

Welcome to Empowering
Homeschool Conversations,
your authority in
navigating the world of
homeschooling diverse learners.

Featuring Peggy Ployer from
Sped Homeschool,
Annie Yorty from AnnieYorty.com,
Leilani Melendez from Living with Eve,
Stephanie Buckwalter from eLarp Learning,
and Dawn Jackson from Dawn
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 Peggy Ployer, your host,
and today we're tackling a
subject so many
homeschooling parents can relate to,
feeling overstimulated, overwhelmed,
and unsure of how to model
calm when life at home gets
anything but peaceful.

Our guest today is Whitney Witten,
a mom of four and a
pediatric occupational
therapist turned mom coach.

With extensive training in
sensory processing and special needs,
Whitney initially used her
expertise to support her children,

but she quickly realized
that as a highly sensitive mom,
she needed those same tools for herself.
Now she helps other
overwhelmed and
overstimulated moms find balance,
reclaim their energy,
and enjoy the freedom of homeschooling.
Through her coaching and resources,
Whitney empowers moms to
build authentic connections
with their kids while
managing the demands of
motherhood with more ease and confidence.
Whitney, welcome to the show.
Hey, Peggy.
I'm so happy to be here.
Thank you.
Absolutely.
We're going to be talking
about managing parent
overload and modeling calm at home,
and I'm super excited about that.

When I started my homeschooling journey,
I had the biggest anger issue,
and I thought, okay,
somebody's going to die
here before we finish our
homeschooling years.

And

And it really was,
it's just a process that
you have to go through
self-discovery as a parent.

And I love that that's part
of your story because we
forget that it's not just
our children who are learning at home,
but it's us.

And we have to model that.

We have to be the one to
initiate the change because
we can talk a lot about things,
but if we aren't showing it,
it's not happening.

So I love that.

Yeah, yeah.

So I think that it that that

is so true because that's

actually it was a big realization for me,

Peggy,

because things really came to the

forefront when I felt like

I had to make a decision to

either continue homeschooling or stop.

And then I realized that I

unless I figured out what

was going on with myself,

it wasn't really homeschooling.

That was the problem.

motherhood you can't talk to

a parent right so as we

homeschool our children if

we can figure out these

things homeschooling is

really a place that can be

a rapid growth area for us

as moms if we lean into the

growth opportunity

otherwise you know it could

either make or break us right but

Absolutely.

Yes.

Yeah, it is really true.

And, and I think we

We just feel like there's

just got to be some solution out there,

not in here,

out there that's going to fix this.

And then the more you try to

just purchase things or do

all these things,

it just doesn't work long term.

But when you take the time

to really invest in

yourself and in your family,

That's when the change starts to happen.

But it's not easy change for sure.

Can you tell us a little bit

about your journey in that

discovery yourself?

Because I love that that's

part of your story.

And I'm sure there's kind of

a story that goes with that.

Yeah.

Yeah, yeah.

I like like most areas of growth in life.

It happened a little bit at a time.

Particularly,

I started realizing that I

needed to start looking inward,

as you said, instead of outward.

During a really stressful time in my life,

things were out of my control.

We had relocated away from a

support system that we'd

had that I had been able to

rely heavily on.

And so we moved and I had five children,

which would be four

children in five and a half years.

So they're all very close in age, right?

Yes.

And at the time,

we did not understand what
was going on with one of my
children and the kind of
support that she needed.

And it was during covid.

So it was all of the
whirlwind where things are
really spiraling out of
control in a lot of ways.

And I've tried several
different things to support
my children through that
because a big part of our
story was the effects of
extensive sleepless nights
with my children.

So going to seek outside
help for my children,
what's going on and how can
I support them through this?

And I finally went to see a
practitioner for myself and

You know,

she was lifting off all of these
things medically that were
going on with me, you know,
adrenal fatigue, all of these things.

And I said, why?

You know, and she said, well, sweetheart,
how could you not be stressed out?

And I hadn't I realized I
had not taken time to step
back and really assess the
state of my situation.

right that moment I really
just slowly started turning
inward and realizing
remembering things about
myself I guess throughout
my life yeah and that you
know somehow when we become
mothers we think that
there's going to be this
switch that flips and we
are suddenly you know right
five o'clock in the morning

and we're happy and
suddenly we have figured
out time management and all
of these other things and
Well, I mean,
it was like I thought that I
must have suddenly outgrown
any of my sensory
sensitivities that I had always had.

Right.

I was trying to just muscle
through life as a mom of four kids.

And that combined with all
the other stressors,

I couldn't do it anymore.

Yeah.

Yeah.

You hit that breaking point
and the adrenal failure.

Yeah.

I've been through it all too.

And you aren't the
superwoman you think you are.

Right.

Right.

Yeah.

Yeah.

So over the course of years,
really started realizing, okay, well,
I need to take the sensory
support tools that I've
been trying to get my children to use.

I'm really the one

That needs those.

