

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.

Thank you.

Hey, friends.

Welcome back to Empowering
Homeschool Conversations.

I'm so glad you're joining us today.

Whether you're washing dishes,
wrangling little ones,
or finally sitting down for
a minute with a cup of something warm,
you're in good company.

Today's episode is a little different.

We don't just have a guest joining us,
but we have almost our
whole team here to have an honest,
open conversation about
something that's so real
for every homeschool parent at some point,
emotional overwhelm.

Whether it's constant demands,
all the pressure to do it all right,
the never-ending to-do list,
or just carrying the weight
of so much for our kids.

Emotional overload can sneak
in and suddenly it feels
like just too much.

So we're going to talk about it,
what it looks like, how we've experienced,
what's helped us go through it,
and how we can offer each
other grace along the way.

And before we dive in,
don't forget to check out

Homeschool Heroes at spedhomeschool.com.

If you're in a hard season
and need support, encouragement,
or just some practical
tools for making things easier,
there's a treasure trove
waiting for you there.

All right, ladies,

let's jump into this conversation.

Overcoming emotional

overwhelm in homeschooling.

You ready?

Yeah.

Maybe.

More or less.

Yeah.

All right.

So what does emotional

overwhelm look like for you personally?

I know it can be different.

Different people handle it differently.

So let's give it some faces.

Well, when I was,

emotional overwhelm looks different,

has looked different over time for me.

Oh, good point.

And initially in the early

days when I was still

younger and full of energy,

it more came out in anger.

Like it was easy to get

angry at people because my
situation made me angry.

And then over time,

I don't know if it was age

or exhaustion or whatever,

then it became more shutting down.

So originally I would just get, you know,

anger would come out.

And then later it was more

just shutting down or thinking like,

I don't care.

I don't care anymore.

Yeah.

I would say I have sort of

the same experience where

it's tempered over time, you know.

But initially, when I feel overwhelmed,

I'll tend to just push harder.

And not just myself, but my kids, you know,

just keep pushing them to

do what I expected to happen.

And

And of course that never

really turns out well.

So, but, but over time, I mean,

and then I can kind of go

the other direction a

little bit when I get to

the point where that even isn't working,

I'll get to where I sort of

avoid the priorities in my life,

but because they seem harder.

So I,

I find something that helps me escape

from it, the feelings or whatever,

and avoid it.

So yeah, there's,

it depends where I'm at in the flow of it,

but,

Yeah.

None of that works out real well.

Yeah.

Yeah, exactly.

Yeah.

I can relate with both of

you and all of that.

And, you know, I,

I just catch myself sometimes, you know,

sitting on the couch going,

I just don't want to do a thing.

I just want to sit here and

I don't even want to sit here.

You know, I,

I'll like go outside and just

like lay down on the

concrete and fall asleep.

I

I've done that multiple

times just in the back.

Well, we have a pool, but I mean,

next to the pool and I'm just,

I'm out and just want to

check out of life.

Yeah, absolutely.

What about you, Dawn?

Yeah, I think for me,

when I think about that,

it always had to do with

getting enough rest.

And if I didn't get enough sleep,
if I was doing too much or
burning the candle at both ends,
that happened pretty much
after my third child.

I just felt like my duties
and all the different
things I was trying to do,
I was running a business
and then homeschooling, having a baby.
It was just a lot.

Yeah.

But I didn't like have that
compassion for myself to say,
you're doing too much, you know,
you're doing a lot.

And so I just remember feeling really worn,
like just worn out.

Yeah, yeah.

That's a very good word for it, I think.

You think back to like the
velveteen rabbit and all
the fur being gone.

It's like, no, this hurts.

I don't want it anymore.

Absolutely.

So can you think of a

specific moment when you

felt like everything was just too much?

What was going on?

Can you think back to anything like that?

Yeah.

One comes to mind right away for me.

There was one year where it

was like the spring.

So we were, you know,

it was early in the spring.

So we were in the thick of it.

My husband was away.

We were selling our house.

We were in the middle of moving.

And my son got chicken pox.

And then one night we had this water leak.

But just overnight, you know,

I woke up in the middle of the night,

discovered water, water everywhere.

I mean, not a drop to drink.

But it was like I just lost it.

And but yeah, that was that was it happens,

you know, sometimes stuff that we.

That just happens from the outside.

We don't have control over that.

Sometimes we create our own

emotional overwhelm with what we take on.

But sometimes it just happens.

Absolutely.

Yes.

Anybody else?

That's like three things

that would send most people

over the top all at once.

Yeah.

Oh, crazy.

For me, it's not just,

it's not one moment.

It's many moments,

but it's like Groundhog Day.

It's the same moment over and over.

Oh, yes.

And that is dealing with
irrational behaviors that
just don't make sense.

Because when a kid's in fight or flight,
you can't reason with them.

There's no making sense of the behavior.

There's no way to ask if
your child is nonverbal like mine.

And it's kind of a one-sided conversation.

And that's,
so it's the groundhog day of
irrational behavior for me.

Yeah, yeah.

I remember when we had our
three foster kids that we
were doing emergency foster care for,
and I was getting two hours
of sleep at night.

And yeah, and they were all, you know,
they were toddlers.

One was preschool,
the other two were toddlers, the twins.

