

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.
Bye.

Hi, everyone,

and welcome to Empowering

Homeschool Conversations.

Today,

we are going to talk about Thinking

Beyond the Book,

Creative Strategies for

Language-Based Learning Challenges.

And my guest today is Marianne Sunderland.

Marianne has over twenty

five years of home

educating experience with

her seven kids with

dyslexia and is a

passionate advocate for educating others

both about strengths and

weaknesses of this

language-based learning difference.

She is the author of Dyslexia One-on-One,

Truth, Myths, and What Really Works,

the co-author of What is Dyslexia?

Parents' Guide to Teaching

Kids About Dyslexia,

and the author of No More School,

Meeting the Educational

Needs of Kids with Dyslexia

and Language-Based Learning Difficulties.

And she's a visionary also

behind homeschoolingdyslexia.com.

Welcome, Marianne.

Thank you, Peggy.

Nice to be here.

Yeah, absolutely.

I used to look at your blog and say, wow,
you know,

that is so much great content

and used to just mine it

when my kids were little.

And so it's a privilege to

have you on the show and to

talk to you and to tap into

the wisdom that you have.

So I'm excited to have you here today.

Same.

Yeah.

So I love to ask my guests

when we first get started,

just what makes you so

passionate about this topic?

And I'm sure you have lots of stories, but,

but yeah,

just share a little experience

background with our

audience just so they can

get to know you and know

where you're sharing from.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Well,

I think I'm probably like most of

your listeners, you know, I,

I did start homeschooling and I,

I didn't know about learning differences.

I never knew that there were

smart people that struggled to learn.

I never struggled in school.

And having just loved being

a mom and raising my kids

and then homeschooling, I was like,

wait a second.

How is it that you're so smart,

but you cannot remember the

silent E rule even though

we've gone over it three times?

Right.

And,

and so really my passion comes from

loving my kids,

just like probably

everybody who's listening today.

Just, you love your kids.

You can see that there is

intelligence and creativity

and so much value.

And I'm like,

there's gotta be something
that can be done, you know?

And so I spent a lot of
years trying to figure that out.

Yes.

And it just kind of started, you know,
from me sharing my journey.

And I, along my own journey,
the first maybe eight years or so, I
there was a lot of
misinformation out there.

And I felt like there were
people kind of trying to
capitalize on our fear that
our children weren't
reading or learning like we expected.

And that was another reason
for me to want to stand up and say,
hold the phone.

Like,

let me tell you how to navigate this
journey.

No one's journey is the same,
but there are principles
that we can apply to the journey.

And so that's kind of where
I'm coming from.

That's awesome.

Because yes, I do think,

and I love that you talk
about that fear because
that's kind of what I felt
like when I first started
homeschooling too,
was that there was all this
information and it was like,
we can fix your child.

And it seems so easy and so simple,
but yet in the end,
It really was a journey,
like you talked about at the beginning,
of really getting to know
your kids and learning more
about just what they needed
versus what somebody else
could offer you.

And it's a hard answer to
give parents because they
really do think that they
can just buy the answer in a box.

Yeah.

It doesn't quite work that way.
We're looking for that magic
bullet or the silver bullet,
something that's going to fix our kids.
And really what I've come to
understand over all these

years is that our kids are not broken.

And I don't call dyslexia a disability.

I know that it is in some

ways when they're learning

to read in the younger years.

And legally and for certain purposes,

those terms are important.

But

For parents educating their own kids,

it's a learning difference.

And I say this all the time,

that kids who learn

differently just need to be

taught differently.

And so now I've graduated

six of my kids and they're doing great.

Some went to college, some didn't.

Most of them,

three of them have their own businesses,

very entrepreneurial family.

So I've learned a lot.

Yeah.

about education and what's important,

what wasn't so important.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

They, they each have their own path and,

and that it just is much
more unique path usually than, than not.

And just, you know,
being open to embracing.

And I really do feel like
homeschooling helped me to
let down those barriers too, because the,
you know,

it was either I was
struggling against myself,
struggling against my child,
or I was embracing what was
in front of both of us.

Yes.

And, and you just,
you have to make that determination.

Yeah.

And, and yeah,
otherwise I think you just go crazy.

I was talking with Jonathan Mooney many,
many years ago.

He spoke at an international
dyslexia association
conference here in LA and he
He grew up dyslexic and not
really remediated or understood,
but graduated from Brown
and has gone on to be this

fierce advocate.

But he said, you know,

when you pound square pegs

into round holes, what happens?

You know, they break.

And that really, I mean,

that was a long time ago.

My memory is pretty bad.

But I always think of that

because that's what happened to him.

And he overcame all of that.

But there are a lot,

and I mean way too many

children who are slipping

through the cracks in the

public school system or could be private.

that are not being understood.

They're not getting their needs met.

They're being made to feel dumb.

And we have this incredible freedom,

even though it's difficult

sometimes when they're younger,

trying to figure out what

to expect and how to teach them,

to give them the freedom of

not being compared

against traditional learners

or being taught under

somebody who misunderstands

them day after day.

So the struggle is worth it.

Yes, absolutely.

I totally agree.

So if you are watching and you have questions for us, just make sure you pop them into the feed and we'll be happy to include those in with our conversation as well.

So just to get started, I would love for you to explain what it means to have a language-based learning challenge and kind of how can parents even realize if their child is struggling with something like that?

So language-based learning disorder or disability is a big umbrella term for what we usually look at as dyslexia.

But dyslexia is a language-based learning difference or difficulty.

And basically what researchers have found is that there is a dyslexic brain processes

language differently.

So you might have twenty twenty vision.

