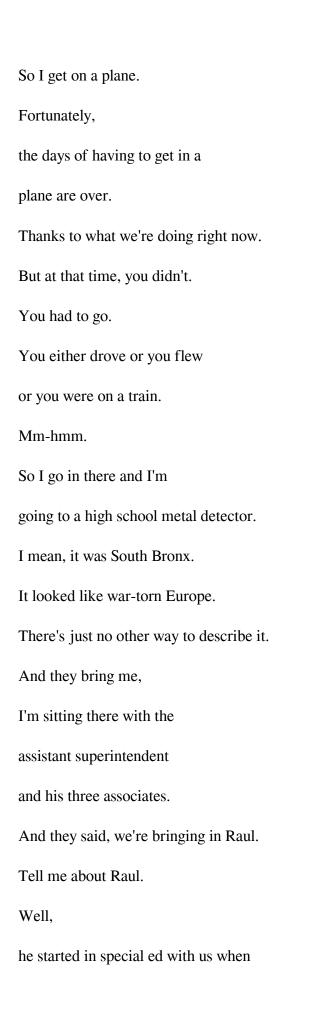
two hundred and sixteen percent that that child will drop out of school by age sixteen. So you can't retain. You have to look at you have to look at accommodations. So what you have to do is what's low. You have to look at what's not working. And then what can we do to to supplant that with something 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.

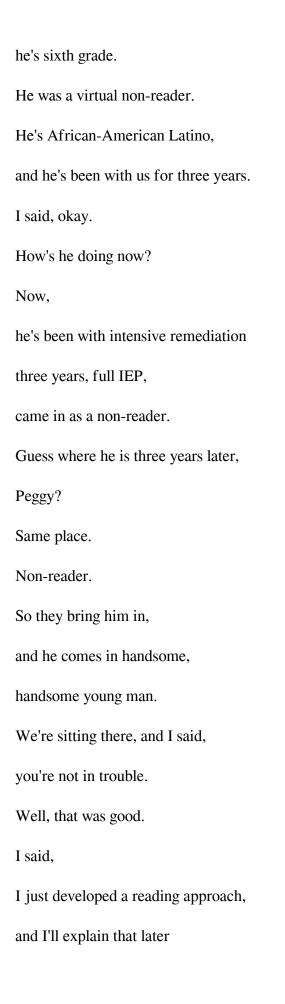
We had like seven hundred dollars to our name. But it was when desktop publishing finally started to come in and you could start doing things that you couldn't do before. And so I went out there and I started selling my failure-free ugly print black and white material. There's no other way to describe 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,

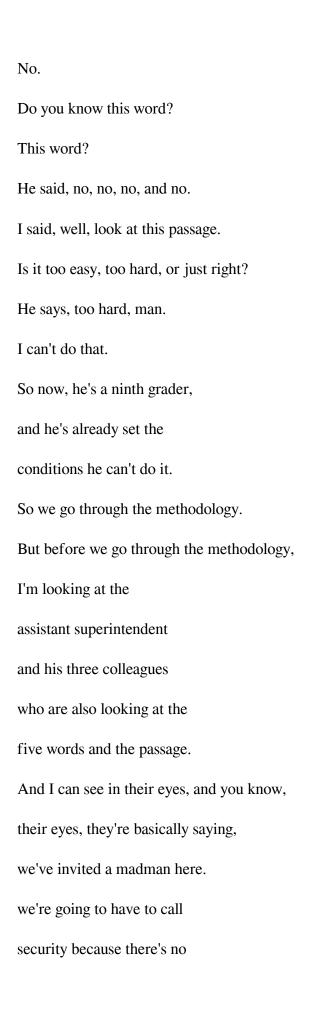
and I would like to do a live demonstration at your school with the student, but I'll only do it under two conditions. Well, that intrigued them. And they said, well, what's the two conditions? The first one I said is I'll only work with the worst kid you got. Now that really. Oh, yeah, exactly. And 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.

