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 75 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.

Hi, everyone,

and welcome to Empowering

Homeschool Conversations.

Today,

we're going to talk about From

Trauma to Triumph,

Homeschooling a Diverse Family.

And my guest today is Sherry McMinn.

She is a Christian

nonfiction author and speaker,

and she's a mom to 11 by marriage,

birth and adoption and

homeschooled nine through

their high school graduation.

She's also the treasurer of

SPED Homeschool and our

board of directors,

and she has an exciting announcement.

Her fifth book,

Embracing Diversity as a Family,

Preparing for the Next

Generation to Flourish,

is launching any day now.

We were hoping it was going

to be launched by the time

we had this broadcast.

Not yet, but very close.

But we're going to share

some resources for you,

and we're looking forward to that.

So welcome, Sherry, to the show.

I'm so excited to have you here.

Peggy, it's great to be here.

I always enjoy our conversations.

Yes, yeah,

you have a wealth of information.

I got to review Sherry's book,

so I got a little bit of a sneak peek.

And it was one of those

books where you just want

to curl up on the couch

because you have so many

good stories that you share

in there and just the

experiences you've had in your life.

And you kind of get immersed in this...

In Sherry's ability to just

kind of draw you into into

the lessons that God has

taught her through her

lifetime and so many lessons.

And so so we're going to

talk a little bit on that

diversity aspect today,

which is kind of the theme

for your new book.

And I would love for you to

share with us just a little

bit of background.

I know you shared a little

bit about your family,

but just a little bit more about that.

And then this this topic of

diversity and how how that

kind of happened in your family.

That's probably a good way to start.

That sounds great.

Well, I

grew up in a loving Christian family.

My parents were just awesome.

My dad recently passed away.

My mom's still alive.

She's 91.

And I grew up in the 1960s

during the civil rights era

and along with all the

other stuff that happened,

the Vietnam War and

sexual revolution and all

that and my parents were

just wonderful about uh

sitting around the dinner

table and talking about

current events and what was

going on in culture and how

our christian faith uh

caused us to maybe be

different and one of the

neat things about my dad he

was a very um significant uh

attorney with a lot of influence.

And at that time in Wichita, Kansas,

he was the only white

attorney that took on

clients who were Black, Hispanic, Jewish,

you know, the non-white middle class.

And that was a really significant thing.

And another thing is my dad

never wanted to join the country club,

even though he loved golf.

because they only admitted a

certain narrow profile of people.

So that was my first

exposure to people who were

different than me.

And my parents were involved

in urban ministries and other things.

And then as I grew up in my schooling,

I went to public school and

we had desegregation.

And so I had friends who did

not look like me and I loved that.

although there were other

people who looked like me

that did not want such a

diverse circle of friends.

And so then when I went to college,

I went to the University of

Colorado in Boulder,

And that was a very diverse

campus and not just skin tone,

but economic class,

people from foreign countries.

It was just a whole new

wonderful world and I loved it.

I've always loved different art, culture,

food,

everything that was just typical of

the family I came from.

And so my husband and I got

married and we started having kids.

My oldest son is my stepson

from my husband's first marriage.

So that added some diversity.

Right.

And we started having kids.

And when we had children,

we had diversity in the neuro aspect.

Right.

Yes, which is a lot of our community.

I just didn't really understand.

And so I started investigating.

You know, I had highly gifted kids,

but they also struggled

with simple things like reading.

So I started researching.

And then I discovered that, you know,

my husband has some issues.

And, you know, I mean,

beyond the regular marital issues.

So I've always been an avid

researcher and reader.

And so I read books.

And then when the internet came online,

just so many online

articles about the city is

so much more than skin tone.

It's, you know,

there are 8 billion people

on the planet and every

single one of us has a different brain,

different fingerprints,

a different eye image for retinal scan.

I mean,

It's made us unique.

And he wanted to do that.

He wanted us to be diverse.

We are to embrace that.

And I feel like we're to

love the person right in front of us,

no matter how different they are from us.

So then at one point,

my husband and I decided we

wanted to have more kids and we

We could not have more birth children.

And so we decided that we

would pursue adoption.

So over the years,

we adopted two different sets of siblings,

so a total of five children.

And they brought a real

diversity to our family.

The first two that we

adopted were Black and Hispanic.

And then the next trio of

siblings who were one, two,

and three when they came to us.

And yes, it was total chaos.

The oldest daughter of the

three was part Native American.

And there are certain tribal restrictions.

Yes,

I have two adopted siblings that are

Native American.

Yes.

But because her father,

a birth father that was Native American,

did not have a tribal affiliation,

then we were free to adopt

her with the other two who

were her half siblings.

So we just had all kinds of

different things about in our family.

And then, of course,

There were cognitive delays

because a couple of the

kids were really abused and

neglected when they were young.

Their executive functioning

didn't develop.

So on and on,

I kept learning more and more

about how each one of the

members of my family

was uniquely created by god

for his purposes and

because we were

homeschooling we could

teach each child at their

ability level with the

things they were interested

in and if we could uh

get them to learn to read

and write and do arithmetic.

Then they had a whole world

to learn about in science, history,

civics, everything else.

And because at that point in time,

we lived on a farm,

the kids could be outside a lot,

which I just laugh because, you know,

now people promote a

thousand hours outside and

all these things.

And I think, well,

that's how my kids grew up.

And,

you know,

with nature all around them and

they could build tree

houses and they could ride

horses and take care of animals.

And all of these kind of

hands-on experiential

learning opportunities were

just so great.

No matter what my child's gift or,

you know,

Their delays were.

It was a thriving life,

and the children learned to acclimate,

and they began to flourish.

And so two years ago,

I graduated my youngest.

She's now 20.

And so I'm a grandma now,

which is awesome.

Yay!

But all of my kids really are flourishing.

A couple of them still

struggle with trauma from their past,

and they always will.

I mean,

it just is a burden they'll always

carry on their back.

But they at least are able

to establish relationships and to work.