And

I lost it.

I just like crumpled into a

mess on the floor and I'm like,

I can't do this anymore.

You know,

the trauma that they were trying

to deal with and not being

able to express it,

the support that I was not getting,

even though I'd asked

multiple places for it.

that,

that was what broke the camel's back

and ended up,

they had to shift to other

family members because our

family just was falling apart.

And, you know, that's,

that's hard because it was

something that we really

felt like we were called to do.

But then after praying more,

after all that changed, you know,

God just really gave us peace that this,
their, their time with us for,
was for a time.

It wasn't that we were
called to care for them long-term.

Um,

But I think you have to come
to a place of healing in
that or resolution,
because otherwise the
overwhelm can just continue
to eat at you even when it's over.

And we forget about that side of overwhelm,
that we can beat ourselves
up that we fell apart.

And yet we're human.

We fall like a failure.

Yeah, absolutely.

Absolutely.

Peggy, that's a lot.

I don't know if I could have
ever done that.

No way.

It was.

That sounds amazing.

I think for me,

when I think of overwhelm

when I was homeschooling,

it had a lot to do with

this idea that I had to do

so much and have things perfect.

I was at that time trying to

recreate the classroom in my home.

Especially around that time

when I would get all the new curriculum,

there was just this huge

feeling of I have to figure

all of this out I have to

know how this is going to

work I have to create a

schedule and I've shared

this before on our talks

but you know I did the big

schedule thing and but I

never looked at it you know

because that's just part of

my brain I made it it was

great but there was just

that feeling I have to do

all these things and you

guys I didn't have youtube

Could you imagine?

I would have been a psycho.

They would have had to lock me up.

I was just cleaning stuff

for my friends and these

homeschool conventions.

And I just had these ideas

that I had to do so much.

And it was a lot of failing moments.

Yeah,

I think you're pointing to some good

warning signs there, Dawn, that, you know,

overwhelm is coming if you

are doing this.

And as a homeschool mom, watch out.

Yes, that is.

And like you said, nowadays...

how much more are these

young moms getting

bombarded with than we ever were?

And, um, yeah, just crazy.

What are some other warning

signs that you noticed about yourself, um,

other than wanting to lock

the bathroom door and hide

in there the whole day?

Oh, you get, um, for me, I, um,

I find myself caring more

about what gets done than

caring about my kids.

When I'm all consumed with

the schedule and missing

those cues that my kids

give me and if I'm snapping

at them or whatever, conflicts,

that kind of thing can

really be a sign of being overwhelmed.

you know, also there are physical signs,

you know,

our bodies can only go so far

when we're overwhelmed.

So just, you know,
being tired or maybe just
always feeling panicky, you know,
that you're not getting
enough done or your
thoughts just keep
recycling over and over and
over and you can't sleep.

Um,
things like always running late or
forgetting appointments,
things like that are a clue
that we should pause and, um,
you know, take stock of things

Yeah.

Yeah.

I wish somebody would have
told me if you're falling
asleep while driving.

I can't remember how many times I was like,
oh, my goodness,
I can see if I can make it
through the day.

Yes, absolutely.

Anything else?

Well,

like if your immune system is worn

out and you're just, you know,

your adrenal glands.

I remember going to a doctor at that time,

a holistic doctor,

and he was just saying your

adrenal glands are shot.

And that's just from stress and overwhelm.

And so you really want to

keep tabs on your health

and how you're feeling in

general every day.

If you have no

energy to make it through

the end of the day.

Maybe it's time to make some changes.

But I think that was

definitely one of my things.

Yeah, absolutely.

So good.

But yet, so real.

If running late is a sign of overwhelm...

That's been perpetual my whole life.

Well, you know,

it's like if that's not your typical,

you know, if you're normal,

let's talk about the norm

for you as a person.

Whatever your norm.

Maybe you're just very laid

back as a person and that's okay.

That's probably a good thing.

I know being late would make

me anxious and overwhelmed in itself.

Yeah.

Yeah.

So what are some things that

help you come back from the

edge when you're overwhelmed,

whether it's big or small, you know,

deep breathing.

I have a couple of songs

that Christian art from a

Christian artist that I go

to that have a message that

is meaningful to me.

And I will just sit there

and listen to it.

And it's interesting because I,

Actually, one of them, old school album.

This one guy, he used to do music.

He's still alive,

but he did music in the seventies.

And I'll listen to his albums.

I have them on YouTube.

And I can just feel after

about two or three songs, I can just feel,

you know,

I'll just all of a sudden take a

deep breath and relax even more into it.

And it's nothing I'm trying to do.

I'm not taking that deep

breath on purpose.

