

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 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.

Welcome to Empowering
Homeschool Conversations.

I'm your host, Anna Yorty,
and I'm here with my co-hosts today.

We have Leilani Menendez,
Stephanie Buckwalter, and Dawn Jackson.

Unfortunately,
Peggy Ployer hasn't been
able to join us because of
some challenges with
electricity due to the
storms down in Texas.

So we just need to pray for her and
that she'll get through all of that.

But today,
we are going to talk about
mental preparation for moms
who homeschool diverse learners.

Now, that's a mouthful.

And we know that in the summertime,
we often take a lot of time
to pick out things like a
homeschool curriculum and
set up our learning areas
and things like that.

But we also know that half
the battle of homeschooling
is just that mental part of the battle.

So today we're going to address that.

Um,

and the panel is just going to have a

conversation amongst

ourselves that we hope you can, um,

take some tips away from

that you can be encouraged by.

So we're just gonna go ahead

and get right into it here.

Um,

Because there's a lot of

mental preparation that

sets us up for success as we homeschool.

And so some people this

summer are thinking of

homeschooling for the first

time and others might be

just coming back for a new

year where they've already

been homeschooling.

But let's talk about what

mindset shifts are necessary

for us to embrace

homeschooling our diverse learners.

And we'll just throw it out there.

We have four of us are here

and we can just all discuss it.

But let's just think about

that and see what we have to say here.

Anyone want to take that?

Well, I'll jump in.

Because I have both a mild, I had a,
all of my children as of
this year have now graduated.

So,

but I had a child with mild learning
disabilities and one with
more moderate disabilities.

And then I also have three other children.

So when I was homeschooling
all of them and my child

with mild disabilities,

I just had to prepare

myself to be aware that

uh his brothers were could

easily jump ahead of him in

certain uh classes and I

just had to prepare myself

to figure out how to

navigate that throughout

the year and how to plan in

such a way that it would

include him where he would

still feel like he's being successful

And then with my moderate daughter,

that's a whole nother ball game.

She was four years after,

she's four years separated
from my last child.

And so she's kind of,
I was able to homeschool
her alone towards the end.

And that one was just mainly
preparing for the battles
until I figured out a good
homeschooling method to
that kind of got her out of
fight or flight and helped
her ease into the day.

And then homeschooling
became a lot easier.

I can share that just goes
to show that the,
you know, there is a lot of like, you know,
mental preparation.

It's not just about finding
that perfect curriculum.

Dawn,
did you have something to add to that?

Yeah,
I think you have to take into
consideration your background.

So I know for myself,
I came from a teaching background.
So I have these giant
expectations of what the

day would look like and
how everything would be laid out and,
you know, it just runs smoothly,
but you don't anticipate
the mornings where, you know,
someone's very sick or you
didn't sleep all night and, you know,
you're just kind of like
pushing through every single moment.
And I think if you can keep
in your mind that there is no perfect day,
that there is a, what we call like an,
like a learning curve or, you know,
a transition each day is a new day
And each day is a day where
you're going to have to
hopefully pray and rely on
God's strength for that day
and also his help.
And one of the other things
I was thinking about, though,
is with change.
If it's your first year homeschooling,
there's so much transition.
You just don't know how it's
going to necessarily work out.
So just being easy with yourself.
having like grace for

yourself and the journey
that whole first year may
not go as you hope and intend it.

You know,

you might go to some seminars and
read some books and you're like,
I got this.

And then it just doesn't look like that.

And there's frustrating days and hard days,

but in the end, I promise you,

you will be so blessed and

you will look back over those years.

Like I do,

my kids are all grown and I'm like,

those are the best days we have together.

That's some great advice.

Planning for just setting

your mind that it's not

going to be perfect.

It's not going to be

whatever that perfect

expectation is that you're having.

I think, yeah,

setting our expectations is

nine-tenths of the mental battle,

probably.

Any other thoughts on that, Leilani?

No,

the only thing that just came to mind

is understanding that your
child is not going to hit
all the benchmarks that
And they're possibly going
to be going slower, but it's OK.

Let that happen.

Just kind of walk with them
and work at their levels.

Because I know my youngest daughter,
I thought by now she would
be able to read something.

And we're still struggling
through a lot of it.

Also,

understanding that maybe the
curriculum is not the best
for them and that you have
to switch curriculum,
even though you had high
expectations for it.

And being flexible from day
to day and just
learning from them on how to teach them.

And you know,
the things that Dawn said
reminded me of something I
just started thinking about.

I am still homeschooling my daughter.

Instead of going four years of college,
she's doing, you know,
homeschool college.

So I'm still continuing to
homeschool her even though
she's officially graduated.

I don't have to report to
the state anymore.

But it reminded me of the middle,
what I have to do is
mentally prepare for three
kinds of homeschool days every day.

There's the ideal day where
things go like you expect
and you actually get something done.

Now I'm talking about the
child here with moderate
intellectual disability.

So things can fall apart pretty quickly.

The total failure days where
you just have to give up on
the academic part of
homeschool and work on life
skills or just building
your relationship with your
child and helping them
learn coping skills.

things like that.