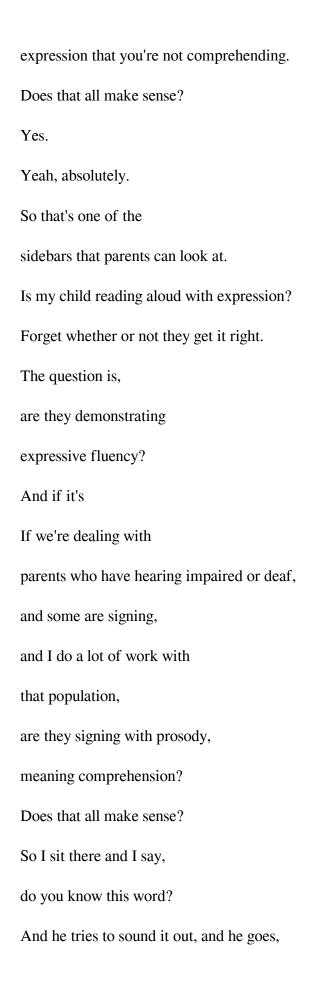


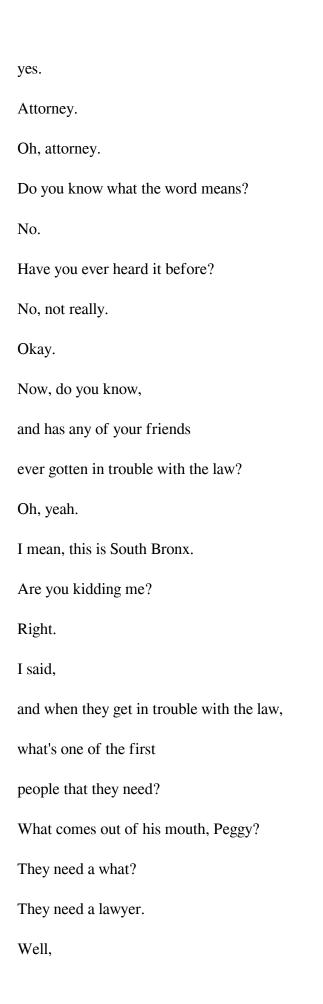


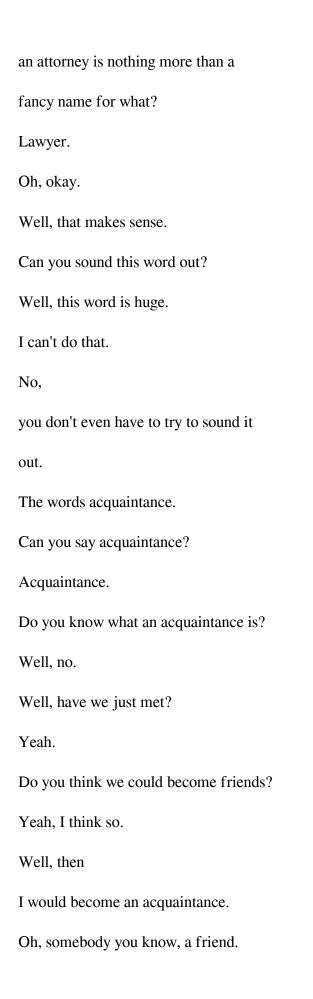
on to your audience what it is and why it works. But I said, and all I want to do is have you try it out. Tell me what you think about it. You either like it or you don't like it, but that's why I'm here. He said, okay, I'll do that. So, um, one of the things that I always do, and one of my beliefs is, 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?



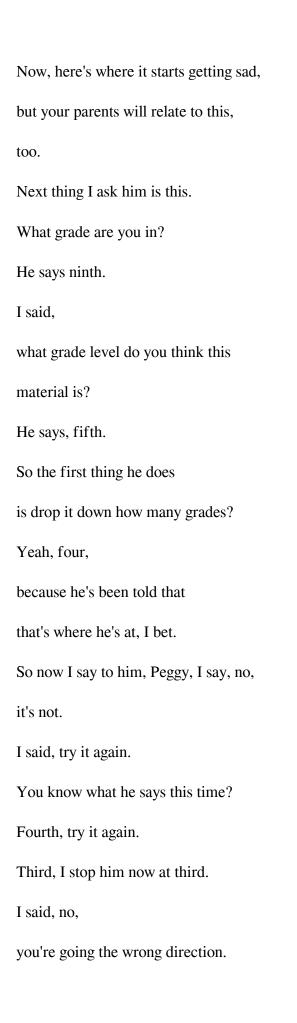
way on the face of this planet that this kid's going to know these words and read that passage in a thirty minute period. This guy's a nut and you made a mistake. So we're sitting there and everything that I do is predicated on the notion that reading is gaining meaning from the printed page. Yes. As 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