I can just feel the songs working well.

on my body,

on my nervous system and things

like that.

and then um the other one I

do is I get up earlier than

everybody else in the house

because if I don't I and I

was I probably would have

been able to do this when I

had a lot of kids at home

but now that I just have

the one I have to care for

I know when she gets up and

if I get up about two hours

before her that's when I

have down time because the

rest of the day when she's

up I'm a caregiver twenty

four you know twenty four

seven until she's unless she's asleep

and so that's my downtime

and if I don't get it

within three or four days

I'll my body will respond

like dawn was talking about

where I can just feel my
adrenal glands are shutting
down and everything I can
actually feel my nervous
system you know the feeling
you get when you're falling
asleep and you can like
feel your nervous system
shutting down all your
systems I get that when I'm
standing up and if I'm like
moving and then I just
stand still I can feel my
nervous system doing that
sometimes so that's why I
know I'm like way over the edge
So in that case, I just have to sleep.
The only thing that takes
care of that is sleep.
Oh, a good nap does wonders.
It does.
Absolutely.
I'll just throw out there, you know,

a lot of times when we're very,
very stressed or overwhelmed,
we tend to think like our
minds go into depression.

you know, what are we going to do?

What are we going to, you know,
what am I going to do?

How am I going to handle this?

Whatever.

But we need to tap into a
power beyond our own.

We need to just stop and pray.

You know, that's,
that's the source of our help.

Where does our help come from?

It comes from the Lord and
pray on your own, pray with your kids,
help them to see that,
well,

they'll already see you don't have it
all together.

You can't really hide that from your kids,
but you go to the one that

does and you're teaching
them even in those moments,
they're learning some
valuable skills that there
is a source and they can go
to him and we can too.

And ask God for peace.

Ask God to settle your spirit.

Ask God to show you and
guide you what's next.

Great.

And I also, I want to add to that too,
something that's been kind
of new in my life lately is
being very specific when
you ask God for help.

Like asking God for help and
whatever that looks like.

It could be a person.

For me,

it was a friend when I was homeschooling.

It was so wonderful just to
get together with her.

She had four children.

I had three.

It was like a small co-op.

But it was just such an

encouragement to go over curriculum.

We used to do art and history together.

and art.

And so it was just lovely to

be able to kind of almost

have downtime in a sense,

even though we were still

teaching and all that,

but just have someone in your life.

And that's why with us was fed homeschool.

We have the coaches, you know,

the coaches to be able to

come alongside and more and

more people are

understanding the value in that.

The preciousness.

I talked to two moms

yesterday that were like,

we know we need coaching.

We're just starting out.

We don't have this down.

And it's just like people

are realizing the value.

And I would say,

if you don't have a good friend,

I did happen to have that,

and I'm sure you ladies have too,

but also to find someone

who can collaborate,

who can look into your world,

give you ideas, and support you.

I think that was a big thing for me.

It was a person that loved

God and was encouraging me

in that way as well, so it was good.

Right.

Yeah.

Having, I mean,

we are made for community

and we are not made to do this alone.

And there's so much of the

messages I think we get

like short messages about
homeschooling is, you know,
here's this great homeschool mom,
you know,
all by herself doing these
awesome things.

And,
and yet the community that you need to
maintain that is, is, you know,
it's gotta be either
deep or wide.

And for a lot of us,
our relationships are deep
just because we only maybe
have one or two families,
as most of you just have shared,
that those relationships we
have to be able to cling on to a lot.

And I had the same thing as
I needed those people.

That was my refreshment.

Once a

And I felt like I could

breathe because my kids
were able to interact with other kids.

I was able to talk about
things other than with my spouse.

And they were able to, you know,
be truthful to me about
what was really going on
that I was missing, too.

You know,
and have friends that could talk
you through that stuff.

Because we miss so much when
we are overwhelmed.

We have that tunnel vision.

And we do need other people
to come in and to help us.

Right.

I'm also thinking we have
two different kinds of
overwhelming situations.

One is in the moment there's
a situation or a period of
time that's just overwhelming.

Another one is when it's
chronic and it's just
constantly and it's
building and building and
over a longer period of time.
You also need to just when
you see it like that,
where it's just this
constant and you're getting
super discouraged and
thinking about quitting,
you really need to take a
day or a weekend or
whatever and evaluate your practices.
What are you doing?
How are you?
What are your expectations?
Are they?
in line with reality, you know,
are they realistic?
And just think about,
try to pinpoint that area
of life or those areas that

are causing the extra stress.

And, you know, some can be changed,

some can't, of course, you know,

our kids are going to be our kids,

whatever,

and their needs can be stressful.

But maybe there's a

different way that you can

organize your life or, you know,

that will help reduce that

chronic state of overwhelm.

Absolutely.

Yeah.

And Annie,

you said a really good thing

about some things you can

do and can't do.

And there's also things that

you can take out.

That there's things we can

remove to make the situation better.

Have any of you ever

experienced something like

that when you took
something out that you
thought you needed and it
actually made it less overwhelming?

Housecleaning.

It was just that.

After my third child, you know,

I think after my third child,

now that I'm older and wiser,

I think I had some postpartum.

And often when you're a homeschool parent,

you're in that skip of life, right?

And you're just moving, moving.

You're not really looking at...

you know, wow,

maybe I'm having some postpartum.

So when things start to kind

of fall by the wayside,

like your house cleaning, you end up,

I mean, for me, it was like,

not a lot of compassion for myself.

It was like, no, you need to do this,

this and this.

And so I think when you can
let those things go, even if it is
deep cleaning that you're so
used to doing you know when
life events throw you a
wrench like a new baby or
something like that you
just have to close your
eyes and walk away it's not
a big deal yeah it'll
eventually get cleaned and
yeah what is necessary yeah
that is very true and there's
there's other things like even subjects,
you know, that teaching my kids,
I found like getting rid of some of those,
what's actually relieving
to both of us and,
and healthier for their
growth and our relationship too.
Yeah.
When you think about the activities that,
Sort of.