You might have perfect hearing,

but the words go in through

the eye and down the optic nerve.

But they don't take a direct

path to the reading center of the brain.

They actually take a very

convoluted path to to the brain.

reading center of the brain.

So this is Sally Shaywitz

back in the early nineties

who did research with

functional MRIs and learned

about this and wrote the book,

Overcome...

overcoming dyslexia,

which was groundbreaking.

It just blew the lid off of all the myths,

the misperceptions,

that it was

intelligence-based or a vision problem.

It was basically how the

brain processes language.

And what's even more cool is that

researchers, Brock and Fernet Eide,

they wrote the Dyslexic

Advantage and they have a

website called the Dyslexic Advantage.

They researched successful dyslexics,
scanned their brains and
basically came up with a
series of strengths that
people with language-based
learning difficulties have.

So for example,
a person with a dyslexic
brain wiring is not real detail-oriented.

They don't see spelling.

They don't see little words.

Same with math,
like math facts and little details.

They're not great at keeping
hold of those in their brains.

However,
the flip side of that is that they
have very good big picture skills.

So they're able to see the big picture.

They're able to maybe make
connections between ideas
that other people don't make.

So this is where you get
your inventors and your entrepreneurs.

They see a need and they
meet it or they see a
connection and they explore it.

And so really, you know,

this new knowledge that
both of those two books,
Overcoming Dyslexia
changed my world in one way.
And then the dyslexic
advantage changed it in
another way where I began
to look at my kids' struggles,
not as just something to overcome,
but something to be excited
about that they actually
have incredible strengths
that if we allow them to
work in those strengths, you know,
while supporting them in their weaknesses,
that they will excel.

Yeah.

Yes.

Yeah.

And that's a really good
point because so often we
can get so stuck on the
things that they struggle
in and really even forget
or push them off to the
side of what they are doing well.

because they aren't academic.

Um, and, and then you, you lose the,
just the child because they're,

they're so stuck in what they can't do.

And, you know,

you hear so many kids say that, Oh,

I'm just, just a bad learner.

And they just kind of lump

it all together because

they struggle in one area or a few.

Yeah.

Yeah, absolutely.

So, um,

Are the challenges, you know,

are they limited to reading

and writing or could we do

you see them in other places, too,

when a child struggles in

these language based learning areas?

So you're definitely going

to see a struggle or a

delay in learning to read.

Reading comes first, spelling comes later.

Spelling is always much more

difficult to master.

So a lot of parents come to me,

they're like, my kid's reading okay,

but their spelling's terrible.

Totally normal.

Just need to keep reading

and exposing them to the

correct spellings.

It takes time, use assistive technology.

So writing also can be

affected either motor skill, you know,

with like the actual fine

and gross motor skills or

processing of language.

Sometimes getting the words

or the thoughts out of

their head is difficult.

So organizing them,

prioritizing them and

putting their thoughts into

words can be difficult.

So writing like composition

can be difficult.

And then there are overlapping ideas.

um, they call it comorbid conditions,

which I think is kind of morbid, but like,

yeah, I agree.

Forty to sixty percent of

people with dyslexia also

have some kind of attention deficit.

So that's either ADHD with

the hyperactivity or just

a profound difficulty with focusing.

Very common together,

which is a very complex extra layer.

Because ADHD is not just focus.

It's
self-regulation of every kind.

So it's emotional regulation,
it's regulating their actions,
their speech,
they're organizing their time,
prioritizing.

So that's not a
language-based learning difficulty,
but it does often come with them,
interestingly.

So more of those executive
functioning types of things.

Yeah.

Researchers have not really
been able to tease out the differences in
Like some people have dyslexia,
but they can write fine.

They can do math great.

Other times you have a child
who has all the profile of
dyslexia and they also
struggle with math and they
struggle with writing too.

And researchers really
haven't been able to tease
out what causes those
differences at this point.

It's not really understood.

Yeah.

Right.

Yeah.

It could be a multitude of things.

Just, you know,

kids being able to

compensate where their

strength area is because

they've learned different

things that have helped them.

Yes.

You know,

just they could have just more

affecting other areas of their brain, too,

and or more profoundly.

Yeah.

Yes.

If you get your child tested

for dyslexia or any

learning difficulty at all,

there's no one test.

There's a variety of tests.

And so they're going to test

your auditory processing speeds.

Those are often, almost always,

your auditory processing is delayed.

It's slow.

Mm-hmm.

visual processing, again, seeing things,
but then it doesn't go
where it's supposed to go.

Working memory,
which is holding onto
information and
manipulating it without
writing it down or just
using it all in your brain.

So memory is an issue.

And then you've got that
executive function layer.

And those can, if you get tested,
you'll see the score.

And so some kids will have very,
very low scores.

Some will have medium scores, but

And that will determine, you know,
in a sense,

how much your kid will be
affected by their processing issues.

Not to say that they can't read,

can't learn to read and

can't be successful,

but that's kind of how,

those are the underlying

causes of these issues.

Right.

And those types of testing
could really help when
you're home educating, too,
because then you can say,
which modes are we going to
be most effective in?
Or that we should maybe back
up certain methods with
other types of methods,
like the auditory and the kinesthetic,
those types of things,
just to reinforce that learning.

So, yes,
that's a really good point to make.

So, you know,
that kind of takes us into
those effective teaching styles.

What methods tend to work the best?

You know, and I can say tend, you know,
in a certain way, but, you know,
each child is different.

But in general,
are there ways that as far
as delivery of materials
and methodologies or types
of learning that usually
stick a little better or
are more effective?

Yeah.

Yeah.