And some of them who I was

the most concerned about

are the ones who are absolutely soaring.

And it's because, you know,

we really trusted the Lord

to show us what we should do.

And we treated each child as

an individual and just

helped them be able to

figure out who they are,

what their strengths were,

overcome their weaknesses.

And I just feel like God

sent me on this incredible journey.

And I just love it.

And of course,

it took a toll on my health

and everything else.

But it was always does all worth it.

And I would do it again.

And I think when you are a

parent raising neurotypical

children who just fit in the box of the.

A, B, or C student, you know,

there's still issues.

There's parent-child issues.

There's marital issues.

There's outside influences.

But when you,

I think God chooses us to be

the parents of extra

special kids and he gives

us extra grace and he shows

us what to do if we look to him.

Yeah.

Oh, so true.

Yes, it is true.

And it is truly a day by day

walk of faith.

And you did that 11 times over.

And and so, yeah,

treating each kid differently,

that is is so difficult

because I think we want to just like,

you know,

box them up and say, okay,

this is the category you fit in.

So this is how I deal with you.

And I can just do steps one, two,

and three, and then we're good.

But that's not how God works

with us or our kids.

It's on an individual basis.

And taking the time to

really understand and know

that child and understand their heart,

where they struggle, what they love,

you know, that I think we...

We talk about that over and

over again on this show.

But with this topic of diversity,

it's good to remember that

no one is the same.

There's no average.

And that we're not striving for that.

We're striving for who God

made each person to be.

Exactly.

Exactly.

And even if you have twins

that are identical,

my older sisters are identical twins.

And yes, they, you know,

dressed alike and talked

alike and did all those things.

But as adults,

they're completely different people.

And each one of us is the image of God.

He created us in his image.

We're his image bearers.

Yet as vast as he is,

which is the universe, you know,

he has no ending.

Then every single one of us is different.

And that is on purpose.

And, you know,

children can learn to read

at the age of two.

or maybe not till 10th grade.

And- Right, exactly.

My one son who probably is the most,

has the highest IQ of all

my children didn't really

feel comfortable reading

till about eighth grade.

Yet he took up every single

appliance and learned that way.

That's great.

Yes.

Well, and you know,

Speaking of diversity and

God loving diversity,

it's not a wonder why the

world is so opposed to diversity,

you know,

and that there's so much just

hostility about people being different.

Or, yeah,

there's just it just it seems

like when you bring up this

topic that people just

start to get angry.

Yeah.

And it's really, you know,

a scheme of the enemy

against God's plan that

people would be different.

They would learn differently.

They would look differently.

They would act differently

because really we as a body reflect him.

And so, you know,

what is like hot topics right now?

where we're seeing this

coming up in society that

parents can start talking to their kids,

even if they don't have

diversity within their home,

that it can be a way to

start teaching and equipping with truth.

Yes, exactly.

And I think one of the most

important things that we

need to teach our children

is that their identity and

their confidence is in God.

He created them the way he

wanted to at conception.

he had in mind even before

conception what they would be.

And it's not a bad thing if

you are maybe not

exceptional in one area or

capable in one area,

but every person has great strengths.

You know, they've identified, you know,

EQ, emotional quotient,

and other people have

talked about all the

different smarts that you have.

And we need all of those

together to have a

successful life and a flourishing world.

And if we think about what

it's going to be like in

heaven with every single tongue, language,

tribe,

and all of us worshiping the lamb

who sits on the throne,

we need all of that.

And I think the more we can

appreciate that people,

each individual is different.

And again,

just love the person right in

front of us.

That's important.

But people who deny God want

to have a pecking order.

They want to put themselves

above someone else,

which means they have to

put someone down.

And that's because they lack

confidence in who they are

as God's creation.

So if we can learn to teach

our children that they were

uniquely and wonderfully

created and made,

Just God intended them,

whether they're highly gifted,

whether they have Down syndrome,

whether they are physically handicapped,

whether they're just a neurotypical kid,

that that's where their

confidence should lie is in

the fact that they're God's creation.

Yes.

He will show us as parents

what we should do for our

kids and to help them.

And the really neat thing is, you know,

when I was a kid,

it was a big deal to just

go to your grandparents

house in a different state.

Oh, yeah.

And then as I grew up, it's like, wow,

people were shocked I was

going to go out of state to college.

And I was blessed to be able

to go to Europe when I was

a college student.

Well, my kids go all over everywhere now.

And I have a daughter who's

an entrepreneur.

And she has clients in Egypt

and the Ukraine.

And we just live in a

totally global world.

And Walmart is bringing all

kinds of immigrants to our

country who are totally

different than us.

And they're right in our communities.

And I love going to Walmart

because it's like the most

diverse place in my community.

And I'm going to be friendly to people.

And people are surprisingly

shocked that you're friendly to them.

And then they'll start talking, you know,

because we were built for relationship.

And whether it's a

relationship with our

spouse or our kids or our

neighbors or something that

we just randomly meet in the airport.

people want to talk and

learn about each other.

And if we can teach our kids

to be conversationalists,

and a lot of our kids have

trouble expressing

themselves verbally or talking to people.

And of course,

we don't want them to just

go up to random strangers

when they're little kids

and talk to them.

But if they can learn to

have conversation with us,

and then conversation with

people in safe spaces at

our homeschool group or our

church or wherever,

then that's really giving

them a foundation for being

able to share their faith,

share their life,

and just love people no

matter where they go, what they do,

And I'm currently at my

son's house around my

little three-year-old

grandson and one of my granddaughters,

who's also three, has been visiting here.

And they both just are such good talkers.

And it's because parents

have talked with them all the time.

And the questions they ask

are hilarious or what they say.

But this is how we should be

spending time as adults with children,

is engaging them in conversation,

reading stories to them,

doing life with them,

working in the garden, holding hands,

walking through the zoo.

Because that is how kids learn.

Kids should not be learning.

I mean, of course,

we can use the internet and

screens and all that to help our kids.