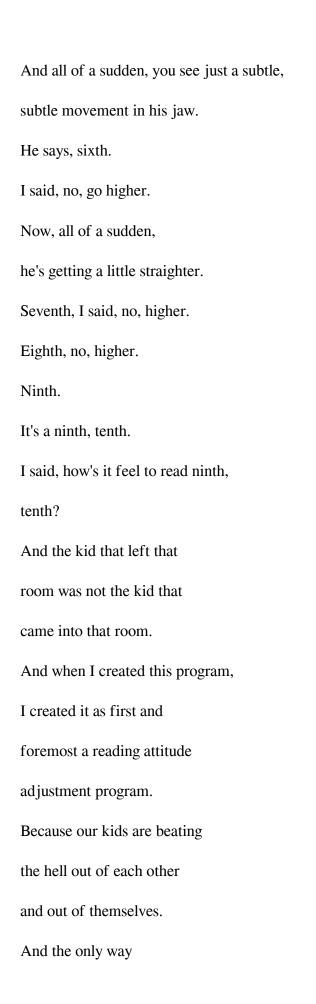


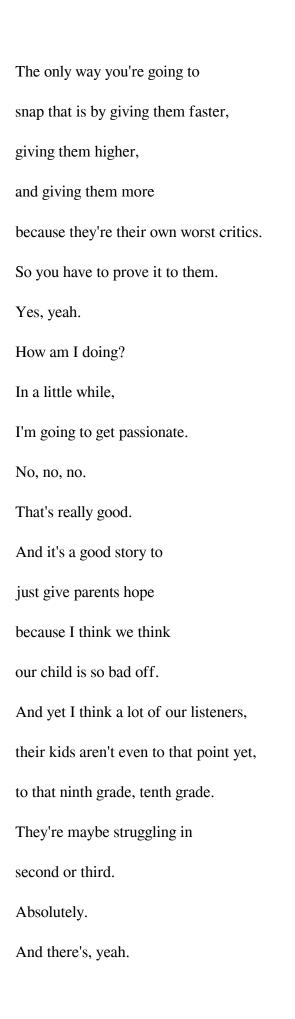




Oh.
Thirty minutes later, he is reading aloud,
just like I'm going to read right now.
Okay?
He takes the passage and he reads this.
And this is exactly how he's reading it.
The attorney and her acquaintance
were astounded by the size
of the rock singer's house.
The house was large enough
to accommodate 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.

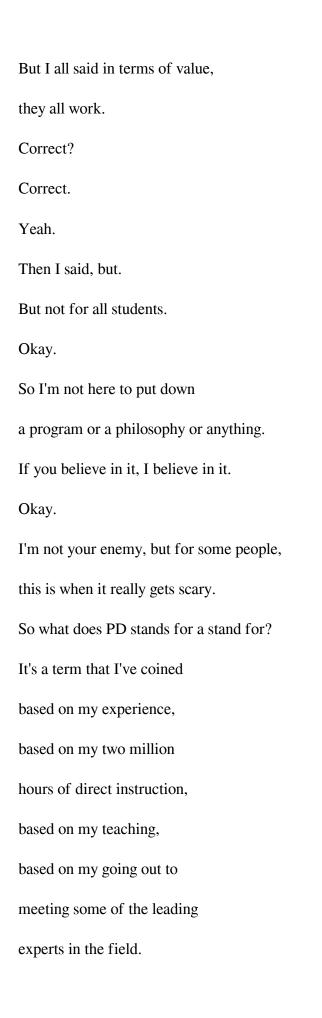


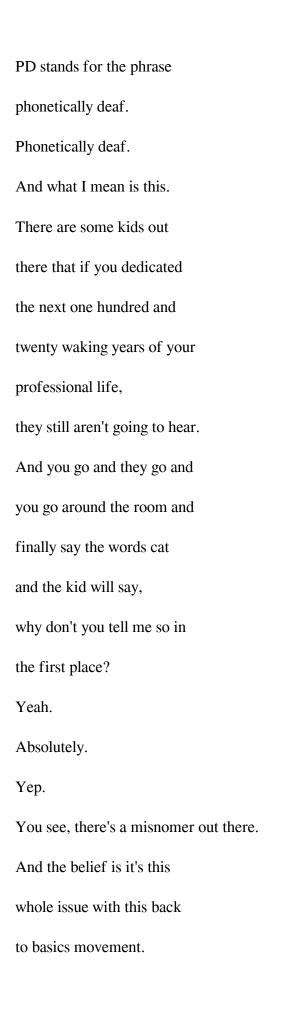




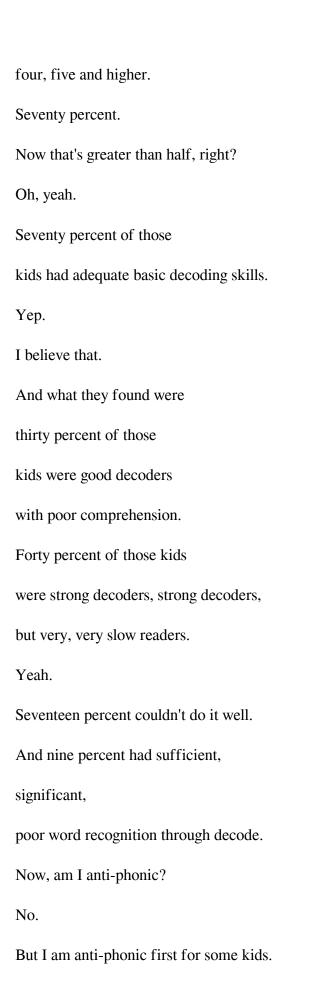
Yeah. And so let me share with you what my research has found. In my book, which I'm getting ready to rewrite, in my white paper I'm doing as we speak, but I wrote it twenty some odd years ago and it is as valuable today as it was then. And I call the book The Failure-Free Methodology, New Hope for Non-Readers. 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.