So,

so for reading really this method or

this approach that Orton

Gillingham approach has

been around for over a

hundred years back in the

early nineteen hundred

Samuel Orton and Anna

Gillingham work together.

She was a teacher and he was

a psychologist and they

were working with.

people, they called it word blindness,

you know,

that they couldn't process words.

And so that approach includes things like,

first of all, multisensory,

which is good for every child,

for every human and every subject,

but especially for reading.

And the idea is that they're seeing it,

they're hearing it,

maybe they're touching it.

And so more areas of the

brain are getting the information,

getting the upload, so to speak,

and then the information

sticks a little better.

So a good way to teach reading is with something that's multi-sensory, also explicitly taught.

A lot of traditional programs assume that you're just gonna pick things up, but a research-based, evidence-based or in Gillingham-based program will teach very explicitly and systematically.

It teaches the same way step by step that doesn't leave anything to chance.

And then the last element of that, or one of the last most important ones is really individualizing it, which means that you are absurd.

I tell parents all the time, you're a tutor.

Look at yourself like a tutor.

You're not a teacher that opens a book and goes chapter one on Monday, chapter two on Tuesday, you're a tutor.

So you see what your child is

forgetting because they will forget.

And you just go back and expect it and just have a method of reviewing.

And that's so a good...

There are plenty of programs that have been designed for parents to use at home.

There's four major ones that are quite good.

And then as far as other kinds of learning, I would say...

For my kids who maybe struggled with academics or attention, using interests was really important, as much as possible capitalizing on their interests.

So if we were doing, you know, say a world history, but they loved medieval, we'd camp out in medieval for a while.

And then kind of we've done ancient so many times, you know, we kind of zip through that part and get on to whatever they're interested in and hang out there a little longer.

We can do that.

We can enjoy learning with our kids.

We don't have to be stuck.

Was it Charlotte Mason?

She said, your curriculum is your tool,
not your master.

And that's so true.

Nobody's going to learn
every fact of history ever.

So you want to explore
history and explore things
that are interesting.

Because the thing is,
is the things that interest our kids,
like say they're really interested.

You
or battle strategy or something.

And so you dive into that for a while.

Their brain is a brain of strategy,
you know?

And so they may not become a
military commander,
but they might be a
strategist of some sort.

You know what I mean?

And so pursuing interests
like that are a wonderful
way to educate kids, you know,
because they're all
different and they all have different

interests and strengths and weaknesses.

And so as much as you can interest,
follow their interests, you know,
will help them to be more
engaged and remember better.

Right.

Yes.

Because I think there's even
research now that shows
that just the brain
activates at a much higher
level and stays engaged
longer when you're focusing
on something you're interested in.

And so capitalize on that,
especially for a child that
really struggles because
you're going to be able to
have them in that activity a lot longer.

So, yes.

Because the thing is,
is something that I've really...
been speaking about a lot
lately is that we want our
kids to feel successful.

We want them to like success
breeds success.

And so if our kids are coming to school,

coming to homeschool and they're
excited to learn, you know, they're,
they're,

instead of giving them a textbook
to listen to or read and,
and a worksheet to fill out,
we're having a discussion
or we're allowing them to
show what they know in a way that,
that they're good at say,
they feel smart and successful.

And as someone who feels
smart and successful, you know,
goes into the world feeling,
being smart and successful, you know,
and I think that is more
important than finishing the page or,
checking off all the check boxes, you know,
from our curriculum.

We want to try to be mindful of that.

And I, it's hard.

I know.

I mean, I struggle even to this day.

So I'm with that still.

Like I have one,

one of my last two kids is, you know,
kind of more traditional learner,
even though he's dyslexic.

And I'm like, Ooh, I could,

I could cram you right inside the box.

I'm like, calm down, Marianne.

You know, it's like,

And it's harder with the ones at the end.

I mean,

I found that I stuck to my guns

with my oldest and, you know, my last one,

man, she just take an online class.

I felt so bad for her,

but she's doing great in college now.

So, but yeah, that is hard.

So, you know, if a parent was to say, okay,

so say I had like a, um,

a picture book that I was

going to use to engage my

child with dyslexia.

What would that look like to

try to make it multisensory

if we were reading through

a picture book?

Well, I mean,

already a picture book has

the visual element and the

auditory element.

And the only other, so, I mean,

you can't really touch,

you could touch a book, I suppose,

but I would say, you know,

if you wanted a child to be
more engaged in a story to ask questions,
you know, like,
what do you think is going
to happen next?
Or why do you think they did that?
Or what would you do in that circumstance?
You know?

Do you think that was a good thing to do?
You know, you can ask questions.

I think reading aloud is
kind of such a beautiful
thing because it just works, you know.
Right, it does.

Yeah.

But I think when we have a child that too,
you know,
struggles in those language-based areas,
sometimes we pull ourselves
back from using those materials.

And so that's kind of why I
asked the question because

I think we oftentimes will
set limitations on what a
child needs and go, oh,
we got to get the Play-Doh out.
you know, to make this interactive.

But I love that.

Yes.

Just being able to look at
the pictures to discuss them,
maybe even touch them and, you know,
I'll just, yeah,
get up and do an activity
related to it or.

Right.

Like a hands-on.

So a lot of times with my kids, well,
I went through a series of
trial and error with my
younger kids in science, for example,
like

There are a lot of really
nice full year curricula
out there that are
beautiful and wonderful,
but that's way too much information.

And I would, like you,
kind of strap my kids to
the chair and be like,
we will read forty five
minutes today and you will
pay attention because we're
going to finish this.

Only to find out later that
they didn't remember really
the things that I read.