And I'm really the one that
needs to be able to model
the things that I'm trying
to teach my children through, you know,
all these curricula that
not only do I get to be
imparted with as as homeschool mothers,
but also as an occupational therapist.

Right.

I have all of this other knowledge that,
again,

I'm going to be a super mom because

I know all this stuff.

Right.

I know all these tools.

Right.

But I was just a mess and I

needed to figure out how to

model it through my life.

Yeah, absolutely.

Yeah.

So parents thinking, you know,

listening to this, they're like,

how do I determine if

that's where I'm at?

Are there some common things

that because I know like

when I've struggled with

things in the past, you know,

you see those lists and then you go, oh,

no, no, that's not me.

I want you to be like real.

Like if this is going on,

this is what you're dealing with.

More so because I think we

need a wake up call,

just like both of us had.

It's like, oh, this is an issue.

It isn't just somebody else or, you know,

for those people out there.

But what can people be

looking for in their own

lives that are kind of

indicators that you might

be overloaded and you might

be experiencing something

more that needs to be dealt with?

So.

Let's think about it kind of

like a pyramid or maybe an iceberg.

That sounds a little more

like a Titanic rocking along.

We're going to hit it, right?

The tip of that iceberg that

so many of us see is mom rage.

We see moments where we do

things or we say things

that we're not proud of,

that we know aren't.

in another situation, we wouldn't do that.

That probably gets the most

attention because of the

mom guilt that comes along with that.

Absolutely.

But there's also another

side where sometimes if we

are in sensory overload or shutdown,

it can look like more or less apathy,

just having difficulty getting going,

initiating tasks.

It can look like having a

hard time really engaging

with our children in a meaningful way,

even though we're there.

So it can really go either way.

And the second way just

doesn't really get as much attention.

But what draws us to

homeschooling so many times

is wanting that connection

piece with our kids.

And then when we aren't able
to engage that way,
it can lead us to feel
guilty and at least
unfulfilled in what we're doing.

Yeah, so true.

And I'm sure that depends a
little bit on personality
type as to which route you
tend to gravitate toward more.

Yes, you can explode or implode, right?

Right, exactly.

But they all originate from
the same thing.

So those are good things to
be thinking about because I
think sometimes...

we don't associate that with
a long ongoing thing that's
going on versus, oh, I just lost it.

You know, I've got to get more patients.

I mean, you know, that's,

that's what I've heard parents, you know,

tell me so much.

And when you get down to the root of it,

no, it really is.

You've got a bigger issue

that's underneath that's

causing the crop up.

And I love that iceberg analogy because

Or kind of, you know, I'm just,

I'm a very visual thinker.

And if you think of it like a mug,

you know, all throughout the day,

we could be adding these things.

And over time, it's starting to fill up.

And what we notice is the overflow, right?

Right, exactly.

But like you're saying, over time,

it is building up.

Yep.

Yeah.

So there's lots of things in

our house that can lead to this overwhelm,

like sensory issues or

other things going on.

What kinds of things are
going into that cup that we
need to be aware of and start regulating?

Yeah,

so I think that's probably why it's
so hard as moms because as adults,
you know, going into motherhood,
we have a lot of control
over our environment and
then motherhood happens and we don't,
or we get married or, you know,
we're living with someone else.

And before you know it, there's, you know,
five other nervous systems
under my roof and they don't all,
they don't all like it the way I do.

Right.

Especially if you have a
child who's a sensory seeker.

And if you yourself are sensory sensitive,
you know,
you might have a child that is
wanting to be with you all

day and climb you and pull on you.

And if you're a sensitive person,

that child's doing it out

of love and fun and affection.

And it's adding some really

big drops in that mud.

So feeling touched out like that.

talked out the education

methods that I use for my

children require me to

listen a lot and discuss a lot.

So even though those are

happy interactions,

I feel like I need a

soundproof room in my house

sometimes and I don't have that.

So even things that aren't, you know,

hard things, right?

Like it's easy to think of

hard things like our child

having a hard time emotionally,

if they're yelling or hitting,

but sometimes it's the

happy things that still can be a lot.

It can be loud play in the house, right?

Yeah,

those are probably some of the

biggest things is it's a noise.

Right.

For me, it was it was all the clutter.

I'm a I have to have

everything in its place.

And when things were out of place,

it just I felt like, yeah,

dumps in my bucket because it was like,

I can't control this.

This is beyond.

And it's just my anxiety

just whoo and way up.

Yeah.

The visual overstimulation

that can come from that is is a lot.

And we want our children to

be creative and play.

And build things and craft

things and it does not take long.

You know,

a lot of those projects can't be

taken out and put away.

It just stays out.

And yeah,

we have to figure out how to

support our needs.

and accommodate for other people as well.

So that's really where being

able to control the

environment has its limitations,

I suppose.

It does, absolutely.

So I think that having a safe place,

I'm here in my bedroom and

in a smaller house like ours,

that is my only safe place.

As far as when I'm starting

to feel really overwhelmed

and overstimulated,

I know specifically what I

can come and do in here for

just a few minutes.