But they need to be actively

learning with us.

Right.

Yes.

It's those interactions that

are so important.

I know my husband and I were

walking the dog last night.

And as we walked past the park,

there was a guy pushing his

child in the swing and he

was looking at his phone.

And my husband said,

how sad that he wasn't even

interacting with this child

and his child was right there.

Yeah.

Yeah.

I know a lot of people get

frustrated with me when they're like,

well,

I texted you and messaged you and

you never responded back.

And I'm like, my phone's in another room.

I check it when I have time.

And, you know,

just have those healthy

boundaries in our lives that family has.

And I wish I would have

learned that sooner.

You know,

it wasn't something that my parents did.

My parents did a lot of

things that didn't involve

us as kids that set a bad

example as far as like even ministry.

You know, you do something good,

but yet when you neglect

your family within the house,

it makes it hard.

It is.

It is.

One of the things that I

treasure about my family is, you know,

that my good,

good husband died 11 years ago.

He died of a heart attack in his sleep.

I still had five kids home to homeschool.

But he purposely decided

when we started having kids

that he was not going to be

the workaholic greatest

architect on the planet.

That his importance in life

was to be a dad.

And so he was an all-in homeschooling dad.

And sometimes he'd drive me

crazy because he'd come in

the house and say,

I was going to take the

kids to the hardware store.

Are you guys busy doing anything?

I'm like, yeah, we're trying to do math.

Oh, wow.

I am so glad he did that

because then when he passed away,

all my kids lost their best friend,

but they had known him.

And so now they continue on

with their lives on the

things that he had talked

to them about doing.

And I, I can't encourage dads enough.

to really be involved in the

homeschooling of their children.

It's not just the stay-at-home mom's job,

it's the dad's job as well.

And I'm really excited

because at the Rocky

Mountain Homeschool Conference next week,

we have what's called the

Fatherhood Bootcamp.

Because just don't know what

to do with their kids.

And I just so appreciate

hardworking dads that go to work,

support their families, you know,

try to do the things that they should do.

And it's really a toxic

world out there for if you

want to be a masculine man

who's a Christian leader in your home.

You know,

the world is telling you the opposite.

Right.

But women are so important in the dynamic.

And, of course,

there's a lot of single

moms that are homeschooling,

and I totally get that.

But if they can find some

kind of male role model,

whether it's a family friend, grandpa,

an uncle, you know, pastor at the church,

whatever, kids need a balance.

And we see that lack of

fatherhood in our country,

what it's done right now.

And I'm just so impressed to

see my one son right now, who's a dad,

how he just loves being with his kids.

He comes from work and he's

just actively doing stuff with his son.

And it just does my heart so, so good.

And the other kids who aren't married,

the other sons are talking about, well,

one day if I get married and have kids,

and I'm like, yep, I'm praying.

Just know they've had this

wonderful example from their dad,

but also my dad,

their grandfather was just

a wonderful guy.

In fact, my

Dad and I, we had,

there were four girls in my

family and then a brother born much,

much later.

So I was the only boy that

my dad took fishing.

And it was great because

then I had three boys and

then I had a farm.

And so I knew how to do all this stuff.

And I just treasure all that

time I got to spend with my dad.

Now he passed away in April.

But I told him, you know,

we're going to go marlin

fishing in heaven, Dad.

I'm sure there's an ocean up there.

Oh, that's awesome.

Yes.

Your life has taken so many

ups and downs and, you know,

and you you've shared some of those.

And I know there's other

tragedies that have happened and,

you know, other just, you know,

wonderful moments, too.

And your book goes into that

and your previous books

cover some of that, too.

But what life lessons have

you learned that might be

applicable to our audience today?

that you might want to share?

Well,

probably the most important life

lesson that I've learned is, you know,

life can change in a second.

And it's really important

that you live each day for what it is.

We have

I think we live in the

greatest country in the

world and we have great

freedom to homeschool our children.

We have great freedom to

have a family that is

whatever it is, whether it's one child,

whether it's 10 children,

whether it's neurotypical kids,

whether it's delayed readers or whatever.

And God has given you the

family he wants you to have.

And he, you know, we will,

we are accountable to him

when we go to heaven and

We will stand before him and

we want to hear him say,

well done thou good and faithful servant.

Part of my

trauma story you know is I

have my own PTSD because I

had a baby that died

suddenly as an infant and

then I had a teenage

daughter who was tragically

murdered and so I am so

grateful that I was able to

be with both of those

daughters all the days that

I was and to give them the

life that they had because

we are tomorrow's are not promised and

And it could be a car wreck.

It could be sickness, whatever.

And you know that last

October I was in Houston

and I had a major.

We were supposed to get together.

I had this major medical

horrible thing where I went

to the emergency room with heart, kidney,

and lung problems all at the same time.

And I thought, wow,

is today the day I'm going?

I mean, I don't want it to be.

I mean, I can't wait to be with the Lord,

but I have many more years

I hope to spend with my

family and my grandchildren.

And so we do have to not get

caught up in the rat race

so much that we forget the

person in front of us needs us.

And whether it's the

two-year-old who cut their

finger or the 12-year-old

who can't figure out

why her body's changing or

the 17 year old son who wants to be a man,

but he still acts like a

kid and you don't know what

to do with them.

No one has gone through.

Yes.

We need to stop and to look

at that person and to meet their need.

And yes,

that means that we probably put

our life on hold.

I mean,

I feel like I put my life on hold

for a long time because I

had this great

responsibility of raising

all these kids that I just loved,

but some of them were

way more work than the others.

And the ones who weren't so

much work felt neglected.

And so now as adults,

I'm trying to reconnect and

spend as much time with them as I can.

So I just think we need to

realize that every day is

precious and every person is precious.

A long time ago,

I had a friend before I was married,

before I had kids, and he said, you know,

let's just go to the zoo and walk around.

So we walked around the Denver Zoo.

He was a good friend of mine.

He knew from work.

You know,

there was no romantic

relationship or anything.