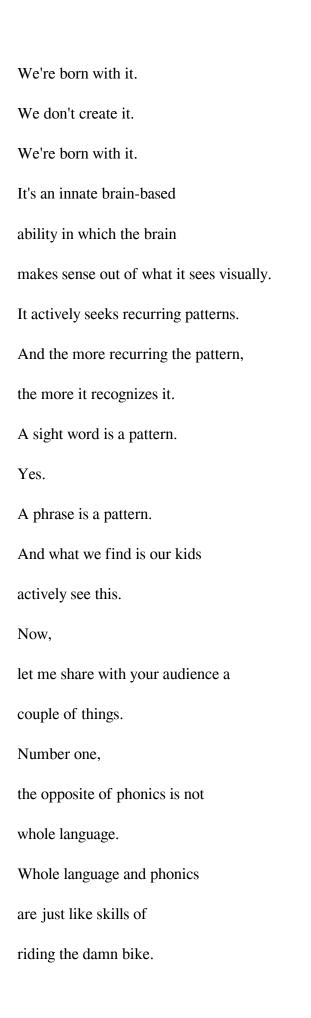
The back to basics movement is some, Oh, well the reason why the kid, the reason why you didn't do this, you never got phonics. Well, you got a lot of kids. Let me share with you the research. There's, there's the illusion and there's the reality. When you start looking at chronically struggling kids, 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,



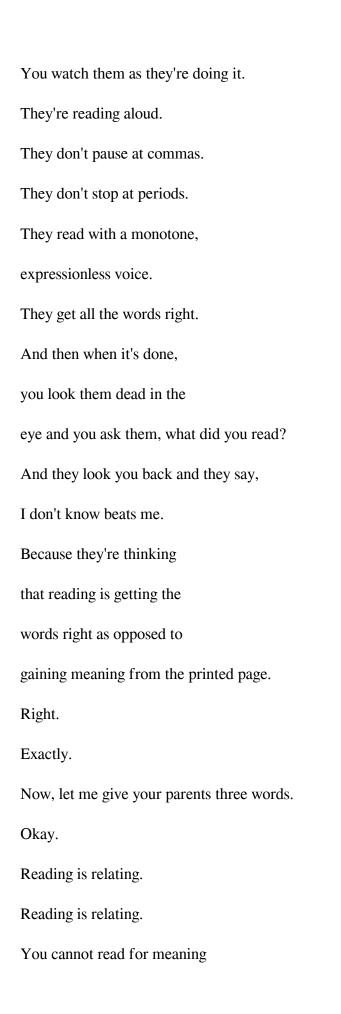
If you're a parent of a deaf or if you look at deaf kids, one of the things, look, I'm going to teach you how to ride a bike one of two ways, okay? Both ways are equally effective. So I'm not here to tell you one way other than the other. I'm just, but there are two totally different ways of achieving 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

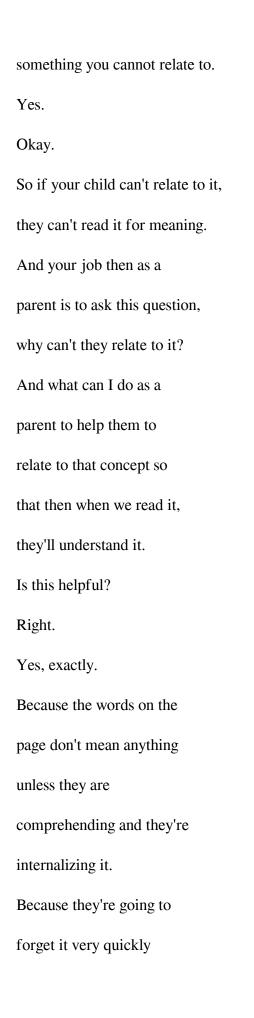
I don't care if it's a day. I don't care if it's a week, a month, a year. You ain't getting on that damn bike until you tell me about wheels, spokes, handlebars, gears, brake pedals. I got a question to ask, Peyton. Is there another way that I could teach you how to ride that bike? Just to get on it? 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.



