

Speaker 1: [00:01](#) Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. So something that a lot of folks don't realize about me is that I am a home school graduate. I was actually homeschooled all the way from kindergarten through high school and then I ended up attending a community college after that. So considering that we homeschool our three children currently, that makes them second generation homeschoolers, which is kind of cool. And I wanted to record this episode today and talk about how certain aspects of being homeschooled really set me up for success later in life because I know a lot of you have young children that you're currently homeschooling or maybe you're contemplating homeschooling in the future. And I thought it would be helpful for you to have the perspective of someone who has been there, done that. So I am your host Jill Winger, and for the last 10 years I've been helping people just like you who feel uninspired by modern life.

Speaker 1: [01:12](#) I'll show you how to create the life you really want by learning how to grow your own food and master old fashioned skills. Okay, so a little disclaimer before we get started. I try to be super careful when I talk about homeschooling publicly because it is never my intention in any way to condemn or criticize anyone who sends their kids to public school. I 100% believe that homeschooling is not for everyone and every single family who is looking at it as an option needs to weight the pros and cons and decide what's right for them. So I also can't speak to your unique experience or your unique children because there are so many variables in play. And I also just want to put out there that while homeschooling works well for us at this point in time, it might not be a fit for us in the future. So we're pretty open minded and fluid with the possibilities. So I just want to put that out there. So no one in any way thinks that you know, this is the only way for every single person because it's not.

Speaker 1: [02:30](#) Now as I look back at my homeschool history and also look ahead with my own children, I have two that are currently in elementary school, one who's in preschool, basically, I've spent a lot of time analyzing what did and didn't work in my homeschool experience. And I often use that as I plan out our own homeschooling and I pick curriculums or we plan out our day, so I thought this may be helpful to some of you as well. Okay. So the first thing I think that sticks out the most for me that really helped set me up for success in the future. You know, and this is what one of the things my mom was a really big stickler on is discipline every day in our routine. So even though we were homeschooled now I grew up with just me and my sister. So there was just two of us.

- Speaker 1: [03:27](#) We were homeschooled, you know, we didn't have to necessarily go anywhere in the morning, but my mom was really particular that we got out of bed at the same time. We had chores and breakfast, we got dressed and we started the day at 8:00 AM so you're sitting at the table ready to roll at 8:00 AM. That really stuck with me and I think as I got older and started getting my first jobs and went into college later on, it felt very, very natural for me to have the discipline of a morning routine. Now I know there's a lot of folks who love homeschooling because they get to do it in their pajamas and they get to sleep in and they get to start when they want. I know there's different personalities, that might be a fit for you. I know for us and for my personality, that's not a fit.
- Speaker 1: [04:22](#) Like there has to be a measure of discipline for our lives to keep running smoothly. And as I look back and how easily I was able to just flow into the outside world, whether it was employment or college or whatever, like when I got to college, it didn't feel weird or out of my element to get up, get dressed, pack my books and go to class and be there right on time. I really credit that to the discipline that my mom instilled in us every single day. Now we did have a little flexibility, um, and like I'll explain in a minute. We didn't school all day long. We were definitely done before the other kids would get home on the bus in the afternoon. But it was that mixture of flexibility and structure that I think was really key as I went into the real world and started doing different activities and have different requirements placed on me.
- Speaker 1: [05:21](#) Another thing that was really, really crucial and one of the biggest factors that we are currently homeschooling our children is we had a lot of free time to play, which might sound counterintuitive as we're talking about schooling and discipline. But having that free time, I think that's really the magic of childhood. So every day in our schooling with my sister and I, we would get done by lunchtime at the latest. And I don't really ever remember a day, it'd be a very, very rare exceptions where we would be schooling into the, so we'd finished our coursework, we go from eight till 1130 or whatever. And then after lunch it was free time. So we would play with neighborhood kids, if they were home, we had a few homeschoolers in the neighborhood, so we would play, we would pretend my sister and I were voracious pretenders, uh, with all sorts of imaginary games and things we would make up.
- Speaker 1: [06:21](#) Um, played outside a ton, you know, create and imagine and read. You know, I spent a lot of time reading, I just like to read. But we, you know, interestingly enough, when I say to folks that

I never went, I never did school past noon and my kids right now don't do school past about 11 o'clock, I think there's some eyebrows raised. Like how on earth can you possibly get everything done in that short of a time period? Like maybe you're missing something major. So just to reassure you that it can be done. We always, my sister and I always tested at the very upper percentile of all the standardized tests because even though we were homeschooled and it wasn't required by the state, my mom personally chose to have us tested every year. We were always at the extreme upper percentages of those tests. We, I did very well on the sat, the act tests. I ended up with a 4.0 GPA in college even though I was doing a double major and working at the same time and on the equestrian show team. So having that more concentrated academic time was not a detriment whatsoever. We were able to still get all of the book learning and we needed to. But most importantly we were able to have that free time in the afternoons to explore who we were and what we liked and have those interactions with the neighborhood kids. And that's really, really valuable in my opinion.