And then there's the days

where you can take a break,
regroup and keep going.
And it's like every single
day I have to be ready for
any of those and, you know,
plan for them basically, not on paper,
but plan mentally to,
to that any of those can happen any day.

Well, great point, Stephanie.

No doubt that,
we have to be very,
very flexible as moms of
kids who learn differently,
whatever the situation is.

We can go from mild to extreme,
but we do have to be
flexible and ready for
anything sometimes.

I always said I had to be a
mom with a big bag of tricks,
like depending on the situation,
you wind up with that.

And it's the same with homeschooling.

We are also, if you've kind of,
had a public school background,
either your child went to
public school or even
you're starting to homeschool,

but you went to public school,
you have kind of a mindset
or a picture of what that looks like.
And we're hearing from all of us, I think,
that we have permission to
stray from that.

We don't need to stay in
that little box of what
that looked like in a
classroom with 30 kids or whatever.

We can
Switch it up.

We don't have to follow, like,
worry about an IEP.

We can adjust on the fly as we learn.

I loved what I think Leilani
said about learning from
our kids about their needs
and how we can teach them.

So there's that.

And I think it helps to mentally prepare,
like Stephanie was talking about,
for behavior issues.

You know, I, my kids have,
I think every kid has
behavior issues and we can
prepare mentally for that
by thinking about how to
set them up for success,

maybe by controlling
environment to the extent possible.

But, you know, that's not a fail safe.

And we need,

but we do set up expectations

for our children so they

understand that there are

boundaries for them.

That makes them feel more secure,

less anxious.

They understand what to expect.

And then they're more likely

to have good days with

those behavior expectations in place.

And then, of course, we all fail.

We all have a bad day

knowing how we'll adjust as

moms or dads to that.

So there's a lot to unpack

in that one little question

about just embracing that

journey of homeschooling

our diverse learners.

We then can kind of,

let's move into the idea of, okay,

now every day when we start

the new homeschooling year,

how can we mentally prepare

ourselves in a more specific way

for each homeschooling day?

You know, you wake up in the morning,

what makes the homeschool

day start out well to, you know,

and what we can control?

Are there any specific

routines or practices that

you all have found to be helpful?

Or maybe even things that didn't work,

you know,

that might be instructive as well.

I was just thinking about kind of

This new question and then

the last question,

how important it is to make

sure that in your heart, you know,

this is God's plan for your

family and that this is

something God has led you to.

And you'll know that because

he'll bring things into

your path and he'll open

doors and you'll meet people.

And it's like he's showing you, yeah,

this is what I have for you.

And even though you may not

have it all down and you

don't know exactly what the

curriculum is going to be or whatever,
he will show you.

And I would even say, you know,
in the morning each day,
and this is just standard, right?

But spend that time with God
and pray over your family,
pray over your children, pray over your,
you know,

weaknesses and confess your
weaknesses to the Lord,
confess your doubt to God.

Like, Lord,

I don't have the strength to do this.

I don't know what I'm doing.

I'm afraid.

I have fear around this and
confess that fear and find
that strength in him and in his word.

And then when you get those scriptures,
you pop them up there
because the enemy will come, you know,
and doubt will come and try
to take you off this.

I've worked with parents
where this has happened to them.

They're like, oh, no,
it conflicts too much or

it's too hard or whatever.

And they didn't give it

enough time to let the hard things fall.

But really remembering what God showed you,

journal that, put that in your journal,

pray over that.

and then pray over your children.

I used to like to pray over

my children when they were

sleeping and I would just

go in and kneel down beside

them on the bed and just

lightly not wake them up, you know,

cause we aren't ready yet, but you know,

just really like, you know,

like Lord be with us today and help us,

but just giving it to God

because it really is, you know,

his story is, our story is his story.

like the ultimate goal of all of this,

right?

I mean, what is your objective?

Why are you doing this?

For me, it was,

I want my kids to know the Lord.

I want my kids to know truth and, and,

you know,

not be taken down a path where

there wasn't truth.

So that was,
those are just remembering your,
like your major points that
you're building your,
your home on and your,
your school on praying with,
if you have a husband, you know,
really praying with him through this and,
And, you know,
being honest about where you are.
So that's like important for me.
Well, that's definitely foundational.
Spending that time with the
Lord in the morning.
The word of God transforms us.
And sometimes, you know,
the homeschooling is as
much about God transforming
us as our kids.
So definitely relying on him,
knowing that we can rely on him.
And I would just add to that,
that if you make your first
thing that you do with your children,
other than eating or whatever you do,
you know,
is spending time with them in the word.
Bring them into that because

God's word speaks to us at any age.

And, you know,

it doesn't eradicate our sin.

So we'll have problems.

We'll all have problems with

that sometimes.

But it certainly does.

transform our minds and our

hearts so that we're more

aware of him and his presence.

And our children need that

as much as we do.

I bet there's much more to

unpack with this one.

So let her rip.

Well, I found that as I've gotten older,

my children have gotten older,

I need to find

time for myself in the

morning before my daughter

wakes up so that I'm calm

and I'm filled up and with

a quiet time with just

doing things that I can do

because most of the day

it's a lot of interruptions

with my daughter and I have

to get that couple hours to

myself with no

interruptions because then
you know I feel like my day
has already started and it
started well so if I can
get up early enough to
start my day well then it's easier
to handle when the day doesn't go well.