I mean,

they sound really good and they are probably.

But when we think about how

they can sort of layer up

as we we just kind of like, oh,

that's good.

Let's add that.

That's oh, there's another one.

And and they just sort of

build up and you think, well,

it's like one hour a week

or something like that or but or a co-op.

It's going to be half a day or whatever.

No big deal.

And then you realize, oh, there's like.

all this time,

maybe to prepare things for it, homework,

or, you know, there's, of course,

travel time, there would be, you know,

a lot of things that we do,

our kids do require

parental involvement to make it run,

you know, we're co-op, and then you've,
you find yourself, you know,
you've joined a co-op,
and you find yourself
spending all this time
preparing for a class that
you're teaching, or helping with,
or whatever,
so you have to consider all of that, and
Those things aren't all necessary.

Your kids are going to turn
out okay if they didn't
have dance class or whatever.

You have to consider the
nature of your family and
just really what you really
are capable of doing
and still having a peace-filled life.

So no one's going to be
harmed if you cut out some
of those things.

I know I thought they were
necessary at one point in my life,

but I realized on the back end,
it would have been okay.

And today co-ops have
changed a little bit where
oftentimes if you join a co-op,
They have a plan for you.

They have curriculum.

They have all these expectations.

If you're in this co-op,
you're going to do this science,
this social studies.

And I think as a parent,
you have to really step
back and ask yourself, is this right?

Is this really going to benefit my child?

So I'm kind of with family
like that right now where
the daughter didn't like
the Bible curriculum.

She didn't like the history.

She didn't like the science
or whatever it was.

And so now we're kind of

peeling that back and it's not, well,

she didn't like it.

She really, really was not thriving in it,

I would say.

And me, I know that's important to me.

Some parents might say, well,

you have to do it anyway.

It's just, you know,

it's the rules and that's fine.

if that's your rules but but

if your child isn't

thriving and they're

pushing against it maybe

you have to look I want to

be in a co-op where I have

more freedom or more

choices because having more

expectations put on you can

be overwhelming I know

absolutely they've changed

when I was homeschooling

they've changed a lot in that respect so

Yeah.

I went to support groups, you know,
and the kids did a couple activities,
you know, now it's like school and yes,
you really have to
investigate all of that
because there's so many
demands on parents and, and even the kids,
they just have to be certain places,
certain days.

And yeah,
it's a very big commitment that
we don't always think all about.

If there's learning
challenges and now you're
putting your child under
that pressure again,
it's what you were trying
to get away from.

I'm not boo-hooing co-ops,
I think they're wonderful.

But looking at it realistically,
is this the best thing for my family?

I just was talking to a mom

yesterday and she was
telling me that the co-op that they're in,
they want to step away from
that and get a more
personalized plan for their children.

Not what, you know,
they weren't doing anything wrong,
but just having those
options of what's going to
work really well with my
child versus a group
telling me what to do.

So it's just another thing
because it is stressful to have, oh,
we didn't get the math done
or we didn't get the social,
the reading done, you know,
because you're on someone
else's timeline when you do that.

Right.

Have any of you done you
brought up something that
was that was really good to

think about is making shifts.

Sometimes when we get into
those overwhelming places,
we have to shift what we're
doing in maybe a more
dramatic way than just
changing one or two things.

But, you know, like.
changing it all.

So any of you have a story
about that or any advice about, you know,
how to do that without, I mean,
just giving everything up?

That would be a big shift.

It comes down to making a
shift is really just making
a change in routine.

It's when I think of

At one point,
one of my boys started going
to a private school.

And of course, there's no bus service.

I was driving him to and from.

So then our days were anchored around the,
you know,

dropping him off and picking him up.

And I think that actually

helped that even though we

had to shift everything

that we were doing,

if you find some anchor points that

in your day that you can

organize around that can

really help with overwhelm because,

you know,

if you don't get it done between

the time he's dropped off

and the time he's picked up,

you don't get the

homeschool done with the

other kids at home.

Then, you know, it's,

that's it for the day.

It doesn't matter.

So it puts bookends.

If you have bookends around

your school time,

sometimes that can help

reduce the overwhelm.

And then over time,

you figure out how much you

can do in that block of time.

You don't get this idea that, well,

I have to do all this stuff

no matter how long it takes.

Set the bookends for your

school and keep it all in there.

And then it's easier because

then you can plan it out.

You start planning

differently when you do that.

Yeah.

Yes.

Yeah.

We did that often when we

had different activities

that we had to be at and we

use those as bookends and

everyone thought about it that way,

but it seemed like it was
less stressful when we knew
that this is the end of the
time and this is what we're
going to get done.

Good point.

Yeah.

When, uh, when my child,
my daughter who has Down
syndrome was young and
really before homeschooling,
but it's the same principle.

I got very overwhelmed with
all of her needs and trying to meet them,
going to all the appointments,
doing all the things I was
told to do at home.