We were just friends.

And so the last thing I said to him is,

okay, let's get together again soon.

Well, we never did.

And then five years later, he died.

And I thought, wow,

I should have made more of

an effort to get together with him.

So I think it's real

important that you and I

enjoy our life as much as possible.

The family we have,

the responsibilities that

God has given us.

I mean,

right now my job is to mentor other

parents, and I just love doing that.

Um,

people will email me with these

heartfelt questions.

I'm like, okay,

what's said on email stays on email.

I would try these five things and,

you know, me back.

It's okay.

You can just vent.

I'm a safe person.

And so God has given me a

season of life where I can do that.

And I want to do that.

I want to say, I don't know everything,

but I have gone through a lot.

And, um,

I'm, I'm happy to counsel you, you know,

if you need it, you just email me.

So, yeah.

And so many people just need to be heard.

I think we,

we don't realize just that we

don't have to have the answer.

We just have to be willing to listen.

And, and if you're willing to listen,

a lot of times they'll

figure it out or God will

tell them what they need to

do when the time is right.

But,

but having somebody who's

compassionate and caring

and sitting there is like, wow, you know,

you're willing to like absorb, like,

some of my stuff because we

always think we got to

carry it all by ourselves.

And God, like you told us,

you said earlier,

God created us for

community and we need that community.

We need other people around

us because the burden is

too heavy for us to carry on our own.

We were never meant to do that.

And yes.

Jesus takes the yoke with us,

but he also surrounded us

with other people who are going,

are you going to give me something?

And if we choose to just shell up and say,

oh, no,

this is too tough to share with anybody,

we're not going to be

blessed by those

relationships that God has

intended to bless us.

Exactly.

So important.

So very important.

One of my adult sons lives

with me and he's busy working a lot.

And then we'll sit down for

dinner and ask each other about our day.

And the thing is, you know,

men are fixers.

And obviously this situation

and he's trying to solve the problem.

And I'm like, no,

I just need to talk about it.

And then I'll figure out the

solution for it.

Yeah.

Oh, that's so true.

Yes.

And sometimes you just have

to talk it out.

And I've got some friends

who are verbal processors.

And so I know I'm kind of

the tend to want to fix things.

And so I learned a long time ago,

just don't say anything.

They don't want your answers.

They just want you to know

that you're listening.

Think about, you know,

I'm going through medical

stuff right now.

And every call I make to the

doctor or the doctor,

wherever it's like you know

press two to speak to blah

blah blah oh yes absolutely

that's three if this is I'm

like I just want a real

person yeah yes yeah yeah

that is true so it's so

true it's today in today's day and age we

we don't realize just how

much we we have been

isolated due to technology

too um and we've allowed

that to happen as well

instead of like combating

it and say no I'm not gonna

do that I'm not gonna put

up with this I'm just gonna

like go into that person's

office and say I need to

see you one-on-one um yeah

exactly so in the middle of

all of this how do we find joy

That's a good question.

You know,

I think that an important thing

for me is I was blessed as

a child to have my parents

help me realize that there

were things that I really

enjoyed in life that were

my coping skills.

So I liked reading, but I loved art.

They allowed me to just

explore all different art mediums.

I love listening to music.

That brought me joy, even though it was,

you know,

the rock and roll Elton John songs.

It still brought me joy.

And I, as an adult, learned

that I really enjoyed writing,

which is so funny because I

absolutely hated writing in

school because I didn't

have anything to write about.

But then as an adult,

I had things I wanted to write about.

So I think that each adult,

each parent needs to find

something that they enjoy doing,

whether it's gardening,

walking, hiking,

you have your acrobatics you enjoy doing,

or music, something,

because those really are

our coping skills.

And then we need to help our kids

learn coping skills.

And again, it's, you know,

we got to figure out when a

three-year-old is raging,

what the three-year-old needs.

And maybe it's, it's teddy bear,

maybe it's music,

maybe it's just cuddling,

maybe it's just sitting and

helping them breathe.

But as they get older, what do they like?

Do they like to kick balls?

Do they like to swing on the swing set?

Do they like to play with friends?

Do they enjoy taking things apart?

You know,

one of the things we did with our boys,

because they took everything apart,

is we would go to Goodwill

and we would buy inexpensive, you know,

toasters and different things and say,

okay, have at it, take it apart,

put it back together and see if it works.

Um, a lot of times it's an animal,

it's a kitten or a dog,

or when we lived on our farm,

it was rabbits, horses, other thing.

And we have super high, um,

depression and anxiety

among teenagers right now in our country.

And I'm not belittling that.

I mean, it can be from serious trauma.

But I also think kids have

not been shown that hobby

craft can be something that

you take pleasure and confidence in.

And I know when I was a kid,

I did embroidery and

knitting and all these different things.

And I enjoyed that because

there's a sense of accomplishment.

First, it's like taking music lessons.

At first,

when you start practicing the piano,

it sounds horrible.

But then day after day after day,

after year after year,

you can make beautiful music.

And I know that for my

daughter who was adopted,

had a lot of trauma,

the one who ended up being killed,

she was a gifted pianist.

And anytime she was stressed,

she would sit down at the

piano and she would just play.

And you could tell...

when she was stressed

because it was like loud.

And eventually it will calm

down and would become

beautiful music waltzes or whatever.

And that was her coping skill.

And that's how she found joy.

And I do believe that we can

have joy in Jesus certainly

by studying his word,

learning more about him,

But he also, you know,

if you think about Jesus

and his disciples,

they just spent a lot of time together.

And they went walking.

They went in boats.

You know,

I hope that Jesus enjoyed those things.

And I think he did because

he helped God create all of that,

you know.

And so I think you need to

find joy in little things.

And then you need to find

joy in things that will

give you long-term fulfillment.

And if you didn't find that as a child,

then find that as an adult.

And, you know,

really it can be simple as

listening to audio books or reading

Just walking around your neighborhood,

talking to your neighbors.