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 again, whether it's sounding words out, whether it's seeing a word on a flashcard, what you'll find in





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

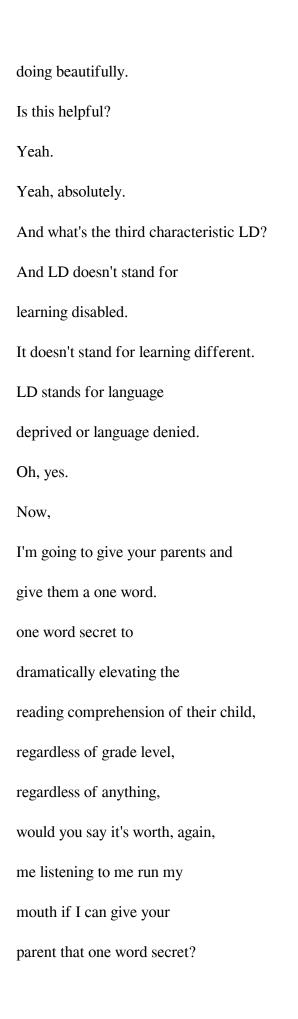
general background knowledge or

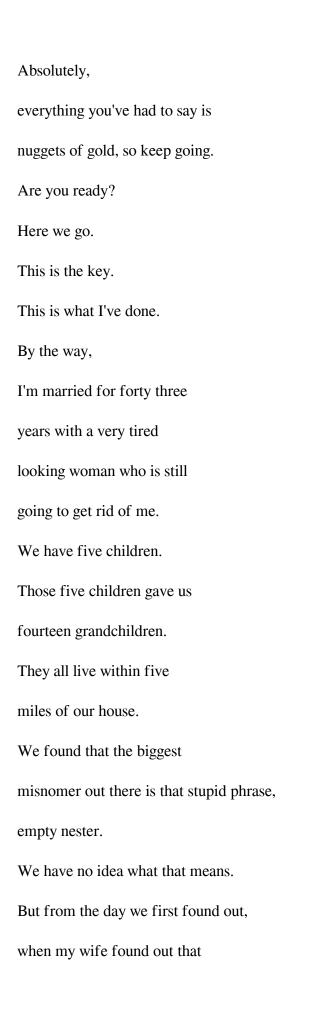
You have a lot of kids who

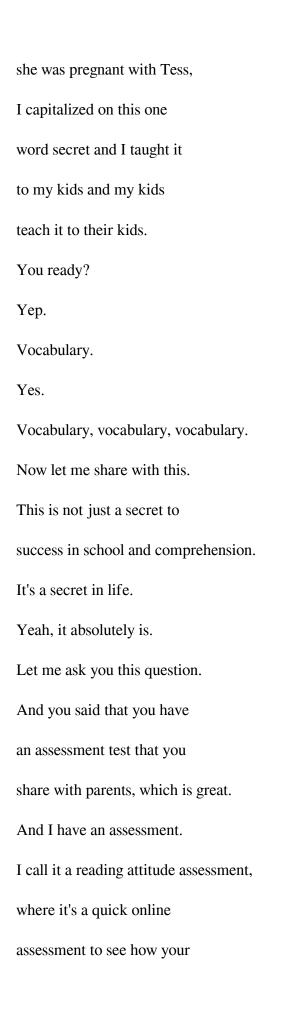
are coming into the

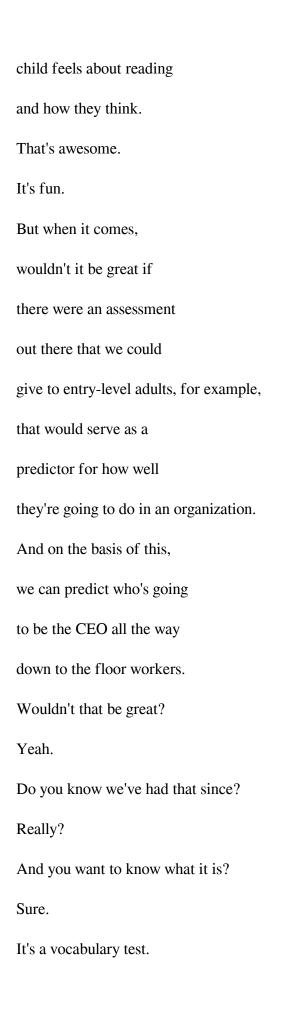
classroom where English is

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

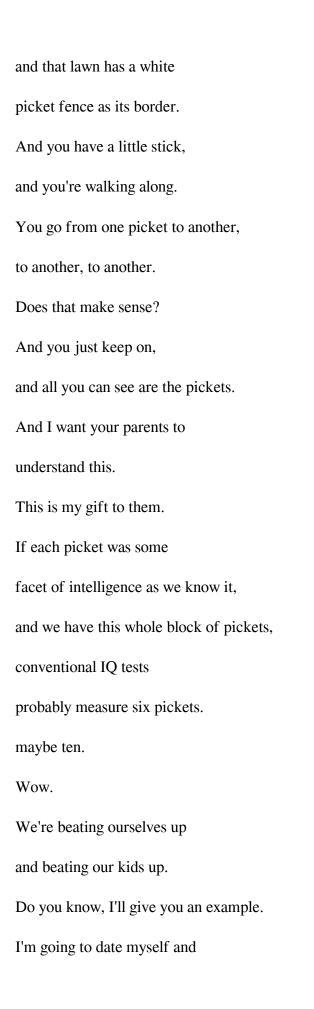


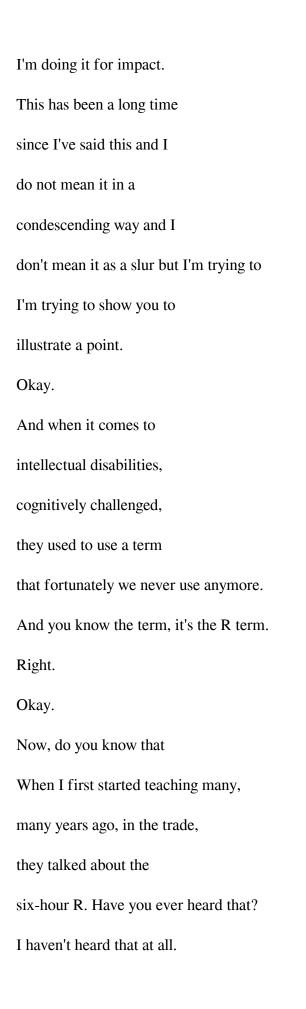






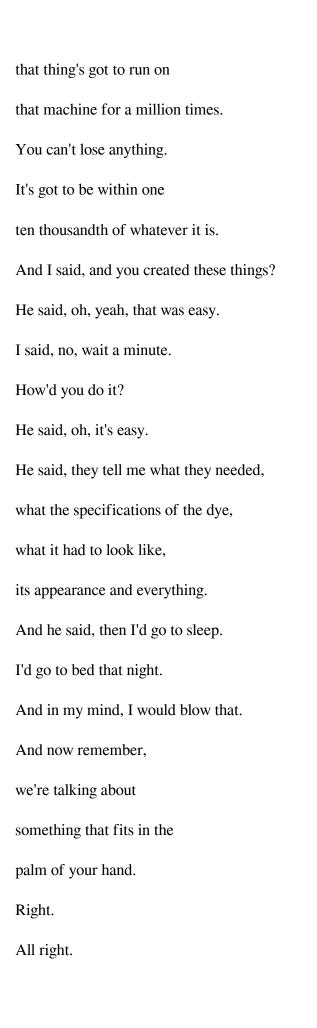
Researchers found that when they gave a vocabulary test that the CEO had the greatest vocabulary, as opposed to those who were, um, At the lower ranks. Interesting. So we are by design a highly verbal society. Absolutely. We are judged the moment we open up our mouths. And I want parents to understand 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,