And that created a very stressful life
no joy in that life when
that's that's what you're
really uh all you're
focused on is you know your
child's development and um

and at some point I heard
uh you know I was a young
christian at that time very
young and um I heard the
bible verse you know from
matthew six thirty three
seek first the kingdom of god

And all these other things
will be added to you.

All the necessary things will be added.

And that was a huge shift
for me where I realized that, you know,
whether Alyssa could, you know,
at the time we were
thinking about whether she
could walk or talk or, you know,
things like that.

I wasn't even to the point of academics.

But turning away from the
focus being on her
achievements and turning it towards
who she was and what she was
created for to know God and

to learn to trust him.

Just that was a dramatic

shift in my life that I'll

never forget where it gave me, you know,

the focal point became her, you know,

knowing God.

And so that once we did that,

the other things really do

fall better into place.

That's so beautiful, Annie.

I know that's where we're

supposed to be now, right?

Each of us in our daily lives,

like we have no control

over anything except for

this moment right here, what we're doing.

But really when we just live

in that existence and

knowledge of knowing that

what we were created for, our identity,

what is our identity?

I wanted to share something.

I think I was born overwhelmed personally,

but one thing...

Your poor mother.

Let's just make her more crazy.

I was like, oh, that sounds really hard.

Let me do that.

You know,

but one thing that really helped

me a lot was I took Fridays off.

I did, too.

Yes.

It was like a fun day.

It was I can't say it was a

catch up day because that was it.

I was done by Thursday.

I was done.

I personally couldn't have a

whole lot of things in

schedule because I'm very

bad at keeping that schedule.

You know,

we all know my story a little bit.

But having those Fridays off, knowing that,

okay,

if it didn't happen during the week

or scheduling a dentist

appointment or whatever it was,

it was just kind of a

comfort to know this is a

more relaxed day.

We'll go take a field trip.

We'll hang out with our friends, you know,

go swimming or whatever it was.

But it was just nice to know.

Just go,

we're just going to do school for

four days.

But in my mind,

we were always homeschooling.

And probably you guys were

thinking that too.

Like the minute you came out of the womb,

you know,

we're reading to them in the womb.

And, you know,

read them as soon as they're

seeing to them or whatever.

And so,

but I think having like a plan like that,

and I didn't have,

I wasn't super focused.

I wasn't horrible about

keeping a schedule.

Like I said, it had the big board.

It was there.

But, you know,

I was kind of a more fluid homeschooler.

Like we're going to get to

math eventually.

Yes, you're in third grade,

but we're going to teach you.

I promise.

You know, I'm kidding.

I'm kidding.

But I know they're going to

come after me now.

They all learn that.

That's the reality of it, though, is that,

you know,

life is school and our kids are

learning and we don't

always have to have the books out.

And we will get overwhelmed

if we allow that curriculum

to control us.

We cannot do that.

We have to be the one that

picks and chooses how we use those tools,

those tools that are wonderful,

but not tools that were

made to control our lives.

Yeah,

that's where the divide has to happen.

And, you know,

just kind of thinking on that, you know,

there is a lot of pressure

right now to do it all.

What advice do you have for

moms who feel like they

just are overwhelmed with

trying to keep up?

Keeping up,

that's the key words right there.

What are we keeping up with?

Yeah,

some image in our mind that we've

created from social media

or from friends that we watch, you know,

and we can learn from other

people and work alongside

of other people.

But we really need to be

careful of that trap of

comparison because we are all unique.

Our families have unique situations.

And I think comparison is

the devil's playground.

I mean, the minute you start doing that,

you are going to either

elevate yourself in pride

or feel like in the depths

of despair because you haven't made it,

you know,

you haven't done it all and kept

up with others.

You know, we just need to find a way to,

you know,

if that means get off of social media,

stop reading so much.

Because you're just seeing

this little picture someone's created.

And even with friends, you know,

friends can do that, too.

I would like to say we

should all be transparent

with one another about our struggles.

But, you know, we aren't always.

But do understand that there are things...

you know, that just stop the comparing,

just be you and be

satisfied in what you've got.

And it's hard to do.

I know that,

but you got to rein that in when you,

when you sense yourself

feeling that discontent

because you're looking around.

Yeah.

Yeah, I think, too,

the struggle is when a lot
of us became moms,
when we started homeschooling,
we didn't really know who we were.

And what was that road of
self-discovery for you in
the middle of that overwhelm?

Hmm.

Was that a new question?

I kind of changed one of them.

I'm sorry.

Finding your identity.

So for me,

I left a career that I thought I
was this great engineer, you know,
and then I came home and I
had these kids that were out of control.

I couldn't control them like
team meetings that I had at work.

And

Um,

God taught me so many lessons and also
taught me just what a

creative person I am that I
thought I never had any
creativity in any of my bones.

Um, um,
but it kind of took me getting to
the end of my rope and
showing me that this isn't
my rope at all.

Was that a pun?

Yeah.

That's kind of, yes.

That's so true.

We come into this, you know,

I certainly did not plan to homeschool.

And I think God used

homeschooling to teach me

about me more than to teach my kids even.

But I certainly learned a

lot about myself.

He revealed some really cool things,

you know,

that I didn't really think I had in me.

And he revealed some not so cool.

things, you know, that I had in me too.

And so he's working all that
out through homeschooling in us.

Well, you know,
we're trying to do this
task with our kids.