You know what they remember?

All the experiments that we did.

So later on,

I kind of opted for their

different science kits you can get.

And I would have them

delivered to the house each month and

work on those.

We had a couple of different

types of kits that would

come and we would just work on those.

And those are the kinds of

things that they remember.

So you could use that

curriculum and modify it,

use it as a spine, maybe touch on areas.

So if you're talking about muscles,

for example,

you don't need to discuss

every single kind of muscle,

but you could maybe talk about

There are different kinds of

muscles and your heart's a muscle,

you know, and then get a chicken out,

get a chicken leg out.

Right.

Right.

Like show them how there's a

muscle and it's attached with.

So those kinds of things
like the hands on
experiential learning helps
kids remember better.

Yeah.

Mm hmm.

Absolutely.

Yes.

And it it takes a little
more work on our part.

But but not always.

I mean,

I found that the one on one series
for high school science was my favorite.

My kids would always that
would be the discussion at
the table when they watch
the video because they
loved they were so funny and engaging.

And I'm like, yeah.

Yeah, that's, that's good.

And I even had one that went
on to be an engineer and
that was enough information
for him to do that.

So I think some people play
down the curriculum that is
more experiential or more

interactive as not being rigorous enough,
but for kids who do struggle,
that's all the rigor they
really need to just ignite
those passions and keep going.

Cause otherwise you shut the
doors and then there's no
learning happening at
It's just so, yeah, it's so unenjoyable.

I, with my second,
so I had older kids and
then I had a second set of
kids kind of in there like
four years later.

And, and so the older kids, you know,
I crammed them inside the
box and tried to make them do all.

And then, and then of course they,
you know,

did these amazing sailing trips
and I was like, okay, whatever.

So the next set I was like, okay,
I'm going to be a little
more attentive to their actual needs.

And so their high school
ended up being pretty relaxed and,
and um you know I sat with
them during science held
their hand read we

discussed you know and it was
I kept thinking, is this enough?
You know, am I doing, am I doing enough?
You know, are they prepared for college?
Are they even going to college?
And so of this set, the second set though,
one of them never went to college.
He took his college fund and
invested it and started a business.
And the other one, um, did go to college,
excuse me.
And she, um,
who was resistant, you know,
to a lot of learning.
Like she just didn't enjoy it.
We would argue, you know, about her doing,
even going to a tutor.
But then when she got, here's the key.
Yeah.
When they found their thing,
So she decided she wanted to
be a physical therapist.
And so she started at
community college because
she hadn't jumped through all the hoops,
which I highly, highly recommend.
Her brain was able to develop and mature.
She was able to try different things out.

She started at community college with intro to college writing, intro to college algebra, right?

And was able to grow and learn and figure out how things work.

And because she was motivated, she pushed herself really hard.

But the lesson really is that even though we had a relaxed high school, like you were saying with the one-on-one science series, she went on to get graduate with a science degree with honors.

I'm like,

I didn't even do that well in college and I don't have dyslexia and ADHD.

So, you know what I mean?

So it doesn't, the academics don't, have a role,

but they're just not more important than keeping your

kids' curiosity and confidence and that connection.

I call it the three Cs.

Right.

Yeah.

The connection they have with you,

the curiosity that they
have about their world,
and the confidence that
they have to actually go
out and explore it and learn.

Right.

And that is real learning.

Mm-hmm.

Absolutely.

It truly is.

And yeah,

I found the community colleges

have been awesome for my

two that went to college.

They started that way and

highly recommend that

because they weren't too studious,

but it did help them learn

the ropes and especially

now with online learning classes.

Those are really just convoluted.

So they could learn them in

an environment where

they're at home and go, ah,

help me navigate.

It doesn't seem as much of a pressure.

You know, you talked about needs.

Yeah, yeah.

You talked about needs a little while ago,
and I would really like to
kind of circle back to that.

What are the real often
looked needs of students
with language-based learning challenges?

So, you know, we talked,
there's remediation is the
fixing of the weaknesses, right?

And so we want to really
spend time working on those things.

We want to be teaching them with a,
you know, a phonics based, you know,

We talked about Orton-Gillingham,
a program that's designed
for people with dyslexia.

We want to work on that,
but holding on loosely
because it's funny.

There's this thing called
middle school magic where it seems like,
I mean, I call it that.

I don't know what other people call it,
but it's universal.

Everybody sees it, but around twelve,
thirteen, sometimes fourteen,
maybe a little earlier.

that kids just suddenly that
kind of the penny drops and they're like,

Oh, I get it.

Yeah.

I'm reading.

Right.

So, so, but we should be inputting.

I do believe there,

there is a statistic out

there that you'll see sometimes that says,

Oh, you know, if you're,

dyslexic child doesn't get

remediated and get caught

up by third grade,

they'll never catch up and

parents freak out.

And then one day I realized,

oh my goodness,

they are looking at public school kids.

They're not looking at

homeschooled kids who are

being taught at their level.

At their pace, you know,

and as a homeschool parent,

you can do that.

So if they're in sixth grade

and they're reading at a first,

second grade level,

that's where you got to teach them.

Right.

You got to individualize it
and then you've got to
review and you've got to
just let go of those
expectations and be consistent with it.
Sometimes you might need to hire a tutor.

But so remediation is one facet,
but it shouldn't define their whole life.

Like it shouldn't be
something we don't want our
kids hating reading,
hating reading instruction,
hating us because we're
forcing them to do this.

Right.

I've talked to parents whose
kids are really resistant.

And they've taken a break
from reading instruction
for even a year at times.

And then the kid heals from
whatever stress that's been
overwhelming them.