And starting with a quiet
time is part of it.

And also starting the school
day with prayer has been
helpful for me too.

That's good.

Yeah.

What about you, Leilani?

Do you have any thoughts on
what else we can do to
mentally prepare and gird
ourselves up for each new day?

I mean,

I like what she said about praying.

And I think the biggest
thing that we've been doing
is we're praying more in
between things through the day.

And yeah, like not just the mornings,
but I mean, the mornings are great,
like waking up with no kids

and getting yourself mentally ready.

like more power to you
because I am a night owl
and that never happens.

But the,
the rare times that it has like
have been amazing.

But just giving it to God
with every little thing
throughout the day.

Yeah.

That's,
that's definitely I think the best
piece of advice to give
someone mentioned
interruptions to the day.

Well, you know,
every one of us could raise
our hand if we say, you know,
we're interrupted many, many times.

So I also think like as we
sort of think about how to
structure our time of the day to,
you know, or the week to think about
things like appointments
that we have to do.

I don't know about you guys,
but my daughter had lots of
appointments and all our

kids can have lots of
appointments or outside
things they need to do.
So to the extent possible,
what I would suggest is
trying to set aside one day
of the week where you try
to schedule as many of
those within that one day
as you can so that you know
the other days are going to be relatively
interruption free from at
least that type of thing.

I know once I start running with kids,
you know,
for this or that appointment in
the middle of the day, it can get,
you know,
everything just kind of blows up
from there.

So I would suggest that as I
know it's not always possible,
but it does help your days
go a little more smoothly.
And you kind of have that expectation.
Oh, well, Thursday is the day we're out,
you know,
And we're not really

expecting to do so much in the house or,
you know,
whatever or academically on that day.

So, again,

it's got to do with expectations

because when you're trying

to cram it all in and there

are interruptions every day,

we get stressed by that, don't we?

You guys ever see car homeschooling?

there's like a program you

can do so I thought that

was my term because that's

what I call it say you have

that Thursday and it's okay

we are just hitting the

road well everybody has a

little satchel the things

that they get to do in the

car could be coloring for

the little ones it could be

you know, books that they're reading,

whatever.

But, um, it's like, we're doing, you know,
cars.

One of the things that we

did when we had those car

schooling days is we would

listen to audio books.

Yeah.

Listen, audio books.

We have it kind of like intentional though,
about things that, you know, in their bag,
they have their little snack.

They have

I always think about what we did.

We didn't really do car homeschooling.

We did more like walks in
the morning after everyone
got up and then they did
their little art journals along the way.

So they had a satchel with
their little journal,
their little watercolor kit,
their little spray water.

I mean, it was so cute.

And they would draw a flower
and we'd go home.

They just quickly sketch it.

We'd go home and look it up
and then we would write it about it.

You know,
that was kind of that classical
approach to homeschooling.

Or what is her name?

Charlotte Mason.

Charlotte Mason.

Do you have something,
some more to add there, Stephanie?

Oh, yeah.

I was going to say,
I like what you said about
knowing your family's rhythms and how to,
you know,
with scheduling everything at
certain times.

One thing that I had to do,
and it kind of went against
the grain with how I raised
my neurotypical children,
and that was my daughter loves to shop.

And so my idea was, well,
we'll do school all week
and then shopping is the
reward on Friday.

Well,
the problem is she has a lot of
anxiety around going places
because she likes it so much.

She just like fixates on it.

And so I found that what was best
Easier with her was actually
going shopping on Monday morning.

That was our school in the
morning was our shopping trip.

And it still is to this day.

And then that relieves the
anxiety for the rest of the week.

And so I had to flip instead
of using it as a reward.

I used it as an anxiety killer.

So sometimes we have to flip
our expectations like
you're talking about what we think,
how we think things should go.

And, you know,
what we use for rewards is
different than what we
would use for neurotypical kids.

Yeah.

That's great.

We have to release some of that control,
don't we?

It's hard.

The struggle is real.

I know, just thinking about that,

I have a couple of kids who
are very strong-willed,

and they don't necessarily

like to be told

or like to have help with or

oversight all the time.

So another thing that just

helps relieve some of that,

the battles and things that
we have to be prepared for
is to help them to be more independent,
to set things up so that
they don't have to keep
checking in with you as often.

To the extent that they're able,
I would prepare,

their materials ahead of time,
sort of like the bag Don
that you're talking about in the car,
but it was at the home.

And so it would have like a
folder or a box with
whatever they needed for
each activity they were going to do.

So they could,
and I would put down like
some instructions or
something that they could read.

So as they moved into that
stage of reading and all that,
they could begin to work
through without me, you know,
hovering over them.

And it relieved me of,
you know, for some time.

And it gave them that sense
of independence that they really craved.

So preparing, you know,
as a big part of that,
because if you don't have it set up, then
it's harder for them to be independent.

So.

Have you ever heard of folder school?

No, just kidding.

No, there's like folders, right?