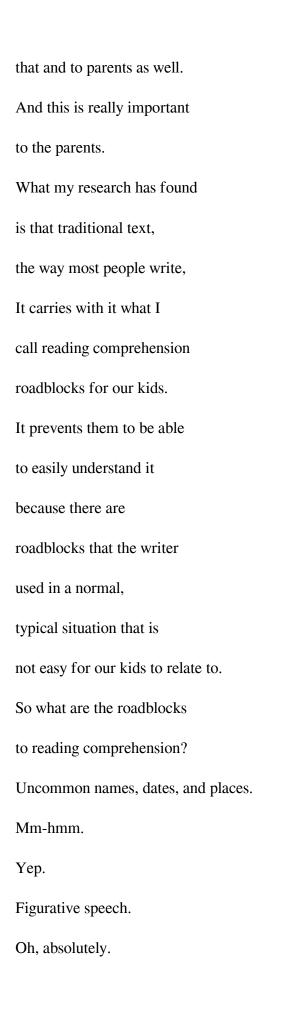
Do you know what they were saying there? The kid was only R the six hours he was in school. Interesting. You take him outside of school, And he was making money, selling things, doing whatever he was. Yeah. Because it all had to do with the comparison academically than what the child's true capacity 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

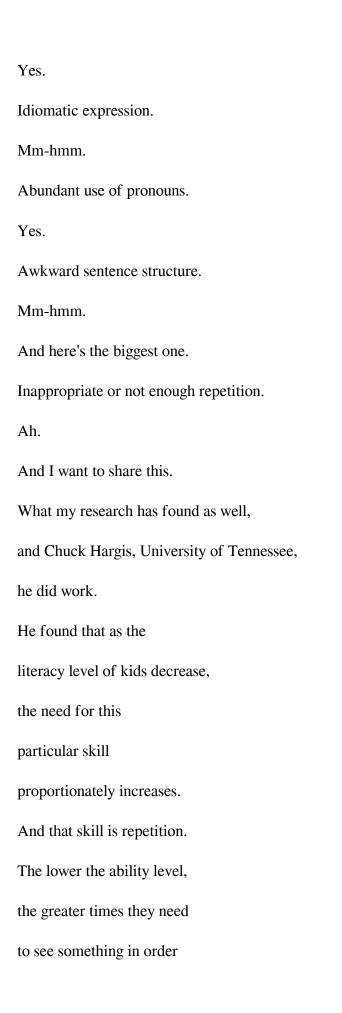
was it was quite a shock and and he was um just really a really nifty guy and uh and and he was a by traded tool and die maker and so he um but he was not He was not formally educated. At that time, he had, at best, a high school education. And he always equated my degrees with intelligence, that I was 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,