And they come to the table
ready to learn the next year.

And so I'm telling you,
it does not look like
traditional education.

But here's the thing.

Parents know what their kids need.

I do a lot of homeschool
consulting and I talk to
these beautiful parents who
love their children,
who've done all the
research and they know what to do,
but they're like, that can't be right.

I can't possibly take a
break from reading because
they're behind.

So what do kids need?

They need a parent that
looks at them like a person
and not a statistic and who
will educate themselves about
learning differences,
it's really important to
understand that your kid's
smart and they want to do well.

So if they're falling apart
or crying when it comes time for school,
they're telling you
that something's not right.

You know, they want to do well.

So they need a parent that's, you know,
seeking for answers and
listening to shows like this and,

you know,
connecting with other homeschool
parents who've done it to
really understand, you know,
that each kid's needs are different,
but they definitely need,
they need that
evidence-based instruction.

They need accommodations.
are another thing that our
kids really need.

And the idea of an accommodation is,
for example,
using speech to text to write
a paper or listening to a
book instead of reading it.

And the idea is that kids
with language-based
learning difficulties are smart,
but they struggle with the written word.

So how can we support those
weaknesses so they can
learn at their intellectual ability?
way, way, way back.

I used to say, you can't listen to a book.
That's cheating.

But then I had all these
kids and my kid was wanting
to read Lord of the Rings.

And I was like,
I'm never going to be able
to sit down and read Lord of the Rings.
No, we don't allow that.
So he started listening to
books and just devoured them.
And many children and adults
with dyslexia love literature.
They love a good story.
It's actually a strength of dyslexia.
Narrative storytelling can be a strength.
Not everybody has it, but.
So, you know,
accommodating their
weaknesses so they can keep
learning at their
intellectual ability and, you know.
Yeah.
Yeah.
That's awesome.
As you were telling that story,
I was thinking about two of
the girls that I coach.
So I â€¦
My other business is I have
an aerial studio.
And I coach eleven girls on
my performance team.

So we perform all around the area.

And I had one girl on my team,

both homeschooled,

and her sister couldn't

join the team or try out

because she was taking dyslexia tutoring.

And she always just looks so

downtrodden because all the

funds that the family was

using were going into her tutoring.

And this last year,

her mom let her try out.

And so she's she joined my team.

And to see her blossom this

last year just makes me cry

because she is a totally

different person because

they've just said, you know what?

You know, reading is going to happen,

but this is something you love.

And, and yeah,

it's just been amazing to see,

see her change because, because they,

they kind of let go of that.

And so, yeah, it's just beautiful.

There is research about strengths.

working in your strengths

and how when an individual,

whether it's a child or an

adult in the workplace,
works in their giftings and strengths,
that all areas of their
work are learning improve.

It's really interesting.

And I do believe it kind of
goes back to that.

I feel successful.

I feel confident.

So therefore, when I go into
situations, I'm going with an attitude of,
you know what I mean?

Like I can do this.

I don't know, but there, so you're,
what you're describing with
this young lady is an example of that,
you know, and, and it's,
and it's a tricky thing to tease out.

You know,

when do you give up the tutoring
and do a sport?

You know, when do you do that?

What's responsible?

Cause we want to do the
right thing by our kids.

Right.

Right.

Yeah, it comes down to, I think,

a lot of prayer and, you know,
just walking in faith because, yeah,
one of my kids just said to me,
I'm done with school.

And I'm like, well, not graduating you yet,
but let's make a plan.

And, you know,
his plan was way different than mine.

Um,
and he's my one with the language-based
learning challenges.

And, um, and, you know,
God just really said, let go, you know,
for a while, not, but after a while,
and it was to preserve our relationship.

Yeah.

Um, and that was more important.

So, um.

So, yeah,
you just don't know what's coming
ahead for your child.

God does.

And just to rest in that is
so much more important.

Yeah.

Yeah.

That whole idea, you know,
the Bible talks about walking with God.

And when you said that,

it kind of reminded me of
this whole homeschooling
outside the box kids.
It's like there is no playbook here.
There is no one curriculum
or one way that works when
what we're talking about
are general things, you know,
things to prioritize,
things that are less important.
But your unique journey is
yours and and you're
navigating it sometimes year by year.
Month by month, week by week, day by day,
hour by hour.
Because some days kids are like,
it's all going in.
And some days it's like
nothing's going in.
And it might be that way for a week.
I remember my kid's dad would say,
I'd be on the phone going,
I just can't do this anymore.
It's like, no one can read.
Everyone's running around.
And I fell asleep during
story time and they went outside.
Yeah.

And he was like, oh,
you should just go to the beach, you know,
and go and relax.

And I was like, are you kidding me?

Like, I can't do that.

But he was right, of course, you know,
we would go to the beach

and everyone would be happy and we'd
get some in and out on the way home.

I didn't have to make dinner, you know,

it's just like what we actually needed,

but it didn't seem like by

my reasoning to be the right thing to do.

Right.

But so that's sort of

prioritizing relationship

and heart of your child is

more important because if

those things are intact and,

Then they can go into the

world with a base of strength.

And honestly, I'm telling you,

from what I have seen with

my kids and other families,

that really is the most important thing.

They could have very little academically,

but be curious.

Yes.

confident and connected and

they actually go into the
world and find their way.

It's wonderful.

Yeah.

Yeah.

As long as they, yeah.

And they know how to get what they need to,

to get,

to get what they want and what

they're drawn towards.

Absolutely.

Yeah.

So true.

So how do you create an
environment then like that, you know,
to really nurture those things?