And at least there is a
space where I can feel and
regain that calm for myself.

Yeah.

Well,
and it's so empowering to know that
that's what you're doing too,
instead of just like
retreating and then feeling
guilty because you
retreated and ran away from it,
but it's not really,
you ran away from it.

You were trying to reset, you know,
everything inside that was
feeling so disordered.

And, and then going back to, you know,
with a more calm
understanding back into the chaos.

Yeah.

And that is how we model it
for our children is in that moment,
being able to understand a

language that makes sense
for them and communicate what's going on.
And that we're meeting our needs.
And here's what we're going to do.
It doesn't have to be, you know,
a long drawn out conversation.
But if it's language that
I've practiced in calm
moments with my children,
then it's just a normal part of life.
And then my child is also
able when they feel the same way.
to do the same thing because
I've got both extremes in my house.
I have kids who are seekers,
I have kids that are
avoiders and we're with
each other the ages they
are most day every day.
So they need to be able to
understand their needs and
how they can communicate and meet that.
Absolutely.

Yeah, I know for me,
one strategy that I used
was because the clutter was
the biggest thing probably
for me was that my kids
could close their doors and
I wouldn't have to look in their rooms.

And also I got lots of big
cupboards that things could
just be shoved in.

I didn't care what it looked
like as long as they were shut.

I didn't see it.

Close it.

That's right.

And so I just got to peace
that whatever I didn't see
was out of sight, out of mind.

And so I'm sure there's
other strategies for parents, you know,
based on other types of
things that would avoid them.

Do you have some top ones to share?

Yeah.

One of my favorites is just
to consider where we're
sitting in the room.

Again, out of sight, out of mind,
back to the visual piece.

There are times when I want
to be sitting at the table
with my kids and I want to
be facing the wall.

We school at our dining room
table and it's one large room.

And if I'm sitting the other way,
I can see the living room
and what has blown up in there.

Oh, yes.

While we are doing that.

Before it has destroyed your front room.

Yeah.

Yeah.

But it is so much,

I can focus so much better
and not feel that rising

thermometer of
overstimulation if I just don't see it.
But on the other hand,
if it's the auditory piece,
if I'm starting to feel
really overwhelmed by the noise,
I like the back, I like my back better.
to the wall because then I'm
not getting the sound all
the way around me it's much
easier than dealing with
surround sound because we
don't realize that the
importance of the auditory
system and monitoring our
environment all around us
it's the sensory system
that helps us be able to do
that and whether we realize
it or not it's doing it
So if we can take some of
the load off of it that way,
then that helps.

Because I use these a lot
during the day to give myself a break.

But I can't do that, again,
during times when I'm
teaching math at the table
or whatever the situation is.

So considering your own
placement in the situation
like that can be really helpful.

Also, back to placement,
thinking about if I'm doing
a read aloud and I'm sitting with my kids,
there are days when I don't
want to be snuggly.

So guess where I sit?

I sit in my chair where only
one of me can fit.

Now,

I might have a child that still wants
to climb in my lap,
but I can respectfully ask for space.

That's different than
sitting in the middle of the couch.

You know,

sitting in the middle of the

couch is inviting space.

you know, again, more of that contact.

And I just kind of had to

check in with myself and see, okay, well,

what am I feeling like, which,

which would be better for me right now.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

I was one.

I'm one of the I didn't like

my kids when they were

babies because they had to

be held so much.

And I just couldn't I had so

much guilt over that for so

long because because of that struggle.

And I love you sharing that story,

you know,

of your own struggles in that area,

because I think a lot of

moms do get that.

And we feel like we're not

being good moms because we

don't want to hug our kids.

But you do you get so overwhelmed and.

And it,

it's good to hear from other people

that it's just something that, you know,

your kids,

God knew when he created your

kids and you,

that this was going to be your need.

This is going to be their need.

And there was a way to work

it out without feeling guilty about it.

Yes, but it is hard, right?

That guilt can be so heavy.

And I feel like the more we

have conversations like this,

I just hope and pray that

moms can feel some of that

burden lift off of our

shoulders about all of the

shoulds of motherhood.

Right.

You know, that affection piece, you know,

children wanting hugs and

snuggles and things, you know,

something that I have found is that

I'm better at handling those

things when I initiate them.

So I try to make sure that

I'm initiating enough

affection for my children

who are more seeking of

that physical touch.

And then it fills their

bucket in a way that's not

surprising and startling as all of the,

you know, the otherwise.

So I know that they're

getting what they need and I'm a

that touched out feeling.

Right.

Yeah.

It really is those surprises.

I think that, that I, yeah,
had a hard time dealing with.

It fits us into that fight
or flight response.

Yeah.