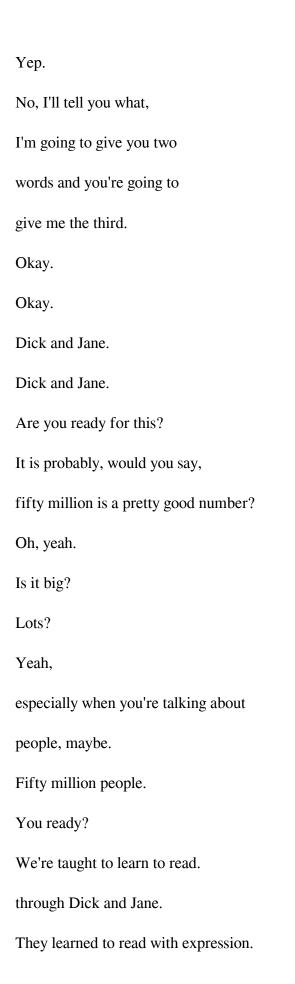
He said,
I would blow that dye up in my
mind to where it was thirty stories high.
And then I would just walk
around inside the dye and
go up and down the
different flights of stairs
until I knew how to create it.
I said, what?
That's fascinating.
You did what?
Okay.
Now, I'm sitting with a man who,
in 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.

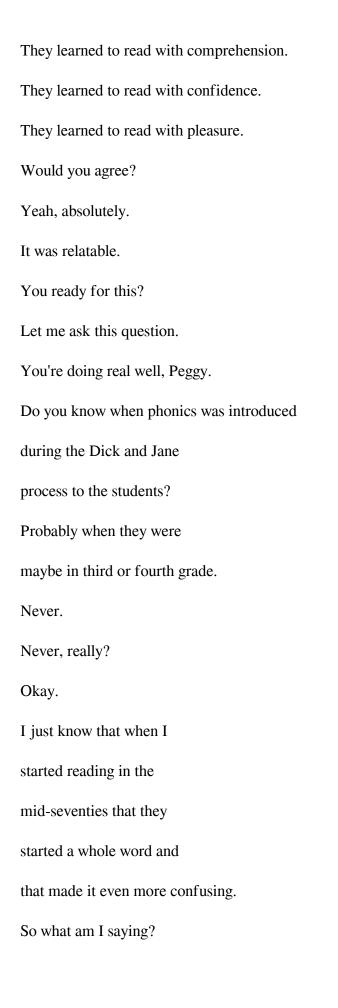
So what else did I find? And this is for the parents or for you. This is Frida Ebert's work. She's a tremendous researcher out at the University of California. And she said, text, T-E-X-T, text, the print, does matter in the teaching of reading. And what she found was that, and what I found, and that's 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



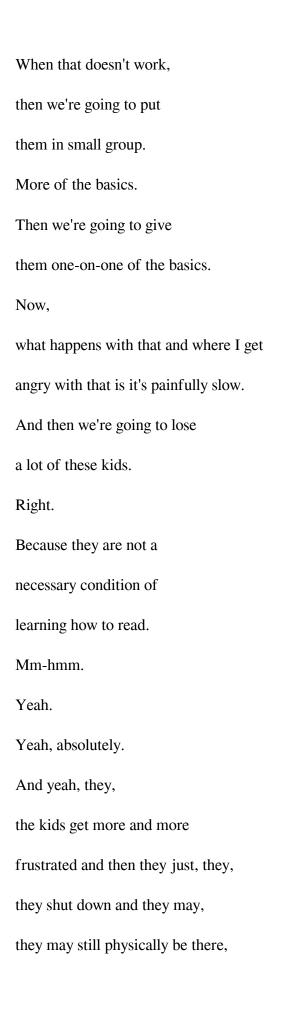


to recognize it independently. Traditional reading material is not repetitious enough for our kids. Yeah, I believe that. Especially with the back to basics movement, where they're saying we're only going to show the kid the word once, they either sound it out or they don't. And let me also share one 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?





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.