Depends on what kind of person you are,

what your learning style is.

But what do you like to do?

And I think a lot of times

dads like to do things like

work on their cars or watch

football games.

And that's great.

That's their joy.

And sometimes as wives, we think,

why are they spending time

doing that when they could be with me?

And that's their coping skill.

And that's fine.

And, you know,

so hopefully they can do it

with their kids, too.

I know my husband loved

working on cars and he

would help me have my kids help him.

Of course,

it takes twice as long when you

have your kids out.

Exactly.

Yes.

It brought him joy and it

brought them joy.

And so I think sometimes we

get so wrapped up in

discipline of our children

and homeschooling our

children that we forget to

just have fun together.

And my kids always kidded me

because I loved playing sports.

I mean, I love baseball.

I love soccer.

I loved archery.

I love basketball.

And until I got to be about 50,

I could beat them in everything.

I could hit home run,

but I'd have to have a designated runner.

But, um, one time we were playing in,

of course we had enough kids.

We could have our own team, you know,

played sports after lunch

because they needed the

exercise and I needed the laughter.

So we went outside on our

farm and this is probably

when my son who's 21,

he was probably about five

and he was pitching and I

connected and I hit like a

home run clear out into the

far farm field.

And he could not believe it.

And it's like I rose in his

estimation 10 points that day.

And we were laughing so hard because then,

of course, I couldn't really run.

I had to just kind of, you know,

lope around the bases.

That brought us all joy.

So it could be board games.

It could be basketball.

It's whatever.

What makes you laugh?

And I just always loved it

when we had a trampoline.

And of course, we had a rule,

only one person jumping at a time.

Well, that never happened.

You know,

everybody goes on at the same time.

Yes.

And one time my husband and I,

we put the kids in bed and

we were just like completely exhausted,

overwhelmed.

And I'm like, let's go on the trampoline.

He's like, what?

And I said, yeah.

Well, I couldn't jump on it.

All I could do was sit on it

and laugh while he jumped.

But you know,

the simple joys in life are the best.

And I still remember that.

It's been like 15 years, but yeah,

we've got to find joy

because if we don't fill up our tank,

if we don't fill up our joy ATM,

we have nothing to dispense

to anybody else.

And it's that oxygen mask

thing on the airplane.

You know,

you put yours on first and then

you help the person next to you.

And we sometimes can be such

martyrs when we're raising our kids.

It was like that.

Um,

And so I just need to go do something.

And so I'm like, kids, put a movie on.

I've got to go outside.

And then I came back in and

then I was a cheerful mom again.

Because the last thing we

want to be known for was

that we were the mom that

yelled and was cranky all the time.

I just don't want to be

remembered like that.

I want to be remembered as

the mom who laughed.

And we had fun with.

And yeah,

she taught us to read and she

helped us do our 4-H projects.

But they don't remember that as much.

It's those little moments

like that that they'll

recall over and over and over again.

Like when you made a fort

and you did all these things.

And I actually put sticky

notes up around my house

because I was raised in

this very strict religious

home where if you don't do stuff for God,

then you have no worth.

Um, and I had to write these sticky notes,

T I W I put them all over my house.

This is worship and God has

joy when we have joy.

And it,

it changed my whole lens of this is

what living for the Lord is about.

It's about being in the moment.

It's about being with the

people he's put in front of me.

It's not about looking religious or doing,

you know,

the checklist of things that I

feel like I should do.

Um,

and and you do you find your

joy in that and that's

where you find god too

right so yes that's such a

good lesson and you know I

think um I am not a good

singer I always wished I

was a good singer but but

singing um hymns during your day

or Broadway show tunes or whatever,

to me that brings a whole,

lifts a whole element of joy.

I think people that sing are happy people.

And I know that when I watch

my little three-year-old

grandchildren run around the house,

half the time they're

singing and I just laugh

because my one little

three-year-old grandson

knows like some of the

Fiddler on the Roof song,

which I think is hilarious.

To me, that's just joy overflowing.

I really want to emphasize

that as a family,

if you can have joy overflowing,

it won't matter what your kids learn.

they will be happy,

content people and they

will love life and they

will want to do things.

They'll want to learn.

They'll want to work.

They'll want to serve others

because they just have

inner joy that spills out.

yeah absolutely and it

should it should spill out

it shouldn't be forced um

you really can't force joy

anyways I know and mine

comes through movement um I

lead a workout in worship

and actually I'm excited

because when I'm speaking

in iowa they're having me

do it as a session so so

If you're going to be in Iowa,

not this coming weekend,

but next weekend for the

homeschool conference,

I turn on my playlist, let it randomize.

And I let the Holy spirit

like show me a specific

move and I just go for it.

And so we build on that and

do a workout with it,

but it is the most amazing experience.

Even for me as a teacher,

I do it with my eyes closed.

I tell everybody, I don't care.

You can look as crazy as you, you know,

you want, cause I'm not watching it.

Yeah.

That's so awesome.

It's so good.

And yeah,

and we I think I had to get for myself,

I had to get beyond what

other people were going to

think about me.

And I think that's what a

lot of this diversity and

prejudice and all these other things,

you know, that you're really hitting on.

with your new book um hit is

we can't be afraid to be

who we are right and and

then we also can't be

afraid to accept people for

the way that god made them

and um yeah so you know

living in a world that's

like that how do you live

that way um and and stand confidently

through the everyday and

just against the culture.

Yeah, that's exactly right.

You know,

one of the things I talk about in

my book is

people's prejudgment of me or my family.

And of course,

I can't compare myself to

people that have really had

rough childhoods and have

really had racial prejudice

or socioeconomic prejudice.

But I'll never forget the

days when I had all my kids,

which is a parade of

diversity at the grocery

store because I did take all of them.

That was an important thing to do.

Of course,

we had two grocery carts and

spent way more money than

we possibly could imagine.

But we get to the checkout

and there was one of two

different expressions by the cashier.

One would be, oh, what a beautiful group.

Do you provide daycare?