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Number three kind of rolls along with this idea of number two and having this free time. But as I got into high school, because I had this free time, I think that was probably the time in my life where it was the most crucial for me because I had time to number one get jobs and my jobs were usually always related to my passions or my goals. So they furthered my experience and who I got to meet and what I got to learn. And I also got to pursue some really random passions, which at the time seemed completely non-related to anything in my life, but actually ended up being really, really important later on. So, for example, when I was in high school, I had those afternoons where I would go work at a friend's ranch and watch them breed horses or work cattle and I learned all sorts of skills and, really good information in the agricultural that I wouldn't have been able to do had I been in, you know, public school, high school all day long.

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I also had three jobs in the summer, which I don't think all kids need three jobs. That just worked out for me. So I did babysitting. I cleaned stalls in a local barn in the evenings. And then I actually ended up working at Jiffy lube, believe it or not, when I think I was 16 just to make a little extra money. So having those jobs enabled me to save up money for college. I didn't end up going into debt and I did go to just a community college, but I didn't have to take out student loans. And I got to meet people and I got to learn new things and that was really, really beneficial for me. And then lastly, the kind of weird thing I

ended up doing in high school, which I think at the time my mom was slightly concerned.

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I was spending a lot of time on the computer learning how to code webpages and it's kind of a weird, it was a weird path for me because I was this horse girl who was in four H and I loved hanging out at the friend's ranch and doing cattle, but I also loved online and you know, back then the internet was definitely a different place. There were not blogs on every street corner and it was much, much harder to start a website. But I had my own website when I was 15 and 16. It was about horses and it was just like the ramblings of a silly horse-crazy teenager girl. But I learned how to code it and I learned how to make my own graphics. And I think my parents thought it was a complete waste of time. And I don't blame them because it looked bizarre for me to be in like coding on the computer all day long.

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But as you guys probably guessed, that kind of set me up for whether I ended up creating later. Little did I know, never would have thought that would have been a thing. And even now today, I still use some of the code that I learned when I was 16 back then. I used it on my blog today and it gave me a really good understanding as I started the Prairie homestead. And I did a lot of my own work on the Prairie homestead at the beginning. And so it kind of was a foreshadowing of what was to come. And if I had been over scheduled with other activities, I don't think I ever would have had the bandwidth to pursue that passion. So, you know, I didn't know that's how it would play out and you can't see the future. But it's just interesting to me how the things I was pursuing as a high schooler in my free time really ended up being the things I'm most passionate now as an adult.

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So just a little interesting side note and kind of the fourth thing as I was breaking down my homeschool experience that I think was really, really beneficial for me is that I had ability or my mom had the ability to laser in on my academic weaknesses. So like I said, I had really good grades. I did great on the sat and all that, but, but all people have natural strengths and natural weaknesses. And for me, my weakness was math. I was definitely stronger in the language arts, which is still evidenced by the fact I like to write. I wrote a cookbook, I like to write blog posts. Um, math, I didn't do horrible at it, but it wasn't something I just was a shoe-in for either. So because mom was able to recognize that, you know, I think it was algebra two, I believe, she ended up hiring a tutor.