And we just don't, um,

I think there's so much
knowledge that power that
comes with knowledge to understand that,
you know, we don't have to
we don't have to talk
negatively to ourselves
about these responses
because no actually it's
it's normal to be surprised
if someone comes up behind
you and touches you right
that's normal you know
times however many kids you
have and whether or not you
had a hard time before you
became a mom yeah you're
probably gonna start having

a hard time and
it's okay here's your
permission slip right
absolutely yes thank you
for that so we talk a lot
you know in general in our
society about self-care um
how does that really play
into what we're talking
about and and managing all
of these sensory inputs um
for for parents
I would say self-care is huge.
It is a huge piece of us
being able to widen.
You know, the science,
the way of saying is the
window of tolerance.
You know how some days you
feel like you can kind of
take more than others.
Right.
Yeah, absolutely.

A way that we can really

have more of those.

I can handle more.

Kind of days where it's like

we can be like the big cup

instead of the small mug as

far as the input we can

take is our self-care.

And those basic needs,

just to take it even a step

back to even more elemental is sleep.

You know,

making sure we're feeding ourselves,

nourishing food, hydration,

all of these needs that are

so easy to hit the back

burner as martyr moms.

Yes.

Are so important for us

being able to tolerate and dare I say,

even enjoy some things that

might otherwise be triggering for us.

So understanding that

foundation and it really
plays into an eighth sense
that we don't talk much about,
which is interoception.
That's our understanding of
what's going on inside our body.
So if we are constantly
ignoring our basic body signals,
like I'm just going to be honest and say,
going to the bathroom,
even when you need to go to
the bathroom as a woman,
we hit the ignore, ignore, ignore button.
And then we're suddenly
surprised that we have
moments where we just blow
our lid with our kids and we say, well,
I didn't feel it coming.
Well,
we probably didn't feel it
coming because that
internal sense that would have told you,
Oh no, I'm breathing shorter.

I'm getting hot.

My, my heart rates faster.

I need to do something.

You know,

we've been ignoring ourselves all day.

So we need to be on a very ground level,

sort of like, let's know,

but let's take basic needs

back and focus on that first and

And then, you know,

we think about self-care and, you know,

for some of us, yes,

it can be an afternoon out.

But for some of us, it kind of can't be.

So what does that kind of

self-care look like for us?

And I think part of the

mindset shift with me came

when I realized that.

If I don't invest in myself upfront,

then I'm going to have to

spend more time recovering

and repairing the

relationship with my children.

And both of those things are
going to take time, right?

But it's a lot happier for
me to take care of myself
and do something that
nourishes my soul upfront
than spend that time on the
back end fixing some stuff
that's gone wrong.

Right.

Mm hmm.

That's very true.

And in your health as well.

When in twenty twenty,
I had breast cancer and
that's when it really hit
me that I wasn't taking
care of myself and all the
things that I had ignored for years.
And and I had to pay it.
I had to pay that time
whether I wanted to or not then.

And had I taken the time, like you said,

to just be thoughtful and

to do it in the front end,

I wouldn't have had to take

that whole year of my life

to basically reset.

And but it does.

It requires some planning.

I know I give a whole talk

on self-care and it is a

lot about drinking water, breathing,

you know, all of all those things,

sitting on the floor with your kids,

things that we can do

without any extra time,

without avoiding our children.

But it does require planning

and being thoughtful.

Yes, that intention.

Yeah, lots of it.

Because we can just shut

down and become like a robot, basically,

and live life just based on

the demands that are put on
us in the day.

And then life just consumes
us when we do that.

It does.

Yeah,

we become more of reactors instead of
being proactive and being
responders to situations
and things that are brought
along our way.

Absolutely.

Yeah.

And you don't want to go
back and look at your life and say,
what did I actually do?

You know,

I wasn't intentional about anything.

And all of these
opportunities that were put
in front of me,

I missed because I was just
busy trying to keep up.

So, yeah.

You had mentioned that your

room is your retreat.

Can you tell us a little bit

about that and just how

that helps you to model for

your kids and how that's

translated since you've

found like spaces of

retreat and rest to be able

to just reset and refocus

and then go back into the sometimes chaos,

I'm sure.

Yeah.

Especially with five kids.

Yeah.

You know,

one of the most helpful pieces

has been that the children

know what it means when I

say that I need a minute to reset.

I'm going to be in my room.

Please only come get me if

you really need me.

I think just that visual cue,

it's almost like one of the

reasons that I have my earplugs here.

But one of the things I

prefer these is because it

shows my children what I

need without me really

having to say anything.

So, yes.

But once I do get into my room,

I rely a lot on doing heavy work.

And what that means is I'm

going to engage my muscles

with intention.

So it doesn't have to be

like I'm going to put on a

twenty minute exercise video or anything.

Right.

Right.

I therapy band even just

stretching that has been

very helpful in the past.

Sometimes I will lie on the
floor and there's a certain
position you can use with
your heels to kind of rock.
Up and down,
which is a very calming sort
of think of like the input
that a baby gets when
you're bouncing a baby as
you're kind of patting their back.
Right.

And it gives the same thing.
So it uses your vestibular
or your movement system to calm you.
Definitely scent.

If there's a preferred
essential oil or a candle,
that can be helpful as well.