Like I've seen parents where
they put each subject in a
folder and all their child
does is come and pull out their folder.

Maybe it's their math folder
or their science folder, but it's,
it's all compartmentalized
so that there isn't, Oh, where's my math?

But mom might rip out the
sheets of math or the sheet
that you're going to do that day.

And then,
you know, have a couple of words,
directions or whatever, but it is,
it's not folder school.

I made that up.

No, we didn't call it that,
but that was essentially the same idea.

And then there was choice about, well,
what do I want to do next?

You know,
then they didn't have to be
directed for everything.

So it just lets them have a
feeling of ownership in
their own education.

And,
and so some kids don't need that
others do,
but knowing your children and
what makes them tick and motivating them.

a big part of it so oh good
good stuff but nevertheless
even if we had it all
together I feel like we
would still have some
stress right who we all
feel stress uh from time to
time with any child and um
I think you know our stress
multiplies exponentially
when we have a child with
diverse learning needs and
we're managing that
parenting role and the homeschooling,
there's a lot of stress, you know,
to pile on to just normal
everyday family stress and work and life.

So, you know,

we need to learn how to
manage that stress so that
we don't get burned out.

Earlier, Dawn, I believe, mentioned that,
you know, she has parents who
They feel like, oh,
they're a failure or they
doubt their calling because
they get stressed and burned out.

So how can we avoid that and
manage our stress so we
don't put ourselves in the grave early?

I'll go.

Is it okay if I go first?

I'll go first.

Absolutely.

Because I get stressed out very easily.

And I feel like it's an ebb
and flow kind of thing.

But I think that having a
routine in place that when
we get to the point where
we're completely burnt out
and we can't function anymore,
that routine's in place so
it doesn't slow us down and
we don't feel guilty.

I mean, we can slow down,

but the routine is still
there that we're in some kind of
we can keep going without
feeling guilty because I
think that also comes with,
with the whole package of
feeling burnt out and stressed,
then you feel guilty.
But I always, I mean, I always try to,
I think the thing that I
get most stressed out about
honestly is the behavior
problems that I run into
that I'm not ready for.
and the acting out and when
we're in public and she
plants herself in the
middle of the floor and we
can't go on or somebody
gets in trouble at the
homeschool co-op and then all that,
that's the stuff that
really starts to stress me out.
And I think having some kind
of hobby that's outside of
everything that I can just almost,
I hate saying this, but like escape to,
that has really helped me a lot.
um of course also getting

enough sleep and enough and
I'm not one to speak about
the sleep part but but
getting the right kind of
nutrition and the vitamins
and the food and you know
making sure we're eating
but also not eating too
much or eating the wrong
kind of stuff and that's
one that I think everybody
struggles with just in
general like that's a hard
one because sometimes we
want to you know gravitate
to our coffee and our chocolate
And, you know,
whenever we're feeling
stressed and that's not
necessarily good for you, but having,
you know,
finding ways to replace that
with something more nutritional and,
you know, those kinds of things.
And coffee can create more
stress actually in your body.
Yes.
Say it ain't so.

I know mine's coffee.

That's my thing.

Yeah, I know.

And they, but it actually does.

It actually was talking to
my chiropractor about that.

You know, he was like,
was saying you know I don't
know why I'm feeling these
certain aches in my body
could it be connected to
the coffee and he said yeah
because it's stressing your
body right it it increases
your cortisol levels right
when you drink it so that
creates stress in your body
so I had to stop drinking
it and the pain went away
it was like the

inflammation from that
that's not I mean and then

I was like I'll just have a
taste of it you know it
didn't work like I'm now
literally drinking tea but

I drink like green tea
which has less caffeine so
but so yeah there's all

those things that you have
to you have to take those
things into consideration
of of what what poop
strips me out if you're a
mom second on a cup of
coffee till the end of the
day and then you're not
sleeping because that'll
impact your sleep so

Those are things to take
into consideration.

And I think sometimes
parents are moving so fast
that they are not, especially the mom,
she's not going,
what am I doing that's
working or not working for me?

And how do I change this behavior?

So that's the hard part is
changing behavior.

And one thing I learned
about changing behavior is
it just takes one tiny act.

So instead of getting up and going,
I'm going right for that coffee pot.

Maybe I'll go for a glass of
water with lemons.

You know, or just, you know,
a nice cup of green tea or
something where it's just
it just takes one tiny
movement in the direction
of making a choice that
actually can impact your
whole entire family.

Really, if you think about it.

So, yeah,

those eating healthy and all that.

impact stress as well so if

you're eating unhealthy or

just let's call mcdonald's

it was a rough day okay

that's okay but how many

times a week are you doing

that you know so it's not

to shame anyone I've been

there for that so I yeah I

was I was an older parent

with my kids so I had all

these really high we've

talked about this before

high expectations what I

thought it should look like

and be like and I wanted it

to be the best but

You know, you, you learn grace,

you learn kindness and
compassion for your journey too,
because this is a growth
thing for you as well.

But, um,

so we're still talking about this
and I take that off to another direction.

Well, we talked about how, um, you know,
what we,
how we treat ourselves does impact our,
um, stress levels.