But there's a lot of growing pains.

And we do look to other people, we often,
you know, as humans, we're in a community,
we do imitate other people,
we can learn from them.

But then at some point, you know,
we have to take all that
we've learned and sift
through it and see what's right for us.

And just continue to go to
God and understand your
value to him is not wrapped
up in how well you homeschool,
how your kids turn out.

It's none of that.

And when we get our sense of
identity and sense of value

out of that place and into
what God says about us,
then we do have a lot more
peace with whatever is going on.
those circumstances don't
throw us into that state of
overwhelm that we're talking about.

Yeah, that's beautiful, Annie.

Good way to summarize that.

I kind of didn't really...

ever figure out the identity
piece until years later.

I was pretty consumed with
my identity being wrapped
up in a mother and a wife
and a homeschool person and
a business person and all those things.

And even though I was the
daughter of the king,

I can honestly say that my
walk was not like, I mean,

I was a Christian.

I was going to church.

I was having a Bible study in the home.

But my faith really, like comparing it now,

I guess, is what I'm doing.

Like comparing to who I am

now and how I live my life now with total,

total dependency,

totally knowing who I am in the Lord.

And it has nothing to do with

who I am as a mother or any

of those other parts, right?

But for me,

I was kind of the stubborn one.

So God had to kind of break me.

You know,

I was the one that was super strong,

resilient in a lot of ways, had to be,

you know,

I was a survivor in a lot of ways.

And so I love the Lord.

Like, I know that because like,

I used to write songs and I

had all these poetries and

letters to God.

Like there was this love,

but there wasn't this,

Lord, Lord of all.

So if something didn't work, it was OK.

It was because God was in control.

And so I'm the bad sheep.

I'm the black sheep here.

OK, OK, fine.

And so but, you know, he's faithful,

right?

He's gracious and kind.

So I think for me, it took a long time.

And I would just say that to any mom that.

feels like her identity is

riding on how well her

children turn out or how

well she does this.

This is a really,

it's a really hard thing to do.

And I'm just going to add this.

If you're married to someone

who's kind of a

perfectionist or what we

call very organized, you know,

like a person that,

why aren't they doing this?

Why doesn't your day look like this?

Why doesn't school look like this anymore?

That makes it even more challenging.

And so I think,

Hopefully and prayerfully,

together as a couple,

you would see our school,

our home may look different.

then the classroom first,

and then other people.

And just having a lower expectation,

I think,

especially if you're starting out,

give yourself a break.

Give yourself like years.

Absolutely.

Well, and I mean, we never arrive.

When you are done homeschooling,

it doesn't mean that God

has refined you to your perfection.

That's far from it.

I'm kind of hoping.

I'm kind of hoping that we...

I think I'm older than most of you here.

And I'm like, Lord, we're good, right?

Like we're good.

Oh, no, no.

I only just begun and he was

near the end of his life.

So yes, we got a long way to go.

Do you have anything to add, Stephanie?

Actually,

I enjoyed homeschooling and I didn't

see it as my identity,

but I thought I found my

people because I spent like

a six year stint in the

corporate world and I knew

those were not my people.

And then, but then, you know, got married,

had kids, started homeschooling,

went to a few homeschool conventions,

you know, homeschool groups in the area.

And I finally found people

that I identified with.

And that was really, really helpful for me,

like helped forming my identity.

as, um, but then it, it was hard when,

you know,

start graduating those kids and

you start losing that even

when they get older, they're not doing,

you know,

all the homeschool group

activities like we used to.

Right.

That it, um,

so I guess my identity kind of

formed that way and now

it's forming a different

way and then growing a

special needs kid in the mix at the end,

you know, that created a whole new thing.

But I really,

I just love homeschooling

because I like learning and

it was so much fun and you
know the internet was
advanced enough to where
you could just whenever
there was a question we
would just hop online and
look it up whereas you know
the good old days we'd have
to go to the library and
look at the encyclopedias
or the atlas or you know a
book so it was and it was
fun although I may have
taken that too far because
one of my sons when he was
in high school he would ask
me a question and so I knew
he knew how to go on there
and look it up I'd say well
why don't you just look it up he goes
Google is not my mom.
You are.
I'm asking you.

Well, now you'd say chat GPT, but yes.

That's right.

So knowing that we've all
been on this journey,
what advice would you have
given your younger self and
maybe to the young moms
that are listening to us
today that you wouldn't
have had in your wheelhouse
when you hit those moments of overwhelm?

I know for me, God is faithful.

You know, that is so hard.
to believe when you see the
chaos and just the pain in
this world and that he's
going to make something
good and clinging to truth
that you have yet to
realize and to have seen it
happen over and over again.

And, you know, and hearing stories.

And now I can go back and I

can share stories that God was faithful.

God was faithful.

God was faithful, you know,

in all of these things.

And he will be faithful

because he has proven

himself and over and over

again in so many ways.

And he will prove this in your prayers.

in your life and the

testimony that he is giving you.

I think I needed to hear

that more than just, you know,

just feeling always,

there's so many unanswered

things that are going on in my life.

That's, that's a great point.

And another thing I would

say is God is with you.

You are not alone in this.

You are not even the one

who's most responsible for,

for your kids.

God created them.