And like you talked about, Peggy,
just the visual piece,
sometimes it's enough just
to go somewhere where, I don't know,
maybe eighty percent of the

room is put together, right?

If I can just go somewhere

for a few minutes where

where there won't be Legos

to step on and tape everywhere.

So sometimes it's just

enough to just go and be.

And when I'm there,

I can focus on doing some deep breathing

But if I'm gone too far,

if I've gotten way too overstimulated,

usually we can't go

straight in and just do

deep breathing to calm.

Oftentimes,

you need more support than that.

And I used to get so angry when people say,

but have you tried this

breathing technique?

I know, just count to three.

I'm so over it.

I can't even count right now.

Right.

But breathing is helpful.

I think that really goes
back to the interception
piece of trying to
understand what's going on
with your body before you
get to the boiling point.

Because we need different
levels of support, you know,
kind of at different points
along the way.

Even in my room,
it's a place where I can
lean against the wall and
walk my feet a few steps forward.

And that leaning sensation of your back,
you know,
supported can be calming.

And when I'm in that position,
I might try some deep
breathing or some alternate
nostril breathing while I'm in there.

Binaural auditory input can

be really calming.

You know,

it could be as simple as finding

some on Amazon or YouTube.

It doesn't have to be

anything particularly therapeutic per se,

but the kind of sound waves

that it is are very calming.

So I think it's important to

have thought through those

things ahead of time

because when we are getting

pushed to that point,

We're not.

No,

there's no thinking about it at that

point.

Yes.

Yeah.

Yeah.

It's offline.

So, yeah,

thinking through that

thoughtfully ahead of time and, you know,
being willing to try something new.

Right.

Absolutely.

Yes.

Yeah.

You just you don't know what is going to.

kind of fill those,

those senses or those voids, um, you know,

one for one person,

it's going to be maybe

jumping on a trampoline and

for another person,

it's going to be just sitting,

maybe stretching.

I, you know,

and kind of moving their body

in different ways or, um, yeah,

or just looking out the

window or sitting outside

and being in nature.

There's,

there's just so many different things,

but you've got to find that
thing that really connects with you.

Yeah.

It's funny you should say
going outside because that
brought back a memory.

Again, children just learning by watching,
right?

We live in a place now where
I love to go outside and
the kids know what it means
when I say I need to go
down and feed the chickens.

But I've already fed the chickens today.

So I think they know.

But before we lived here,
we lived in a very dense neighborhood.

And so I would walk down to the mailbox.

And they learned that whenever mom said,

I just need to go check the mail,
that meant I need to go check it alone,
probably.

That short walk down to the mailbox.

And I will never forget the
first time a child told me
that they needed to go
check the mail in the middle of a lesson.

yeah my first thought was
like you need to check the
mail and then I realized oh
wait a second like this
child is has learned that
this is what mom does when
she's feeling overwhelmed
and overstimulated maybe I
should try it too so yeah
uh-huh outside yes outside
very um easy low
maintenance way to help us regulate
Yes, absolutely.

You got a dog, walk the dog.

That's my forced outing
every morning because he
looks at me and goes, are we going?

Like, okay, time out from my schedule.

I will take you for a walk.

Sometimes we need that push though,

don't we?

We do.

Yes.

Because there's just so many demands and

And they seem to just be

like gnawing at us and going,

what about me?

Are you not going to get to this today?

And and but the problem is,

is the demands inside of us

require the first attention.

And we need to be like we

were talking about

intentional about that.

Otherwise,

we can get through our whole day and go,

oh, man,

I didn't even think about any of that.

And then why am I so stressed out?

And yeah, yeah.

Yeah,

I think the problem that comes when

we make it a huge to do,
instead of finding those
micro moments during our
day to really meet those
needs with intention.

You know,
it doesn't have to be an hour of
quiet time.

You know, I know sometimes people say,
well,
you need to make your kids take a
quiet time so you can have time.

And yes,
but that doesn't always work
depending on our child's needs.

Right, exactly.

But can we find five minutes,
ten minutes more frequently
during the day?

You know,
maybe we can't find a long stretch,
but maybe we can find those
micro moments and take advantage of them.

Absolutely.

Yeah.

And that is really setting boundaries.

It's setting boundaries for yourself,

for your family,

and it's teaching your kids,

modeling them how to do that.

But I think we feel guilty

when we say no to things

and yes to ourselves.

Can you talk a little bit about that?

Yeah.

When we say no to other

things and we say yes to ourselves,

I think we have to really

get clear on our why first.

first.

Because if we don't

understand why saying yes

to ourselves matters,

then it's very hard to make

habits and lifestyle

changes that are going to, you know,

it's like swimming upstream.

And so it's already going to
take a lot of effort to start with.

So we have to make sure that
we are really on board with
what we're deciding to do
and why it matters.

And again, for many of us,
it is being able to find
true connection with our
child and to be able to
enjoy the freedom that
might've brought us down in
schooling to start with.

And then all of these things
start to just erode that away.

So yeah, for sure.