- New Speaker: [12:39](#) So she found a local math Whiz and he came would come over in the mornings and help me work on algebra. Did I love it? No, I did not love it. But because she was able to laser focus in like that. When I got to college, I was able to ACE, I think I did trigonometry and geometry and all kinds of stuff in college, like no problem. And I ended up actually helping the other students in my college math classes. And I really credit the fact that mom spent that little bit of extra time making sure it was solid before I went on side note here. I think as homeschoolers sometimes I'm speaking to, if you are currently homeschooling or maybe you're contemplating it, sometimes I feel like we think we have to be our child's only teacher and I'm not sure that is necessarily always a good thing.
- Speaker 1: [13:33](#) So it's, it's wonderful for a child and parent to have that teacher student relationship. But I think it's also important that your child as they grow also learn from other people. And you know, I had several, more than several. I had many opportunities in elementary and high school to get into classroom situations, whether it was, you know, little extra classes mom would take me to, or CPR classes or 4-H events or even this tutor where I would have other two teachers teach me or I would be in that classroom setting. And I think that was really important. So I understood how to learn from other people, not just my mom. And because of that, when I did get to college and I walked into my first college classroom, I didn't have a hard time with that. It didn't feel foreign, I wasn't disoriented.
- Speaker 1: [14:30](#) I was able to keep up with all the assignments, all the homework. No problem. And I really think that having those different teachers in different applications throughout childhood was a really great precursor to that. So as I, as I examine my homeschool past and I really think about it and I look at my and what motivates them to learn as adults, like think about it when you want to learn something, when you're on YouTube Googling videos or you're reading my blog hungry for information on homesteading. When you're learning like that, it's always something you're passionate about, right? Like I know for me, I will research my latest homestead interest or blogging information all day long. And I'll geek out over it. Like I will be obsessed with it. I can't sleep at night. I'm taking notes, I want to tell everybody about it because I'm passionate about it.
- Speaker 1: [15:30](#) However, if you were to make me take an accounting class right now, I would probably want to poke my eye out with a pencil because accounting is not something I'm passionate about and I don't really see a great application for it in my life at the moment. And I would probably be the very definition of an

unenthusiastic learner. And I think that really applies to our children as well. Now that being said, we still have to have discipline and we need to, I and I believe, and maybe some of you will disagree with this, I believe that we still need to instill that discipline in ourselves and our children to be able to learn things that we might not love because there's plenty of times when as adults, we need to be able to pay attention and listen to instructions for something that maybe isn't our life's passion, but is still important.

Speaker 1: [16:27](#) But that being said, we still need to have plenty of time to chase the things we're passionate about, especially as developing children, but even as adults. And I just am completely fascinated by the fact that the things I chased the hardest in high school, whether it was horses or blogging, or hanging out with my ranching mentors, those are the things that ended up being the interests that I came back to as an adult. And I ended up expanding them into successful businesses. And really what I considered to be my life's calling. So as you homeschool, or even if you don't homeschool and you send your kids to public school, but you're just a parent, don't ignore those propensities and inclinations that your children have. Pay attention to them. Seek them out, because sometimes kids don't even know what they're good at or they don't recognize what they're passionate about, but help them find those things and then nurture them.

Speaker 1: [17:35](#) Because for me, that really was the biggest game changer of all. Okay. So to wrap it up, all in all, there is definitely no right or wrong way to do this, right? There's lots of ways to get your kids educated, whether it's homeschool or private school or public school, and lots of different parenting styles. But I know for me, that free time I had to chase my passions was hands down the most valuable part of homeschooling for me. And yes, I still needed the basic math and the language skills and the science and those things as well. But that free time I had is really what set me up for success. And that my friends is all I have for you in today's episode is a little bit different than our usual topics, a little more on the homeschool side than the homesteading side.

Speaker 1: [18:30](#) But I hope it was interesting. I'd love for you to drop over to the blog or Instagram and share your thoughts, especially if you were a homeschooler yourself or your homeschooling. Now, I'd love to hear your experiences, what you see as being the most important aspects of this journey for you and your children. So thank you so much for listening. If you are so inclined, I would be honored if you'd pop over to iTunes and leave a quick review so more people can find this podcast and I will chat with you on the next episode of the old fashion on purpose podcast. Thanks

for listening. Cheesemaking is one of those things that kind of makes you feel like a homesteading rock star. It's just magical to transform an ingredient as simple as milk into all sorts of amazing things like butter and ricotta and cream cheese.

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The biggest issue I ran into when I was trying to start making these things was finding the right equipment and cultures because let's face it, they don't exactly sell mesophilic starter culture at your local grocery store. One of my favorite resources for home dairy projects is New England cheesemaking supply company. They have everything you need to turn milk into magical things. And I have put together a downloadable quick start guide that you can grab for free over at [theprairiehomestead.com/cheese](http://theprairiehomestead.com/cheese) I included my favorite recipes in there, a list of the cheese cultures that I like best, and a little discount code to save you some cash on your order. You can grab it at [theprairiehomestead.com/cheese](http://theprairiehomestead.com/cheese).