What if we're eating, you know,
unhealthy all the time then
our bodies get stressed and
and if our bodies are
stressed you know uh our
minds get stressed and
little things can send us
over the edge so that's
part of this this topic for
sure there's a lot more to
it as well I mean I like
how um leilani said about um
the routine,
having a routine that kind of
will carry on if we need to take a moment,
you know, to step out,
that the routine does help.

And then, you know,
sometimes switching it up
will break a pattern,
a negative stress pattern.

But I bet, Stephanie, you've
probably never experienced stress,
but maybe you've heard about this.

No, it's,
it's interesting because my
daughter slips easily into
fight or flight mode.

It sends me in the fight or flight mode.

So we both kind of live in
fight or flight mode.

I,
but so one thing that about avoiding
burnout is learning the
tricks to get her out of fight or flight.

And it can be through music therapy.

It can be through taking a walk.

So I'm thinking one of the
other things we do,

doing something that isn't
as brain taxing because she

has brain issues, kind of like a TBI,
a low grade TBI all the time.

So doing things that don't tax the brain,
doing stuff she thinks is fun,
being funny or stupid in

the teaching of the material helps.

But then I ended up in fight

or flight and then cortisol

levels are always elevated.

And I got to the point a

couple of years ago where

it wasn't just burnout, it was physically

Uh,

my energy was low at the mitochondrial

level.

I mean, it wasn't just, oh, I'm tired.

I sleep.

I'll feel better tomorrow.

It was my mitochondrial, you know,

the cortisol had been going

on for so long that it

finally tanked at a very,

at a cellular level.

So like you were talking about Dawn,

that was very appropriate.

Cause that's exactly what I

had to learn was what

contributes to my wellness, you know,

greens, the B vitamins.

If you've been in fight or

flight for a long time,

it drains that those B

vitamins back in there,

eat a lot of greens.
eat healthy and the things
that take it away I found
out are coffee even though
I still sugar any sugary
food processed food all of
those things take away from
health when I'm at that
energy level and so I have
had to learn to control my
like you're talking about
even just those little tiny changes just
controlling what goes into
my body until I build the
energy levels and my cells
back up I mean it gets to
the that's what shocked me
was I finally realized this
is going on at a cellular
level this isn't just a
mental you know mindset
thing I can't just change
my mindset and make things
better I have to physically
take care of my body to get
it back up so that even if
I am slipping into fight or
flight it's not doing that
energy drain every time

Also,

I want to just ask you really quick

to Stephanie,

do you do any kind of self

regulation practices,

like through breathing for yourself,

right to help help kind of

regulate and get you grounded?

Because we know as parents, if I'm off,

that's going to impact my child too.

And now we're all just

spinning out together.

But is there anything that you do?

Like,

you know, breathing or, okay,

mommy's going to take a break.

I'm going to go in my room

or I don't even know if

you're able to do that,

but just step away or put some music on.

Like you said,

what do you do that helps you with that?

There's several things.

I,

I do do the breathing where I breathe in

for four counts and then

breathe out for eight or breathe in four.

And then I'll go from eight to 12 to,

you know, I can make it really long.

And I know that lowers my heart rate,

but not my blood pressure.

I checked it.

It does change your blood pressure,

but it does lower your heart rate.

And I also have a little

mechanical foot massager

that I run on my feet.

We have a, I listen to,

they're only specific

artists that it works with,

but Christian music with

very specific artists that I can,

you know,

I can tell there's some depth

behind those songs and behind the music.

You can kind of feel it.

And those things will raise

my energy levels.

And prayer, reading the word.

But I can't always do those in the moment.

Like you said, can you really slip away?

No,

I can't just pull out my phone and

start reading the word in

the middle of something.

So those are kind of more in

my quieter times.

But even massaging my own feet,
if I don't have the little mechanical one,
because sometimes the sound
of it sets her off and she gets mad.

I have to use what's available.

That's really good.

It could be a whole topic.

I hear a number of you just
saying to take a break of some sort,
whether it's just a moment
of breathing or doing something funny.
laughter.

If you can find something to like, I,
we have at our, at our fingertips,
a phone with like, for me,
funny animal videos do it
for my daughter also like
to take a pause and just say, let's just,
let's just look at these
pictures or these videos
and just get some laughter going,
you know, that can switch it up or, um,
Or, you know, just remember too,
we're circling around why
we're homeschooling.

We're not homeschooling just to get from,
you know,
point A to point B academically.

And I'm very guilty of that
because my personality is goal oriented.

So to me,
the daily goal is get through
these activities that I've planned.

And the day rarely goes quite like that.

And so for me to be able to say, you know,
I can take time out.

This is not the main thing.

The main thing is that I raise a child who,
you know, a good character who loves God.

And we deal with hard issues
that come up or, you know,
and sometimes it's not a
hard issue per se.

It's just they're having a hard day,
you know, and it's it's just part of
their diagnosis or whatever.

But to allow yourself to say,
I don't need to finish this today.

Tomorrow is going to be a
new day with new mercy in the morning.

So that's great.