Getting clear on our why and
our motivation.

And then once we are, I think it,
Maybe it's just that I'm a
very pragmatic person, Peggy.

But when I really realized that, well,

I can either spend this
time on the forefront or I
can spend it in recovery.

Right.

When the light bulb just
clicked with me and the
negative effects it was
having on relationships with my children.

Yeah.

when I realized that and how
much time I was having to
spend repairing after the upset,
I thought, well, this doesn't make sense.
It just doesn't even make sense that,
that I'm not being more
intentional about taking
care of myself and
communicating my needs to my child.

I think sometimes there are
so many things that we
assume are understood and
When they're not,
we need to be more explicit

with what we need and we
need to use few words and
we need to choose words
that make sense to that
child or that person in the situation.

But we have to buy into it, right?

Exactly.

Yeah.

Your kids, they know you inside and out.

They're going to pick it up right away.

When we're setting the boundaries,

it has to be a boundary

that we're willing to hold to.

And we're not, you know,

I can be idealistic and

list off a bunch of things

that I think are ideal boundaries.

But when the rubber hits the

road and I'm feeling

overwhelmed and overstimulated,

maybe the child is reacting

in a way that's

overstimulating me because

they're yelling.

Am I really going,

is this really a boundary

that I'm going to stick to then?

If it's not, I need to revisit that.

Yeah, that is true.

And yeah,

it really does go back to that why.

Because we can hold on to

things so much tighter and

with much more resoluteness

when we know why we're

doing it and we know that

the outcomes we want from it.

Um, and if it's been proven, you know,

over time that we've seen, yes,

when I do this, this does happen.

You know, like when I go get that calm, um,

everything in my house

seems better for the rest of the day.

And so over, over time,

you kind of have to build

up that habit and it is

really hard to get that ball rolling.

But once you do.

And starting with smaller,

so smaller goals can be really important.

Yes.

Again,

maybe we're not going for a thirty

minutes of quiet here or calm.

Maybe we're going for five.

And I think there have been

times where I've needed

longer time and I come back

to my children and they've

done a good job of getting along.

You know,

during that time I come back and

I really I thank them for it.

You know,

I let them know I'm feeling much better.

I feel more calm and able to

engage with them better.

Thank you so much for

helping me so that I can we

can all enjoy the day more.

And acknowledging that it

really is in many ways a

team effort has been really helpful.

Absolutely.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Everybody has to.

Yeah.

Yeah.

But, but the nice thing is,

is your kids really do want

to follow you.

Um,

even though sometimes we don't think

that they do.

Um,

and so when we take that lead and we

show them things that bring us peace,

they're going to like your

one child that went out to the

Oh, yeah, I want that.

You know,

we want to create that feeling

inside of our child is

mom's got something I don't.

How do I get that?

You know,

that's what you really want them

to have because that's

going to make them want it

for themselves internally

instead of externally

trying to reward them to

get somewhere where you want them to go.

Yes, one thousand percent,

especially if we have a

child who's resistant to

that head on direction.

Yes.

And we'll push back from that,

which is what I was

experiencing when I

realized this is getting me

absolutely nowhere.

In fact, it was making things worse,

if I'm being honest with you.

All of my red, yellow, greens, all of my,

you know... Which we're told so much.

This is what you need to do

to get this result.

And yet, no.

Yeah, you know...

that added layer of mother and teacher,

it's, it's complicated.

It is very much so.

Absolutely.

Yeah.

So what are some pretty simple,

straightforward,

easy ways that parents

could start trying to make

those connections with

their kids and be

purposeful about it in

their homeschooling day?

One of my favorite places to start is the,

verbalizing our own

experience to our child.

And we're starting to learn
more about emotions to
understand that it really
doesn't even start with an emotion word.

Like, have you seen the emotion charts?

Yeah.

Okay.

It really starts with trying
to understand the body sensation first.

That goes with that emotion.

Makes sense.

So I've gotten a lot of
pushback from my children
by trying to label their
emotions for them.

And, you know,
there are so many things
that we assume is going on
with the child.

We have no idea what we know, what we see.

We know our observations,
but we don't know.

I mean, sadness.

I know,

I know I had been sad before and it

has looked angry.

You know what I mean?

Like it's complicated.

So instead I label my own

experience and I start with

what my body is actually feeling,

such as my muscles are

really tight right now,

or I am clenching my jaw.

Like I am,

Oh, you know,

using actual words with my

body experience and then

pairing emotion with that

has been really helpful for

my child to see to see

what's going on and really

breaking the idea of

emotion down a step further.

I do use language that makes

sense to my children.

So at different ages,

I've used cartoon characters that are,
you know, from their favorite movies.

It's changed as they've gotten older,
right?

Right, yes.

But really putting thought into...

how do I make this in a
language that's understandable for them?

And I start with myself
instead of labeling my
child's experience for them.

Yes.

Yeah.

I've had a child that was
very resistant in the same
way and wish I would have
had that knowledge and how
to deal with them because it was,
and it really ended up,
it wasn't until he was and
I saw him kind of hunching over.