Well, I mean, with little kids, it's easy,
you know,

because they just want to play
all the time.

And so for our family,
when my kids were young,

I called it like the
exercises of learning.

So we would do a little reading,
a little math, a read aloud, you know,
and then we'd listen to his
read alouds for history and

we do hands on science or
sometimes do a co-op or something.

Or sometimes I'd force them
to sit through a textbook,
but I don't recommend that anymore.

But so that was kind of the younger,
the elementary years.

I look at those as just exposure,
follow interest, you know, get a puppy.

Having children is a great lesson.

I'll tell you like a little
sibling is just a great lesson.

planting a garden, you know,
very Charlotte Mason,
like live life with your children,
Montessori.

And then as the kids get
into middle school,
I start to kind of focus more on, okay,
well, independence,

like how are they going to
get a little more independent?

And I just, I, I just, I, you know,

I'm trying to generalize it,
but using some accommodations,
some assistive technology.

One of the things also that
I really recommend for families is,
to help their kids as they get older,

especially ones with
learning difficulties is to
find their thing.

Like if, whether it's, you know,
one of my kids was animals,
another kid was football,
another one was soccer and
friends and scouts, dance, you know,
whatever it might be.

It's really important for
them to find something that
they're good at so that
when they're faced with, you know, oh,
I'm in a writing class or,
with a bunch of kids, you know,
and I can't write or whatever, you know,
they have that strength,
that thing that they're good at.

But, you know, for me,
it's really important to have
piece in my home.

And so that comes with a lot
of conversation.

That's another,
that's the fourth C really.

I feel like conversations
that we have with our kids are gold.

And when you send your kids

away to school all day,
and then they're at sports
and then doing homework,
and then you might have
dinner together for
all day, every day,
and they can come to you.

I have a big chair in my
room and I love it because
a kid will come in and
they'll sit down and I just
stop what I'm doing because
I know they want to have a
conversation with me.

And that is such a big part
of creating a warm, safe,
place for your kids to be
where they can say,

I read this today and I'm, you know,
it could be something there
where you're like, oh my gosh,
that's really bad or, right.

You know, but you have to, you know.

They're bringing you into
the conversation.

So it's an open door for you
to be able to respond back.

Yes.

So, you know, relaxed,

individualized learning,
open communication, safety.

Mm-hmm.

Those kinds of things are
just a place where home is a safe place.

It should be a safe place
where they can learn the way they learn.

And there's obviously
consequences and boundaries,

but I have found the more
that we have this kind of environment,
the less need there is for
that kind of thing.

Absolutely.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

I think a lot of times when we talk about,
you know, environment accommodating,
you know, we talk about, you know,
lighting and all these things,
but the relational thing really matters.

Is is the most important.

I love that you focused on
that because it tends to be forgotten,
but it's what we have and
we all have the ability to
have that equally.

Yeah.

If we if we're just very
present in the moment versus, you know,
just trying to.

cross off all the boxes and
do all the things.

So yes, we have equivalent access to that.

So, and maybe, you know, if, if you,
we do have, you know,
working parents and things

like that time is limited,

but then you just, you, you focus on,
you know, what you do have for that.

Yeah, absolutely.

Yeah.

So I know kids like to be challenged and,

So we don't want to under teach,

but we don't want to over teach either.

Is there a way a parent can

find kind of that sweet

spot of learning for a child?

Yeah.

You know,

I saw that in your list of questions.

I was like, that's really difficult.

Um,

because we all have that kid

who's like reading at a

first grade level and who

wants their sixth grade

reading curriculum, you know,

or whatever it is.

So it's,

it's a difficult thing to navigate.

So I try to find ungraded things or,

you know,

like an algebra program or

pre-algebra program that's

designed for kids who are struggling.

So it's more visual or, you

So there are curricula out

there that are more

designed for kids that

struggle so that they can

do higher level stuff.

But I would say...

most curricula say,

so say there was a kid who

was really invested in

working at grade level that

you could theoretically,

not so much with math, but you could try.

Uh, and sometimes, you know,

you just get the ninth

grade curriculum or the algebra and say,

here you go, go to town, you know,

and have them be like,

I don't understand any of this.

Well, why don't we try, like,
let's do the placement test.

And a lot of our kids, um,
ideas about learning and
ideas about what they want
out of their life are
opportunities for us to
teach them to accept their
learning differences, which is important.

It's important for us to accept them,
but it's also important for them.

And that is educating them
that you are smart,
because kids with dyslexia
are very smart.

And it's easy if we don't
talk about learning
differences and dyslexia
and what have you processing our ADHD,
our kids are going to think they're dumb.

Or they're going to think
that they're lazy and
unmotivated if they have
ADHD and we're not,
we're not going to label
them because we don't want
them to like have a crutch or something.

But the reality is, is that we're,

we're empowering them by
teaching them that dyslexia
is a processing issue.

Like I have a son who had ADHD and I,
and I was reading this great book.

It's called ADHD two point O it's the,
by the people who wrote
driven to distraction back
in the eighties.

But anyway, okay.

I'm like drawing neurons and dopamines.

And I'm like,

this is how your brain works.

And he was just, I'm like,

and so here's this

supplement that's going to help you.

And he was like, no,

I don't want to take it.

But then he did and it helped.

But the idea is that we

educate our kids about what's going on.

So it's not a mystery.

Right.

It's not something they need

to be embarrassed of or ashamed of.

It's just is what it is.

And it's not one

conversation that we have with them.

It's a series of conversations over time,
different circumstances.

You know,
siblings are a great way for that
to happen.

You know,
you have your twelve year old
who's still reading at a
second grade level and then
you have the first grader who's like, oh,
look, you know,
I'm reading Little House on the Prairie.