Do any of you struggle with
this feeling yes alone any
of you struggle okay yeah
well we'll talk about this
specific one for a minute
but just a feeling that it

all depends on you that
you're in it alone don't
you think that really
contributes to this stress that we feel
and feeling burned out if
things aren't going quite
the way we envisioned.

And how can we get out of
that mindset that we're alone in this?

I think the world gives us a
lot of that pressure too.

I was going to say,

I think like one thing that

I was learning about

recently that at my late age in life,

God never stops teaching us, right?

When I learned that my story

is God's story,

God's story living through me,

it's not about me.

All the things that I've

done or what I want to

achieve or anything,

I used to get so caught up

in all of that.

But it's all his.

And we are a reflection of him.

And if we can just get that

burden off of us saying,
this isn't about me,
this isn't about me showing the world.
Look what a great mom I am.
Look what a great homeschool mom I am.
Or, you know,
I'm going to sell a million
tickets at my next event or something.
It's, it's for the glory of God.
And it's really that question of God.
How can, how can you live?
How can you shine through me?
You know,
how can you shine for me to my children?
to my friends, to the world out there.
And I think if you go in it
with that perspective,
instead of it's about you and it's,
you know, a reflection of you and I,
you guys, I was guilty of that.
I had married into a family
that were big homeschoolers already.
So they kind of set the path
and I was like, oh my gosh,
I have to catch up with
them and do what they do.
And oh my goodness, my sister-in-law was
She created homeschooling, I think.
You know, I mean,

she was just one of those people,
you know.

She would create her own
curriculum and all the little things.

And I was just like, whoa, okay,
that's what I have to do.

And it was very daunting for me.

But had I had more of the
mindset that my life is in
God's hands and he's given
me life to know him and to glorify him.

There's no guarantee how
this is all going to work,
how it's all going to turn out.

But if you can go in it with,
this is God's burden.

It's not my burden.

It's for his glory.

It's not for my glory.

In 300 years, guess what?

No one's going to know our names.

No one.

300 years.

Don Jackson who?

Like no one's going to know.

Hopefully there will be
souls in heaven as a result of,

The journey of knowing

Christ and sharing that love with others.

So and hopefully that's our
children and others that we
meet along the way.

I don't know.

That's just my thing that
I've learned at this late age in my life.

I see a lot of heads nodding
here on the screens.

I'm like, should I end the recording now?

Should we just sing an amen?

No, it's funny because you said something,

Dawn,

about looking at your sister and how
she's building all her own curriculum,
but also recognizing that

God made each and every one
of us so incredibly unique.

We can't do everything on our own.

And I think sometimes we
feel that pressure from the
world that we're supposed
to do everything on our own.

And then we create this
little bubble around
ourselves and then we start
to feel lonely and we feel
like we have all this
pressure and stress on

ourselves when God did not
create us to do things alone.

we're supposed to be a community.

We're supposed to rely on
each other and we're not
supposed to be jealous of others.

And we're supposed to love each other,
but he's feeding, like you said,
we're a vessel.

He comes through us and other people.

And we all, I don't know.

It's like a big, you know,
I don't know how to explain it.

There's no words to really explain it,
but it's a community.

I guess that's the word.

The fact that the four of us
are here is that you're not alone.

And listening to this, you're not alone.

And the other thing is that,
and you may think,
my child and what is their future like?

Why am I having to go
through all these things?

But if you think about it,
each of our children here
on this call are
contributing to what we're

sharing with you.

And so as long as you are living,
doing the best you can with your child,
and sharing with others
coming alongside others
when they need help when
you find someone in need
that's that's a big part of
what we're doing here but
also what you can do
individually in your own
lives is you may feel alone
I know it's very isolating
we should do one on
isolation the feelings of
isolation when you have a
special needs child but there's so much
think day to day it's easy
to be isolated and feel
alone and like you're doing
it alone but if you can
just lift your eyes and
look around a little bit
which I know is hard you
can't always do that in the
moment that there are other
people and you just uh you
know it takes effort to
find them and connect with

them and it may not be in
person it may be online but
Don't don't go it alone.

You know,

you don't you don't have to go it alone.

And even though it's bad homeschool,
the website Peggy has changed it over.

I don't know if all of you

listening to this are aware,

but she has changed it over

to more of a Facebook type.

product where you get an

account and you can go in

and start talking to each other.

Now we're just setting it up this summer.

So it's just now, you know,

starting to grow and build some momentum,

but that's a place where

you can go and find connection.

Don't, don't try to do this alone.

Peggy's trying really hard

to find ways to connect our community,

our homeschool community

online at Sped High School.

So please take advantage of that.

Yeah.

And it was funny, too,

that you said that because

I was talking to Peggy and she said something to me about how each and every one of us that she's bringing on board are so unique and different that, you know, there's there's people that you will connect with, like your personality will fit with one person or, you know, there's just there's such a diversity among everybody.

This platform is going to really take off.

I think it'd be a huge, huge resource for the homeschool community to connect.

Those kinds of connections are great.

And then also, we need to find some in-person connections when we can.

That can be hard depending on the nature of your child's disability or diagnosis.

But that community, is one of God's ways to help us through this life.