I'm like, what is, what's wrong?

You know,
and then realizing he actually
has three discs that slide in his back.
He'd been dealing with major pain for
for years and didn't know
how to verbalize that that
pain was affecting him mentally.
It was affecting him socially.
It was affecting everything about him.
And he was even ignoring it.
And so that is so important
because we miss those
things so easily because
we're so focused on trying
to fix or avoid instead.
Yeah, yeah.
I think right along with
that is taking the
opportunities to check in
with our kids outside of
frustrating moments,
because it's easy to only
focus on these sorts of

things when there's a problem.

And, you know,

no one's really learning when...

We're upset.

We know that with other things.

So, right.

Like we we learn not to push

through math when someone's crying.

Well,

let's also not push through talking

about our emotions right

now when someone's crying.

So let's talk about other

things about emotional and

sensory regulation outside of the stress.

And then when stress happens,

we can reflect on that later.

But sometimes the timing is everything.

And, you know,

sitting down at the table

before we start a lesson, you know,

in the morning and then in

the midday are usually

times when I check in with my kids about,
how they're feeling, you know, giving,
and again,
not just how are we feeling emotion-wise,
but yeah, how is our body feeling?

There's even,
there's guided body scans
that are available.

Kelly Mahler is one of my
favorite resources for interoception,
but there's visuals to, you know,
cue children and adults, you know,
starting with our head, you know,
really doing a body scan to
see how is our body feeling.

Yeah,
that's a great resource because we
have become so much outside
of our body because we've
used so much technology and
we're looking at all these
resources outside of us
that we almost seem to be

this ghost going through
all of the space instead of
really living in the moment
anymore and experiencing
all of that with all of our sensations.

It's like we're just kind of...
existing.

And it is, yeah.

It's easy to focus on those
senses that tell us about
the world around us,
but the senses that tell us
about our body and that
certainly the inside of our body,
those are very undernourished senses.

And especially as moms, you know,
the more sedentary we get as adults and I,
yeah,

we've got to be really intentional
about tuning into and then
nourishing those senses.

Yeah.

Yeah.

I often ask because my other business,

I have people turning

upside down because I'm an

aerialist and I'll ask

women who come into my studio.

So can you go upside down?

Well, I don't know.

And, you know, and so, but they've,

they've just,

they haven't like done

anything other than sat in

a chair for the longest time.

And so even to just like lay on the floor,

you know, and turn, it was like,

it's like totally upsetting

to their body and,

and they don't even know it

until they do it.

So.

yeah even simple things

peggy I've talked with moms

about when we unload the

dishwasher don't unload it

like how we would normally
unload it like actually
invert your head right you
know it does um yeah give
your body a chance to have
that sensation oftentimes
it's very alerting right
that inversion is and so
that can be really helpful
when we're thinking about
how we can kind of tweak
our energy and alertness
levels throughout the day
is just so little change like that.

Yeah.

It's, it's amazing body position.

It doesn't cost you anything.

You can do it just sitting
down or turning upside down.

And I do it anyway.

Right.

Right.

Right.

Yeah, yeah.

But it's been so long since
most people have done things like that.

I mean,
when's the last time you stood on
your head?

So think about that.

And your kids would think it
is a blast that you're doing that.

So, you know,
what a better way to connect
with them than to get into
their space and do something fun.

And be playful.

That's one of my favorite
things is to think, okay, how can we...

engage our senses in a
playful way that that meets
my child's sensory needs as

well as mine I'm all like
you said we are we are so
we are stretched so thin as
parents and as

homeschooling parents that
yes we can do these things
but figuring out how to get
them all done together
right let's make the most
use of our time that's
where we really have to be intentional
Absolutely.

Yes.

And and yeah, and it over time,
when you realize just how
much play and all of those
things are important to learning,
you're you're not wasting time.
You're actually making your
time much more productive
by adding those things in
and teaching your kids, by example,
like the things that you've
been sharing about Whitney is I mean,
these are invaluable things.

All my kids are adults now.

And the things that I loved

that I taught them were not their reading,
writing and math.

Those are the things I don't
think about at all anymore.

Yes, they all got the basics.

But the fact that they can
have relationships with other people,
they can have conversations
that they can express their
needs and they can ask for
help and they can help others, you know.

And so there's just so many
other things that were so
much more important because
that is what's really
helping them through life
more so than all of the
things that they learned in
books through the years.

Absolutely.

The EQ over IQ for sure.

That's totally invaluable.

Yeah.

Yeah.

So I would love for you to
share and you share the one tool with us,
other things you found
helpful and then where our
listeners can find more
about you and the services
that you offer.

Yeah,

so I some other tools that I found
that have been helpful are.
having headphones that I can
find quiet even with my
children yes and I know
that the earplugs seem to
kind of be gaining
popularity but I you know
if you can tolerate having
that sensation of them in
your ear I can still
participate with my
children and be with them
and they can enjoy running

all over the house playing

hide and seek and shrieking

And enjoy it without feeling

like I'm going to crawl out of my skin.