Right.

But this is an opportunity
both for teaching the dyslexic kid that,
you know, they're smart,
but learn differently and
focusing on their strengths, you know,
making sure you're saying,
I love how you make food or
I love how you train the
animals or whatever.

And then the younger one
teaching them humility, you know,
like just because you can
read well does not mean
that you're a better person.

Right.

You know,

and that's I used to say that
that should be a subject, you know.

Like the whole character
training should just be on the list.

It's an inconvenience or an interruption,
but it's actually part of
the curriculum for the day.

Yeah.

Oh, absolutely.

Yeah.

I think when we first
started homeschooling,
character training was like
the only subject in our
house because there were
constant battles and I needed it.

Yeah.

But yeah, it just, it works out that way.

Yeah.

So, you know, we, in our audience,
we have a lot of parents
who start homeschooling
because of like anxiety.

reasons where their kids are
just kicked out of school.

Mine was, that was my story.

And so a lot of kids come
like completely shut down.

They, you know, are,
have trauma from school or
maybe even we've pushed
them too hard within our homeschool.

How can a parent start that
healing process of moving
towards what you've been
talking about with your
three C's if they feel like
they're in that place?

That's a great question.

I talk to a lot of parents
who are pulling their kids
out only because it's a life-saving move,
but they have no idea what
they're going to do.

And honestly,
like pulling them out of that
environment is half the battle.

You get your kid home, let them sleep.

Let them wake up when
they're ready to wake up.

Let them eat when they want to eat.

Let them move when they want
to move or need to move.

And you've solved half your problems,
right?

Because they're able to not
be being pounded into a round hole.

But then that trauma is a real issue.

There are learned helplessness,
like I'm dumb, I can't do this,
or immediate frustration
when something's hard and shutting down.

And so in extreme cases,
I do recommend parents just stop.
de-school.

You've maybe heard of this term,
which is basically either
doing light academics or no academics,
maybe dropping the readings
instruction or hiring a tutor.

Tutors are like little miracles from God.

I don't know.

They seem to have this ability to teach,
this desire to love on our kids.

All of our tutors have been
just incredible experiences for my kids.

So
possibly a tutor.

But you want to be real sensitive.

Again, it's that communication,
that fourth C,

like we're going to do this
homeschooling thing.

How do you feel about it?

What are your concerns about it?

Because a lot of times a kid will say,
well, who am I going to have for friends,
right?

And so you want to accommodate that.

You want to stay connected
to the good friends or join
a homeschool group.

So we want to have a lot of
communication with our kid.

And then-

possibly taking a break from things.

And it seems really scary,
but especially in elementary school,
which is usually when kids get pulled

You have so much flexibility.

I mean, you could do,

you could go and do field
trips every week, you know,

and listen to books while

you're driving and have a

fantastic education because again,

you're cultivating their confidence,

their curiosity and their connection.

And then they will let you

know when they're ready to

start learning.

You know, they'll express desire to start,

to start reading and it might not be.

in a week or a month or a year.

It might be longer, but yeah,
and you have to navigate that,
but that's kind of what it looks like.

They've got to,
the period of de-schooling
is really to decompress,
to build their relationship
and trust with you and to
do fun things that are,
they're interested in so
that they enjoy learning again.

And

The important thing is to
try not to schoolify it.

You know,
you might go to the library and
get some books and leave
them laying around, you know,
but try not to then pull up a worksheet.

Right.

Not that fun time we had today.

Yes.

Panic sets in.

Yeah, you could do that.

Like I know parents who will,
who are kind of unschoolers.

but they do ask their kids
to write about their

experiences or create a
PowerPoint or record a
video or something where
they can just express themselves,
what they're learning.

So that, you know,
it's sort of school-ish.

But then, you know,
so learning about learning
differences is key.

You've got to understand
what's going on inside your
child's brain so that you
don't do what I did, which was like,
tell my kids when they were
bored to go read a book.

I became an Orton-Gillingham
tutor and they did a
simulation of what it's
like to be dyslexic.

We had a family schoolroom
office and I was in the office and my son,
who's profoundly dyslexic,
was behind me at the desk and
I just turned around and I was like,
I am so sorry.

And he just laughed.

He was like, you're fine, mom.

He has much more grace for

us than we have for him.

Yeah, for sure.

He's so thankful for being
able to have been homeschooled.

And there's a stage where
your kids are like,

I was homeschooled and
that's why I can't spell.

I'm like, not really.

Yeah.

But, you know, later,
like my older kids will
come to me and say,
we had such a good childhood, you know,

traveling and playing
outside and siblings and
just the freedom that they

had to be children because
they see now in the world, you know,
that it's just a different

â it's a whole â

The world is just, you know,
kids grow up so fast and
there's so many
expectations and pressures put on them.

And literally, you know,
children playing in the backyard.

I used to worry because I

had so many children.

I was like, all my kids play all day,
you know, this is so bad,
but actually ended up fine.

Yeah.

Yeah.

That's great.

So I'd love for you to talk
a little bit about your latest book,
No More School,
and then also your website,
Homeschooling with Dyslexia, too,
and just what families can
find there and how to connect with you.

So my website is
homeschoolingwithdyslexia.com.

I have articles that I've written.

And so there's a search bar
so you can search for what
things that you're looking for.

There's a contact page.

If you can't find it, I can help you.

I have classes, online classes.

So parent education classes, not for kids,
but for parents to learn about.

So it's kind of like a quick
way to learn about dyslexia
or dysgraphia or
dyscalculia or processing

issues or executive function.