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,

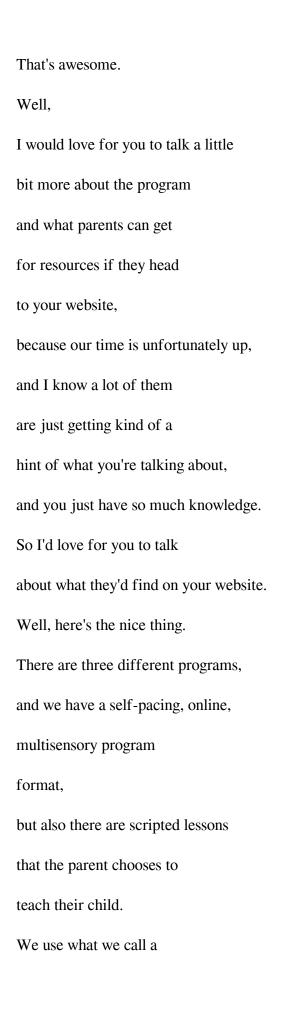
I couldn't find a student

or an adult that didn't

have an immediate and

successful reading experience.

And that's why I called it Failure Free.



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.

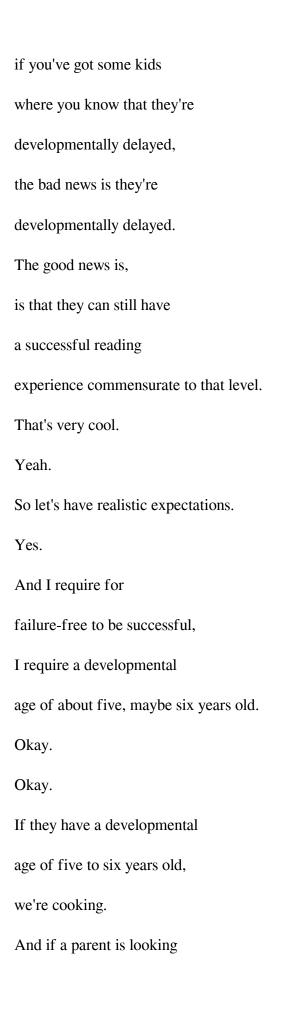
Do not water down what

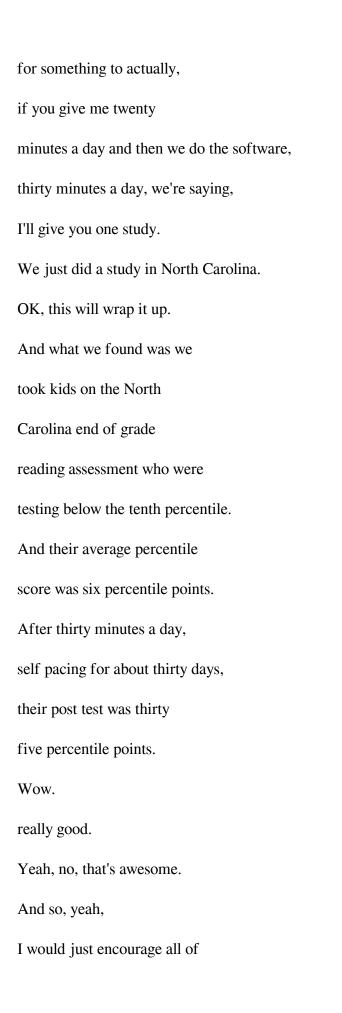
you're getting into their

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,





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

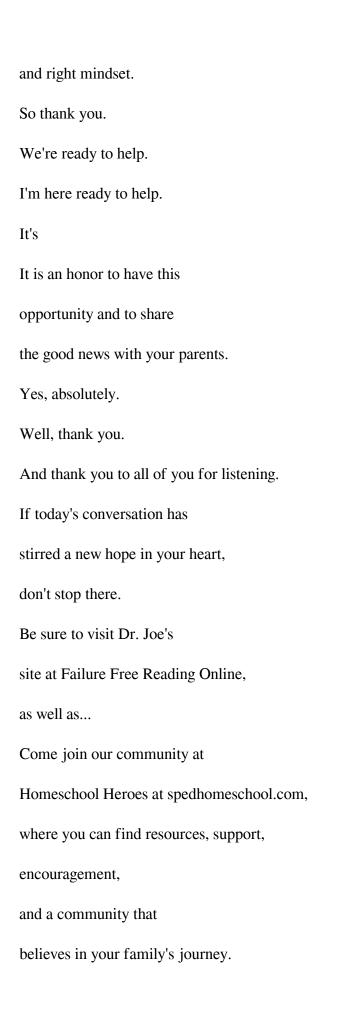
to get discouraged,

but you've reminded us over

and over again that there

is a way forward and we

just need the right tools



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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.
This has been Empowering
Homeschool Conversations
provided by Sped Homeschool,
a nonprofit that empowers
families to home educate
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diverse learners.

To learn more, visit spedhomeschool.com.