He knows them.

He can empower you to
understand things that you
don't really have the human
ability to understand and
that He is always with you.

You do not have to do this
all on your own and run
yourself ragged trying to do everything.

Absolutely.

And I would say if you're, uh,
like Dawn was mentioning,
if you and your spouse
aren't on the same page,
do the hard work to get on
the same page because it
makes a difference.

Your kids kind of know, can see that.

And you know that you're not
on the same page and it's
just that that leads,
that contributes to the overwhelm.

Just knowing that you're not
on the same page when it
comes to what you're doing,
how you're doing.

Now there is some, uh,

I mean,

part of that is because my husband
was one who was perfectly
happy with folks, you know,
doing school at home.

And that's not at all my MO or, you know,
my own learning, much less trying to,
you know, force my kids into that same,
uh, that way of learning.

And that's not even the way
that I learned best.

And we didn't take the time to do that.

And I wish we would have,

I wish we would have, um,

I don't know what the answer
would have been if I would have changed.

I mean, I tried to change my methodology,
but it just wasn't me.

And I just wish we would
have worked through that a
little bit more.

But the other thing I would
say is take the time to do
the most important things,
especially if you have a
child who's got more severe
needs and they're not able
to follow a regular curriculum,
or if you have health needs
that are draining your
energy and your time.

I think we get too caught up
in school instead of education.

So think of your child,
education is designed to
prepare your child for adulthood,
whereas school is kind of
what we end up doing day to day.

So if you're overwhelmed,
you get your mind off of
school and get more into

the mode of thinking about education.

What's important for my

child when they graduate?

And it's not gonna be,

probably not gonna be

everything you're doing right now.

So true.

Pretty much guarantee that.

And I can kind of give it

like a kind of off the tail ends of that.

I agree with that so much that one,

I had a parent say this to me yesterday.

It's my heart is building

lifelong learners, right?

That's kind of what you're

saying there too.

Like how do we instill a

love for learning in our

child instead of just

trying to cram a bunch of

information into their brains?

How do we create a wholehearted,

how do you look at the

whole child and learn how they learn?

Take in that observation.

I've told a couple of

parents now in my coaching,

stop homeschooling your child.

Just observe your child.

Just sit with your child.

Just play with them.

Get on the floor with them.

Just get to know them a

little bit before you try

to create this whole plan.

And then once you get to

know them and you understand, oh,

they are a moving learner.

They like to learn through moving.

then you can adapt your

ideas and your curriculum

and everything else around that.

But getting to know them and

then also asking that question,

is this building that

curiosity in my child to keep learning,

to becoming a lifelong learner?

And I know all of you, like myself,

we're lifelong learners.

We're still learning.

I'm still taking courses.

And I love learning too.

And so just being able to

pass that down to a child.

And the last thing I would

say too is never get caught up in, oh,

they're in third grade.

They need to know this in third grade.

That's not true.

That's not true.

Third grade can happen in second grade.

Third grade can happen in

fourth grade or tenth grade.

I mean, it's that process.

It's building that rhythm of

teaching and learning together.

Yeah.

Well said.

I love how this conversation

has really gone to faith and joy,
you know,
and enjoyment of the life that
we have been given with our
kids to be at home and to
learn with them and the
faith that we are able to
share with them as we lean
into God and show them by example.

So I'd love for you guys to
talk to just some ways that
parents can anchor themselves in that joy,
in that faith that have
worked for you in the past.

Well, have life versus.

What's that?

One way is just to have life
versus like our homeschool
versus for your life,
your homeschool life and
just things that you fall
back on and knowing your why.
If you know your why and

it's grounded in the word
of God and what you believe
about true education and
building character and the
skills that they'll need.

And then you have verses to back that up.

You can pray those verses at
any time when you're struggling, you can,
uh, recite them.

You can teach them to your children.

You can, um, just use them as your anchor.

That's great.

The, uh, the, the,
we have such a privilege, um,
to have these,
this time with our children.

And what is it?

Deuteronomy six, I think,
talks about how parents are
to teach their children.

And it lists all the
different times and places
of the typical day.

And we have that privilege to do that,
to bring God alive in their
lives through this journey
of homeschooling.

That's really what it's like.

Math is great, English or whatever,
but that's really what's going to...
affect their eternity, you know, and,
you know, I, I have, I had a verse that,
that came to me early in my
homeschooling that

literally I had scrolling
across my computer screen for

And it's faithful is he who
calls you and he will also
bring it to pass.

He calls you.

A calling is when God has a
purpose for your life and a
purpose that he equips you to do.

So he doesn't just say, oh,
go do this in your own strength.

He says, do this in my strength.

And that's why this particular verse,
it says he will bring it to pass.
And so I needed that daily
reminder to do that.
And then of course, you know,
we really can't overlook
that we can't exist without
the spiritual nourishment that we need.
So making your first thing in the morning,
at least some bite of God's word,
you know, it doesn't have to be chapters,
you know,
you don't have to do the year
reading of the Bible and plan, you know,
but get a little bit of that,
whatever your schedule allows,
and then let that,
saturate your mind with some
some nugget from that let
it just saturate your mind
throughout the day keep it
on the top of your you know
in in your focus as you go

about that day yeah

I know for me,

it's just been a time of

being honest before God,

like in my prayers,

in my journaling to God,

writing letters to God,

Him writing letters back to me.