Right.

It doesn't it doesn't

exclude me and it doesn't

make them feel like they aren't heard.

It includes me in what's going on.

So having the auditory

support has been really helpful for me.

Yeah,

the therapy band is super

transportable and is a way

for me to get that in the car,

especially the older our children get,

the more time we're

spending out and about.

So I'm all for things that I

can transport.

Lots of oral motor input for

myself that's grounding through my jaw,

chewing gum, anything that I can suck,

like candy.

or, you know, a mint,

that sort of thing can be

really calming and on the go.

Chewy straws are really helpful for me.

Yeah,

I'm kind of dumping on you here at

the end.

But yeah, little things that it's like,

you know,

there's not many sensory

supports that across the board,

I can say would pretty much help anyone,

but not some of them.

For those moments that I just get really,

really overstimulated and I'm done,

cold can really help me regulate that.

And so I have a few

different ice tools that I

keep in the freezer.

But if I can't get somewhere

where I can just like

splash cold water on my face,

then I can grab something
like that and really, you know,
work on the front of my
face and just regulate that way.

So those are some kind of
handy tools that I probably
use pretty regularly.

And I wouldn't ignore the
benefit of weighted
blankets for adults as well as children.
I know we use that a lot for our kiddos,
but if you don't have a weighted blanket,
speaking of being playful,
something that my kids have
loved doing is piling
pillows and blankets on top of me.

I'll come to my room.

I know mommy needs a minute.

But, you know, but first, you know,
everybody go grab all the
pillows and blankets and
come throw them on me on the bed.

And so then it's kind of a fun thing,

right?

Because you're getting to

cover me with stuff.

And then I get a sensory break as well.

Yeah.

I found Kelly Mahler.

I think I've mentioned her.

She has great resources for

interoception and anything.

Here's a title too loud, too tight,

too fast, too bright.

Have you,

heard that I haven't no um

that's written what to do

if you're a sensory

defensive in an over

stimulating world so if

you're if anyone's a reader

it's very dense some

science stuff in there but

but it's very helpful and

um lastly I would say mona

delahook does a really good

job of bringing um that
self-regulation talk into
the world of the child
And she also does talk as
well about the parental
piece and the importance of
the parental
self-regulation in that relationship.

So she does a great job of
taking the science-y talk
and bringing it down to
everybody's language and how
it applies to that parent
child relationship.

So absolutely.

And of course more people
need to talk about this.

And so that's what I do.

I, I,

I coach moms and I coach one-on-one
because so much of this is
a habit change that we're talking about.

It's,

it's not going to happen overnight and,

And it is much easier when

it takes place in the

course of a relationship with someone.

So really unpack what this

looks like in a mom's life

and in that family situation,

because oftentimes, you know,

it is just so multifaceted.

So we deep dive in coaching

and we figure out what's

going on and what are ways to

that we can look at the family as a whole,

but with the goal of

supporting mom through those moments.

So I coach one-on-one and I

also provide workshops as well.

And I have some free

resources to get started.

The website is

sensationalmoms.com and

there's twenty-five ways to

get started with

self-regulation as well as

Three things you can do to

reset during those I've had

enough moments.

So like when I've headed to

the retreat spot,

what do you do instead of

just sitting there and crying?

Right, exactly.

Been there, done that.

Yeah.

Yeah.

So what are things you can

do once you have gotten to that point?

So those resources are free

and available on the website as well.

And I also podcast and talk

about my stories and bring

other folks that are

helpful to help moms along

their own sensory and

self-regulation journeys.

Oh, that's really cool.

And again, that's sensational moms.com.

We'll have those links for

you in the show notes so

that you can refer back to them.

Just not even figure out how

to spell them and just click on them.

We'll get that figured out for you.

So, yeah.

Well, thank you so much, Whitney.

This has been such a good,

it's a conversation that's

well overdue on this show.

And I just want to thank you

for speaking today.

truth into this and sharing

your story and being

transparent um and just

giving moms and dads hope

out there when they feel

like life is just

overwhelmed and over blown

them over and they don't

know what to do um with

within the chaos of their
own home and and how to
kind of bring that back to um
a place of peace.

But thank you for all that
you shared and all that you
do to help families.

It's a blessing.

Absolutely.

Thank you, Peggy.

I've really enjoyed it.

I'm just doing what I wish I had had,
right?

That's so many of our stories.

Yes, absolutely.

That's mine, too.

So, yeah.

So, yeah.

Well,

thank you all for tuning in today's
episode of Empowering

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and encouragement on your
homeschooling journey,
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that's here for you every
step of the way.

Thanks, everybody.

And we'll see you next time.

And we are going to talk
about homeschooling hacks
for neurodivergent families
with a mom of eight who has
very kids all over the
spectrum and and everywhere
else who has a lot of wisdom to share.

So you'll want to come back
for that episode next time.

So thanks, everybody.

And we will see you next
time right here on

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