So you can listen to it or
watch it and kind of get up
to speed quickly.

I have a mentoring group, which, you know,
is for parents.

A lot of parents in there
have kids who are really resistant.

But my book, No More School,
I wrote about a year and a half ago.

And it was really this
message that shared my
journey of educating my kids.

And the subtitle really is
it's not about not doing
school or not educating our kids.

It's stop schooling them and
start helping them learn.

That's the idea.

And what kinds of things do
our kids really need now?
to be educated, to be successful.

And so it starts with kind
of a little bit of our
story woven through it,
but also just kind of,
what is that word that everyone's using?
Deconstructing the public school.

Like where did it come from?

And where did the teaching
methods come from?

And are they useful?

And what are they good for?

And then we can take what works

And and and and leave what

doesn't and reconstruct an

education that really meets

the needs of our kids,

because I have seen my like

I had a lot of kids and

then nobody was independent.

And so my thing was pretty

out there and my kids are

successful as adults.

And I was like, hold the phone.

They don't need to know what

verbs and nouns are.

I do it all the time.

Like to write a good paper

or to be a good storyteller.

You know what I mean?

So anyway, that's,

that book is the really my

heart right now is just to

help parents feel confident

to step outside the box and not,

you're not hurting your kids or,

you're definitely not hurting your kids.

You know,

if you provide a loving
environment where they can
follow their interests, you know,
you're doing a good job.

Yeah.

Yeah.

So anyway,

it's kind of a way to help
parents because it's hard
to step outside the box
because we all most of us
are products of the
traditional school system.

And we we really that's another reason.

I mean, that gets a little fringy,
but like the school system
and the way that it's
structured with one correct
answer and one authority
and we don't ask questions, you know,
those kinds of things are a
little bit not really
conducive to critical thinking or.
Independent thinking, you know,
finding our thing because we're so caught,
we're so on this belt of, you know,

got to do what everyone else is doing.

Right.

So it's kind of a way to
help parents feel confident
to step outside the box.

That's what that is.

Yeah.

Yeah,

I was told by a couple I interviewed
a while ago, they said, you know,
the first big critical
decision that kids who are
within the school system have to make is,
now what are you going to
do for the rest of your life?

Because they've been told up
until that point,
every little step that they need to take,
and then all of a sudden
they have to make this major decision.

How much better that we give
our children that
decision-making capability
and that ability to explore,
really know who they are, and
and understand themselves
before they have to start
making decisions like that.

Yeah, it just puts them in a better place.

It really does.

You know,

that and community college or

trade schools,

there's so many great trade schools.

Um, you know,

I don't know if your listeners know this,

but the department of rehab

is in every state in the

United States and they do

look at learning

disabilities as a

disability and they will

help your kid to find a

program or school or degree

that meets their needs to

help them find it, apply for it.

And they'll pay for it too,

if you have a diagnosis.

So, um, yep.

You know,

there's a lot of different

options for our kids to find their path.

And, you know, when I was growing up,

it was just like you're

going to college and you're

getting a degree, you know.

And then I got a degree and

I earned more in college
waiting tables than I did with my degree.

I was like, wait a second.

Yeah, exactly.

He's like, Oh, well later, you know,
you need a master's degree or a PhD.

Oh yes, exactly.

Yeah.

There's,
there's so many options for our kids.

Absolutely.

Yeah.

Well,

I want to encourage our audience to
check out homeschoolingwithdyslexia.com.

I will definitely put the
link in the show notes.

So you can connect with Mary
Ann and her resources and her books.

And I know your book,
the latest book is linked
right on your homepage.

So, but they're all on Amazon.

So you can find them there.

So, well,

thank you so much for this conversation.

It was, it was just delightful.

And, and, and,

Have so many good things in it.

Thank you.

Yes.

Hour goes by super fast.

Absolutely.

So, so yeah,

I'm just thankful for all that

you were doing and sharing

and still being in the game.

There's so many that, you know, we,

we get a little bit older and we're like,

Oh, I'm done with this.

And I know so many people

who have done that.

And I'm just thankful for

you being in the space

still and continuing to

encourage and equip families.

Thank you.

Absolutely.

And I just encourage our audience,

our website is now got a

re-redo over this last weekend.

So things are easier to find.

I have some people on my

team that are like, Peggy,

we got to be able to find stuff.

So the cool thing is,

is now you can go to our website.

It's bedhomeschool.com and

the tabs up on the top

under like homeschool help

and curriculum and

I don't remember how they're labeled,

but if you go into each of those,

there's a whole little like

picture menu of all of the

different types of curriculum,

curriculum helps, diagnoses,

and also like family support therapy.

And you can click on that.

You'll see all the resources

that are tagged with that.

And also you can start

discussions in there.

Yeah.

on that particular topic,

which is super cool.

Plus you'll get an email if

you're following it on

anything that's happening.

So all of that is interconnected.

You can even have access to

that part of our website

with a free membership,

but you do have to sign up

for a membership.

So, um, we just want to get you connected.

Um,
there are upper levels of membership too,
that gets you access to
some of our exclusive content, um,
consultations, things like that.

But just excited to have all
that done and be able to
connect with everybody.

And then next week,
my guest is a speech pathologist,
and we're going to talk
about building strong voices,
speech strategies for social skills,
self-regulation,
and learning success.

So she's got a lot to talk
about and super excited to
be back next week to talk about that.

So, yeah, well, thank you so much,
Marianne,
and thank you all for joining us
on the show today.

And
I guess we will see you
around on the website and
definitely check out
Marianne's resources.

And until then,

God bless everybody and take care.

And we'll see you next time

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