Try that one.

That's really interesting.

Dear daughter,

what's on your heart that

God wants to say to you?

practicing authenticity and

honesty before the Lord.

Like sometimes we think we

have to behave a certain way because,

you know, Christians should be joyful.

Lord, I'm not joyful.

This is really hard.

I'm not sure I'm qualified to do this.

Please help me.

Please confirm for me,

asking God to show up for you.

But I think that's probably

where I try to do too much

on my own instead of crying out loud.

Yep.

We need him, but we pretend we don't.

And all he wants us to do is

come to him with all of our needs.

That's really true.

Yeah, yeah.

And that's what keeps us

really grounded is his truth.

And because the world messes us up so bad,

tells us so many lies,

shifts us to the wrong place.

I was praying about that

this morning and I was like, oh,

just keep my focus on you.

I feel like I'm being like, you know,

I was reading a verse about, you know,

God is anchoring you and he

is an anchor for our soul.

And there's just so many tides.

And even if I like try to be quiet,
my brain is like going in circles.
And, you know,
and it's like that's the
only thing is if I just
focus on God and I just worship him.
then I can be anchored and I
can feel the calm and his peace.
And we just,
we have to shift our eyes off
of the things of this world.
No matter how much chaos is
going on in your home,
you can still turn and look at him.
And he is there.
Like Annie, you said, he is with us.
And it's so easy to get
overwhelmed because of the
things that are swirling in
our lives and that pull our
eyes away from the true
place that they should be.
And that's on our loving Father, our,

you know, Jesus,
our friend and the spirit
that just guides us through
all of the decisions we have to make.
And we have no idea how to make them,
but he is there and he can
guide us and it'll all be good.

That was, you know,
the verse that I clung to
is that God will make all
things good because right
now I'm making huge messes.

And if he can clean it up
and make it look good on the end,
we're good.

And don't let the enemy tell
you you're messing up your
kids because you're not.

Just bringing them home,
even if you just sat and
looked at them all day.

It's a lot better than what's going on.

Yeah.

We don't know the end of the end either.

Like,

we don't know where the end of that
story is.

You know,

it could be years from now that
we might see that or, you know, in heaven,
we'll realize something.

But just trust God with the
end wherever it is.

absolutely you always make
me want to cry every time I
listen to you I'm like I
wasn't going for that can I
just have coffee with you
sometime can I I wish I
wish we all make that
happen one of these times
we have to have virtual
coffees right here

Well, yeah.

Yeah.

Well, thank you, ladies,

for this amazing conversation.

And I want to thank all of

you for joining us for this,

because you are why we do this.

You know,

we could all be going our own

ways and be content with

the lessons that God has taught us,

but we know that we're called to share.

And that's why we do this.

And that's why we host this podcast,

because we love you.

And we know that the roads

God has taken us down,

the hard places we have been,

have given us wisdom to be able to share.

And that's what it's really all about.

And it was something I know

in my life I did not have.

And I wished I would have

had resources like this.

And so...

So, so yes, I appreciate you ladies and,

and you, our community, you know, we are,
we are here to support you.

Definitely check out these
ladies and all of their resources.

I know Don does consulting,
not only on the team at
spedhomeschool.com,
but she does coaching too,
and really getting in and,
and working alongside
parents like for the long haul and,
which is something that our
consultants don't do.

We are basically there to
kind of help you get started.

But if you need a coach who
is with you for a long time,
Don is there for you.

Stephanie has some amazing curriculum,
especially if you have kids
that really struggle with
learning like just the basics.

And

And how do I even teach a
child that we actually just
had an episode a while back
on how to teach a nonverbal
child how to read and write.

And so great expert in that area.

And Annie writes for
Crosswalk Magazine is an amazing author.

It has so many resources.

So, um,
definitely tap into her resources too.

And Leilani who will be with
us next time when, um,
we do another group conversation.

She has an amazing podcast
channel living with Eve and
she offers consultations to, um,
homeschoolers in,
in Florida who need testing,
but also she is one of the
SPED homeschool consultants as well.

So these ladies do amazing things.

I am just the host.

Yeah.

I keep everything going together.

Yes.

But yeah.

You have vision.

Absolutely.

So, yeah.

Well,

thanks all for joining us for this

real and raw conversation today.

We hope you feel seen, encouraged,

and reminded that you are not alone.

In this episode,

if this episode resonated

with you or you thought of

another parent who might be

in the thick of it,

go ahead and share this

recording or this video.

These conversations are

meant to be a lifeline, a reminder.

That overwhelm is part of the journey.

It's not the end.

And as always,
if you're looking for more
practical resources and
heartfelt encouragement,
make sure to visit us at [homeschoolheroes](http://homeschoolheroes.com),
that's bedhomeschool.com,
to find free downloads, support groups,
stories from other families who get it.
Be sure to check out more
episodes also of Empowering
Homeschool Conversations
wherever you listen.
And remember,
you're doing a sacred work
and we're cheering you on
every step of the way.
Until next time,
keep homeschooling boldly and confidently,
and we'll see you next week.
Bye, everybody.
Bye-bye.
This has been Empowering
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