Yes.

Yes.

Oh, okay.

And then the other expression was, wow,

I could just never be

around that many kids.

How many kids do you have

and why aren't you stopping?

I just say, you know,

it's just such a blessing.

It is really crazy.

But, you know, I just love them.

You know, they're just so fun to be with.

And then when we got out to the car,

I'd be sure to tell my kids, you know,

I just love you.

You know,

even if you acted up in the store,

you're just so worth it to me.

And people just say stupid

things and they say hurtful things.

And because we have the

confidence in the Lord,

we know what we're supposed

to be doing and we just do it.

And in a world that hates families,

hates marriage, hates kids,

Um, we're just going to hear it.

And so you just expect it

and you teach your kids that they'll,

you know, they're going to hear it,

they expect it, but, um,

it's not the way it's supposed to be.

And how are we going to grow

up and make it different

for other people?

And, uh, I, uh,

I love where I live right now.

I live in Southwest Florida, Peggy knows.

It's a very multicultural area.

I just love it.

I have all these medical

providers right now and

they're from India or they're from Cuba.

or, you know, wherever.

And it's just so fun to talk

to them and find out about

their background and how

hard it was to get to where they are now.

And to just say, gosh,

I just I'm so glad you're here, you know,

excellent doctors,

and I'm so grateful to have them.

And

I'm glad that my parents

taught me to be open-minded

and you know just because

you disagree with people on

ideology or religion or

politics does not equal

hate that's the big thing

right now is oh well if you

don't believe in this then

you must hate me it's like

no I don't hate you

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

a lot of people are living

immoral lifestyles.

But that doesn't mean I hate them.

It just means that I hope

that they'll come to know

Jesus so they know how to

live by the Ten

Commandments and by Jesus's, you know,

what he taught about to

love my neighbor as myself

and to follow God's commandments.

Because that's where we find

our confidence and our joy.

Right, exactly.

And you want people to feel, you know,

it's not that you want to change people.

You want them to be who God

created them to be in the first place.

You know, I'm not opposed to you,

but I really think there's

stuff that you're missing

and I don't want you to miss out.

And when you see it from that perspective,

then you're like, that is out of love.

Yeah.

Because there is so much

more that you just have no grasp of yet.

Yeah.

haven't released into what

God created you to be.

Instead, we, you know,

we try to be who we think

other people think we should be or who,

yeah, who we've, we think we should be.

So yeah, a lot of that.

Yeah.

So we had a question.

Oh, yeah.

I was going to say one of

the things that I always

doubted myself about was I

was always kind of a chubby

kid and I did sports,

but still I was chubby.

And when I got married, of course,

then I got pregnant and gained weight,

never lost it and all that.

I was expressing something

to my husband who said, you know what?

We made all those babies.

I made you exactly the way you look.

It's okay.

You look like one of those

Renaissance painting women.

I'm like, that's all I needed to hear.

What a lovely husband.

Yes.

Anyway, okay, so we have some questions,

I think.

Yes,

we had some questions sent in from

viewers ahead of the show.

And if you do not know about that,

we have a link that we

always provide on the

YouTube video and on our

empoweredhomeschool.com.org

website that you can submit

your questions ahead of time.

Or if you're on our newsletter email list,

we'll send that out to you

the night before.

So Linda had a question

about can multiple levels

of learning be done together?

That's that's one that a lot

of parents have,

especially with big families like yours.

So you're a good person to

answer this question.

Yes, this is such a great question.

So I think people get in the

box of institutional school

and they think, OK,

this is what a first grader does.

This is what a fifth grader does.

Right.

That has some merit.

You know,

some of it's based on child

development and that's that's OK.

but um,

When we had five kids in

homeschooling every two

grade levels and it was totally tough,

the system that worked for

us is that each morning I

would help individually

each child do math and English.

We would sit at the kitchen table.

The kids would rotate out

like every 15 minutes.

And the other kids would be

busy with chores like

cleaning their room or

watching the little

a toddler or doing their piano practice,

something constructive.

Then we rotate out to the next person.

Some of the kids were very

resistant learners.

Some of them were just get

right through it.

But still, through high school,

I would help my kids with

their English and math individually.

So we'd get that done.

And then they had some other

schoolwork they could do on their own.

And for the little kids,

it was like coloring pages

and things like that.

But then we would regroup and have lunch.

And then we'd go outside and

play baseball and I'd hit the home run.

every day we would have a

block class that we rotated

so like monday it could be

history tuesday it could be

science wednesday it could

be our errands to town and

piano lessons thursday it

could be something and then

friday often we would have art and um

We did that as a group and

we would do it so that the older kids,

their intellectual needs

were met and the younger

kids could just listen and

participate at their level.

A lot of times we would do a

hands-on activity

Because of my art background

and my husband being an architect,

when we studied history,

we would study and build

like models of castles or

pyramids out of sugar cubes.

You know,

we'd always have some kind of fun thing.

And then if I had like an

infant or a toddler,

they would be taking their

nap during that time.

And so the younger kids saw

what the older kids were

doing and it really helped

them a lot be interested in things.

And I was just amazed at

what they would hear.

A lot of times I would just

read right out of the textbook.

have the older kids answer

questions and the younger

kids would like participate.

It was amazing.

And then the older kids, I might say, okay,

we're done with our group lesson.

Now go answer the questions

on a piece of paper in your

notebook or whatever.

And so we would extend the

learning for the kids who

were at a higher grade level.

But yes,

I absolutely think that learning

as a group, multi-age,

is a great way to go.

One of the things that I

have done in the past is

I've helped to write

curriculum for the generations.org.

And I wrote their

elementary science and

history workbooks that go with the text.

And it has all these fun

hands-on things that we did.

Like we did a whole Viking unit and we,

you know,

went and picked grapes and dyed

fabric purple,

and we built little boats

and sell them in the bathtub and,

And I think that that kind

of thing is really good for older kids,

but also for younger kids.

They can participate.