So yeah,

I think one of the things is we get into that mindset of thinking, oh,

if I don't do this by this
certain time or whatever it looks like,
I'm going to ruin my child.
My child's going to be ruined.
And they're not going to be ruined.
I can just say that looking back,
I know how much I stressed
about things like that.
This is, as we said before,
you're not alone.
There are people that God
puts in your life.
And then best of all, he's always with us.
He never leaves us.
He never forsakes us.
He loves us more than we can ever know.
And he loves our kids.
And he loves our kids more than we do.
And so when we get into that mindset,
we can realize that
You know,
the stress lifts and we don't
fall into that loneliness
and doubt and discouragement.
So I would say just reach
out to when you feel like
you're really stressed.
Reach out to someone.

Reach out in prayer.

Reach out to someone, you know,
and talk about it.

Be transparent.

And there's there's
encouragement there for you.

Um,

we don't have a whole lot of time left.

I think what we'll turn to
now is some practical tips
and advice just for keeping that,
that mindset going that, um,
you know, the correct expectations,
things like that.

We've given some along the way already,
but what practical tips or
advice would you offer to
moms who are just starting
their homeschooling journey?

Or, you know,

there are those that have started,
you know, been in it too,
that need to hear this.

So yeah,

just let's think about that
because summer's a good
time to reset and rethink
how we did things the prior year.

And so this is a great time

know starting in the fall to
try a new thing so maybe
you'll pick up a tip here I
have two little things I
know we have a little time
real quick grade levels
stop it just stop it okay
I'm so tired of hearing my
you know because I'm on
facebook groups and stuff
and it's like my child's
not working at the third
grade level so nice
you know what is the
objective here go back to
your objective it is not
about the grade level I'm
sorry I know you want your
child to work at a third
grade level and they're in
third grade but that is not
always realistic and that
can actually deter you from
your goals here so you know
how do I mean if you're
thinking but someday I want
him to go back into school
I want him to be in a program

OK, but right now,
if this is your first year or this,
you know,
you pulled your child out
because you're thinking
they're so far behind.

I can help them.

That's true.

And they will progress
faster in a smaller group setting.

And one on one is amazing.

And I totally, completely love that.

But you've got to get that
out of your head.

That's my opinion,
and I'm sure you guys have your opinions,
which I'd love to hear.

And then the other thing is,
I'm going to be a mean guy today.

Get off social media.

Stop it.

Stop scrolling what other
homeschool moms are doing.

It's so overwhelming.

I've seen people go, well,

I'm trying to find a
curriculum for my child.

And then you get 20 offerings.

20 offerings.

And this is, you guys,
I'm just going to plug here.
This is why I love,
I love my school Solomar
because we identify exactly
how that child learns and
exactly what kind of
curriculum they would need.
We're not all over the map.
We're kind of like geeks
when it comes to curriculum.
So if your child's more of
this type of learner with
this sort of an interest,
We pair those and that's
something you can do on your own.
You don't need like us to do an assessment,
but we do that if you want it,
but you can also be attuned to that.
How does my child learn?
Are they,
are they pretty much going toward their,
You know,
there are computers all the time.
But why?
Because that's also giving
your child a dopamine hit.
It's giving you a dopamine hit,

but it's not healthy.

I'm telling you right now.

So I'm going to be the mean

guy here today and say,

stop the social media

because your brain will get

so overwhelmed and you will

get exhausted just by going.

Oh,

I have to try beautiful feet or I have

to try, you know,

this curriculum or that curriculum.

And now you've got all this

curriculum in your closet

and you don't know what to do with it.

So,

so Dawn first coffee and now social

media.

But you make an awesome

point because that whole

social media thing is

promotes all this comparison.

And it's sort of like, you know,

you're going to get on a

horse and you may not know

how that horse is going to

ride or whatever,

but stay on the horse for a while.

Like once you've picked a horse in this,

you know, or a curriculum,

just stay on it,

ride it out a little bit.

Don't start looking around and thinking,

Oh,

maybe this or that you'll make

yourself crazy.

Yeah,

just the people that you know that are,

you know,

that have been doing this for a while.

Trust them and then take a

really good look at it yourself.

See if you can find some

used pieces and then look it over and go,

yeah, no, this will work or modify it.

Right.

To work for your child.

It doesn't you don't have to go, you know,

no teacher does that.

I'm a credential teacher.

We never follow the curriculum.

We do every little part of it.

They give you so much you

can pick and choose.

or just focus on the supplements.

You don't even have to pay

the whole curriculum.

But my whole point with the
social media is it is overwhelming.

It's so overwhelming that
you're going to want to
quit because it's too much information.

That's what I'm saying.

And so do yourself a break,
just find that little group
that you trust.

Don't put that big question
out there on social media,
because you're going to be,
you'll go crazy with all
the answers and options.

Yeah, I agree about it too.

Nice.

Well, another thing,
and I'm going to speak here
to the parents who have more severe kids,
because that's what I have
most experience with.

And that's when you have a
neurotypical child, you,
the process for teaching
homeschool is you shop for curriculum.

you plan it all out and then
you teach and the reason
you can do that is because
the curriculum has a table

of contents which turns out to be your scope and sequence scope is what you're going to teach in a year sequence is the order in which you teach it when you have a special needs child that is like two or more years behind grade level in the core subjects you know the three r's reading writing with arithmetic you can't start with the curriculum, you have to start with goals. You have to set, okay, this, and this addresses the problem when they're not on grade level. So when they're not on grade level, you start with goals, not with curriculum. And you set the goals like, okay, my kid is in fifth grade reading at a second grade level. Your goal is not going to be to go out and find fifth grade curriculum. It's going to be to find

something that your child
can learn and grow with from
where they're at today.

So you set goals and then
you shop for curriculum and
then you do the planning
and then you keep planning
all year long when it's not
going because regular
normal curriculum is
designed for kids like ours.

So you have to you have to adjust.

You have to make adaptations.

You have to do all these things.

There's one more point there

I forgot I was going to say.

But the idea is you can't
start with curriculum like
you would a normal child.

So if you're saying,
what curriculum do I have?

That's what I mean, too.

That's the wrong question.

The right question is,
where is my child today and
how much do I think they
can move forward in a year?

And you have your starting point.

Your starting point is not curriculum.

And that's a common mistake.

I made the same mistake.

Okay.

I'm guilty too.

So I'm kind of preaching at
the choir here.

I love that.

That to me, that is like,
that just blows out this
whole conversation today.

Like, I think that was just amazing.

I was coaching with a mom
the other day and she kept saying, well,
you know,

I want him to do this and this and this.

And I said,

the goal here is that he would
even go over to that space and
turn on that book or that
whatever computer.

I think he's like more computer learner.

And just if it's two minutes, that's it.

Yay.

That's a celebration.

Because that's where he's at.

No,

don't tell him because he'll get upset.

No, I'm not doing that again.

But in your heart, you're going, okay.

The goal,

like you're saying the goal is

we're going to have to

build the routine routine

is we're going to try, right.

It may not be that.

And do you know,

just with her having that mindset,

he is actually doing much more.

It's really amazing.

Just backing off from, no,

we got to do this and this

and that to a goal, like the goal.

And I keep telling her the

goal is for him to have the mindset.

We do school from nine to noon, you know?

And then whatever that looks like,

it looks like that's still great.

Great point.

And as a matter of fact,

I am through the sped homeschool website.

I'm going to offer a series

of one week challenges,

one for developing a student profile,

one for setting goals and

one for planning.

So I'm not sure when this

recording is coming out,

but if it's already past
the date to get them live,
they should be there recorded.
So you can still learn from it and clean,
but I'm going to offer
those challenges this
summer to help people
get the right mindset and
get their plan down based on their child,
teaching the child, not the curriculum.
This is going to be some great resources,
Stephanie,
because what you're talking
about is powerful and
freeing as a homeschool
parent to realize that
you're not bound by a
particular curriculum or grade level,
that we are going to
Take our child where they're at today,
and then our desire is to
see forward movement over time.
We cannot predict
necessarily how long that's going to take,
but as long as over time we
see a trajectory of movement forward,
that's our goal.
That should satisfy us and

keep motivating us to keep on keeping on.

Because you have to ask yourself,

what is the objective here?

That's something I was

working with a co-op with

about asking the parents,

what is the objective?

Not what is the goal of the curriculum?

What do we want to accomplish?

But the objective is that

our children wouldn't want to learn.

Leilani,

in our couple of minutes that we

have left,

maybe you have a tip or advice

you want to add to this conversation?

I mean, I don't know.

I think Dawn's pretty like, and Stephanie,

I don't know.

I just, they're right.

Listen to them.

And I'm excited to hear what

Stephanie's challenges are too.

I don't really have much to say.

Well, that's, I mean, no,

you've given a lot.

Thank you.

Since they've been so serious,

I'm going to add a frivolous one to this.

And I'm going to say, have fun.

You shouldn't be slogging through.

I mean,

some days that feels like you're

slogging through cement.

But try to make it fun.

Switch up how you do things.

Schedule a party for no

reason every now and then.

Keep your sense of humor.

That really,

really helps if you can just

find a sense of humor about

certain situations.

You know,

those are some some tips and

advice that I think have

they've seen me through

some really hard days.

So instead of, you know,

watching social media, you can create.

This is what we do.

Sorry.

We'll recreate social media.

We'll get creative and be goofy.

We're quite goofy.

Goofy is good sometimes.

Yeah.

And when they see that you
can be goofy and just laugh,
it bonds you as well to
your children and then to you.

So that's, well, we've gotten some great,
great information.

I thank you all for joining
the conversation and adding
the wealth of your knowledge.

And I just thank God for
what he's done in your lives,
like was mentioned at the beginning.

And our kids,
all of that story that he's
been writing in us goes
into this and hopefully
pours into the lives of all
who are coming online to
join this conversation.

I trust that our
homeschooling friends have
picked up some good tips
and advice to think about
over the summer and maybe
implement a few of them.
starting with the new homeschool year.

Be sure to join us next week
for a new episode of
Empowering Homeschool Conversations.

And we always look forward to seeing you.

Until then, take care and God bless.

Bye.

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