The learning sticks no

matter what kind of learner you are.

When you do stuff with your hands,

I think it sticks.

And that was kind of a question, too,

with one of our other

viewers was asking a similar question.

And I want to make sure to get that one in,

too.

But she had said,

where can I get help

building the right

curriculum for my five neurodiverse,

medically complex trauma

kids with great

vocabularies and hyperlexia,

but learning differences and difficulties,

especially with writing and

more specifically with

getting what's in their

head through their hands on the paper?

So would you recommend then

the more hands-on type of

things there as well?

I would.

First of all,

it's great that they have a

high vocabulary and they're

good readers because I

think that's key to a lot

of future learning.

And I think a lot of kids

have what's maybe called

pencil resistance.

They don't know what to write.

They don't

They can't write.

They don't want to write.

They hate to write.

I know I was kind of a kid,

but now I'm a writer for my life.

So I think, first of all,

you have to have something

to write about.

So one of the things I did

with my younger kids, well,

and my older kids too,

is I had them write letters.

I had them write cards to their relatives,

letters maybe to neighbors,

different people letters.

because then they could talk

about their life.

I think you have to give

your kids something they

know about to then write about.

And a fun game that we

played was a story game where I said,

okay,

I'm going to start with a sentence

and then

you add the next sentence.

So we did that verbally for a long time,

for years.

But then when they got to be middle school,

we'd say, okay,

now I want you to write one

of one paragraph story and

I'm going to start with the

first sentence.

And so then I'd write the

sentence out and then they could

say whatever they wanted to

so I think that you have to

give kids uh confidence in

their penmanship so you got

to work on that a little

bit whether it's printing

and I do advise cursive

writing I think that's

really important to learn

cursive after you've

mastered um you know just print

um before you get on the

computer I think you need

to learn though um but then

you just start writing and

it could be about anything

it could be ridiculous

writing could be made up

story whatever what do they

love so if you have a say a

fifth grade boy who loves

cars but he hates writing

so what does he um want to

write about well draw a

picture of your favorite

car okay then write

the name of the car and who drives it.

Okay.

So it's a Corvette and it's

driven by Mr. So-and-so who's actually,

you know,

he's an advertising manager or

he's a spy or he's a

Spider-Man or whoever.

So they're writing about

what they love and keep it short.

Don't correct it.

Do not correct your writing.

Let them just pour it out.

Then when they get older and

they're starting to write paragraphs,

you can help them learn, okay,

there's an opening sentence,

there's a closing sentence.

And then there's three paragraphs.

So the opening paragraph,

the middle supportive and

the closing paragraph,

but it's a step-by-step process.

And what is the goal of learning to write?

Well,

the goal of learning to write as is

when you're an adult,

you can write a letter,

you can write a job application,

you can write a report.

And that doesn't have to

happen by fifth grade or seventh grade.

And so maybe by 12th grade,

they can do that.

And what I think is my kids

who hated writing in

elementary school got a

little bit interested in it

in middle school.

But then by high school,

they had things they wanted

to write about.

And our kids before age,

it was a wonderful

extracurricular activity.

And they wanted to write

long reports all about what

they did on their project.

And then two of my kids in 11th grade,

they said, for English this year,

can we write a novel?

I'm like, well, sure.

Yeah, absolutely.

And so they did.

And so they got it all out, you know,

their rough draft.

And I said, okay,

now we're going to go back

and I'm going to show you

some corrections and,

And we did all of this, you know,

using an actual pencil and paper.

And then they would learn to

start correcting their own writing.

And even though they weren't good spellers,

weren't good editors, eventually,

guess what?

Now they're in their 30s and

they're fantastic.

Wow.

So it doesn't happen at the

structure that everybody

says it has to happen at.

Right.

You may have a student who

does great and they can learn, you know,

they can do IEW program or

something like that in

middle school or high school.

But you might have a highly

gifted student who can read

the encyclopedias and

but can't really write down

what they know.

And that's okay.

Just help them step by step, one at a time,

slowly and surely.

And by 12th grade,

hopefully they can at least

write a job resume.

They can write an inquiry

letter because it's a

process and it does not

happen at a set year like

everybody wants to think it does.

It happens when people are

ready and when they have

the ability to do it.

Yeah.

So Rainy,

who had put in the question before,

she's watching live and she

said these kids have

connective tissue disorders

and can't write anything at length,

plus they have dysgraphia.

So we have connective tissue

disorders at our house.

I have EDS and we've just

recently found out

that was underlying my issue

and all my kids' issues.

So we did a lot of those

verbal stories as well.

Hiking,

somebody would name out three

things and they'd have to

make up a story with it.

And then they'd throw in all

these other crazy things, but...

Um, so, but a lot of the, the verbal,

the audio, you know,

and it was amazing just how even when my,

my oldest son couldn't read,

he was listening to audio

books and in a year he was

at the college level.

Um, so yes, we have zebras too.

So that's what they call kids with the,

or people with EDS are zebras.

Um, because there's,

there's 15 different forms of EDS.

Um, so, so yes, um,

we're in the same boat.

But, yeah, I love that, Sherry, that,

you know,

you just have to eventually they

will get up to that.

And I have to encourage you, Rainy, too,

that a lot of it is what we

found with our family is a

lot of muscle work.

Because now one of the

reasons I do aerial is in my 50s,

it's the only way my joints

stay together.

And so I can't sit down for very long.

I'm always up and moving

because that disorder

causes me to be in a lot of pain and my,

my daughter too.

So, so yeah,

we just have to constantly be moving.

you know one of the things

that we didn't really talk

about that I think is super

important is um our kids

diet and when kids have

food sensitivities or they

have allergies uh all that

affects their learning their behavior

And, you know,

especially when you have

more than one kid and it's

not necessarily genetically

related to you,

you have to be a private detective.

Oh, absolutely.

And the more poor your diet can be,

the less junk food,

the less processed food.

And we always had a water

and healthy snack break

mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

So that the kid's brain

stayed activated and we had good,

healthy fat.

You know, we have this thing where like,

no fat, no fat, but your brain needs fat.

Yes, the brain needs fat.

Absolutely.

And so I think that's a

really important thing.

And we were sort of foodies

because we lived on a farm.

We raised our own food.

We love to cook, to eat.

And my one daughter became a

professional chef.

But I think that diet is

super important and having

your kids eat a good

breakfast before they start

their schoolwork and then

have a good lunch and they

can participate making all that.

So it's not all on you.

Right.

But I do some good skills.

Definitely that way.

I think anybody, any kid that has issues,

so to speak,

really you've got to really

take a look at what they're

putting in their mouth.

Absolutely.

So many things.

Well, Sherry's book,

we got to let them know about that.

It's Embracing Diversity as a Family,

Preparing the Next

Generation to Flourish.

It will be available on Amazon soon,

but it is listed on Amazon.

And I've got the link there.

I'll put it in the show notes, too,

so that you can find it more easily.

But and then on your website,

can people find the book there as well?

Absolutely.

uh they will at some point

it's hard to remember the amazon link

But you can email me any

questions and I am happy to

give free phone

consultation to people that

just really want to talk.

I'm just happy to do that.

I'm available.

This is what I love to do is

encourage parents and your

kids are absolutely worth all the time,

all the stress, all the money.

They will grow up.

This too shall pass.

You know,

we're parents for life and it's

way worth it if we just

seek the Lord about what to do.

Absolutely.

And Sherry's website,

if you're listening to the podcast,

is SherryMcMinn.com.

And I will also put that

link in the show notes so

you can click on that as

well to find the rest of

her resources and all your other books,

too.

Sherry's got lots of

resources and about totally

different topics, too.

You just write about a range of things.

So, yes,

if you're looking for some really

good summer reading,

check out Sherry's website

at SherryMcMinn.com.

So Sherry, this was amazing.

It was, um, such a good conversation.

We could probably talk for hours, but, um,

I appreciate you taking time out and, um,

and yes.

And, and, um, let's see our, um,

we had one more comment rainy.

She said, thank you.

Um, she.

Yeah, you're welcome.

And we're,

we're just happy to be here to help.

And, um, I know that's Sherry's heart too,

as you just heard.

So reach out to her on our website.

If, um, you have questions, um,

for her and, um,

and yeah, well,

and she'll definitely get

you connected and,

and answer those questions.

So thanks so much, Sherry.

I appreciate you greatly and, um,

for all the work that you

do with in Colorado and, um,

and all the work you do to

help us here at Sped Homeschool as well.

So.

You bet.

It's my pleasure.

Yeah.

And if, if you don't know,

we actually have a brand

new website as of, um,

Well, Saturday afternoon,

it was supposed to, Angie said, Sherry,

she's going to be reaching out to you.

So we have a brand new

website and it just went live.

It was supposed to go live

somewhere on Friday night,

but there was some DNS transfer issues.

So it went up now,

but this is our new website.

It's called Homeschool Heroes.

And on there,

you can build an account and

connect with other homeschool families.

You can share stories.

There'll be events on there.

There's groups and resources,

but just so much more than

our other website used

to have and there's we have

admins on there and so so

if you want to start

connecting with other

families you can actually

build your own local group

and say where you're

located and other people

can find you and you can do

that for free so I just

encourage you if you were

on our email list you got a

code to get into the

navigator level which is

the first paid tier up for

free for three months

And if you missed that and

you really want to get that code,

email us at office at

spedhomeschool.com and we

will send that to you.

But we want you to hop on,

try it out and connect.

Because like Sherry, like you said,

we need community.

We are created for community.

And that's why I'm so

excited about having this

website and having that

ability for people to just connect.

be able to connect,

to share their stories and

to get the support that they need.

Because that's really what

we need more so than any

resource that's out there.

We have lots of resources,

but it's the encouragement

and the connections that get us through.

Exactly.

And if I can just give one

plug to the Rocky Mountain

Homeschool Conference,

we're having a unique

workshop seminar day and

lots of tracks and we're

actually having a community meetup,

which should be so fun.

And I think almost 200

people have registered.

So we're really excited about that.

If you're in the

uh,

Colorado area and want to come to the

Rocky mountain homeschool

conference.com next week.

Uh, I'd love to meet you in person.

Yes.

Yeah.

And I'll be in Virginia.

I'm leaving tomorrow.

I'll be, um, keynoting the, um, the HAV,

um, special needs conference on Thursday.

So I'll be doing that.

And, um,

looks like there's a lot of

registrants for that as well.

So,

lots of things going on and they, um,

special needs homeschool.

Our homeschooling expo is

coming up in Shelby,

North Carolina as well.

And me and a couple of my

co-hosts for the show will

be there as well.

So lots of things going on

this summer to get you connected, um,

and to get you support.

So definitely tap into those things.

Um, next week I will not be on the show.

We'll have a pre-recording though.

Um,

One of my co-hosts, Annie Yorty,

will be recording a session

with a couple that just wrote a book,

but they're going to be

talking about thriving together,

strengthening your marriage

while raising children with disabilities.

So that is coming up next week.

And then the week after I'll be back live.

So we'll have another topic

for you to dive into.

I'm just continuing to

encourage you and share resources,

but yeah,

Make sure to check out

Sherry's new book when it comes out.

Watch for that.

And we will keep the links

in the show notes so that

you can find those right away.

But thank you, Sherry, again.

Appreciate you and love all

that you're doing and all

the support that you provide.

And just keep up the good

work and take care of yourself.

I know you're getting better.

You look amazing.

So can't wait to see you in

person again soon.

Sounds great.

I'll look forward to it.

I'm hoping to be in Houston in October,

so we'll look forward to that.

Awesome.

Yes.

All right.

Well, thanks everybody for joining us.

We'll see you next time here

on Empowering Homeschool Conversations.

Take care and God bless.

Thank you.

Bye-bye.

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a nonprofit that empowers

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