

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. So when we first moved to our homestead back in the day and we were far from civilization and I had small children and I couldn't get out of the house very much, I would pretty much feel like I was going to lose my mind during the winter months. Now obviously our Wyoming winter are extra long and I knew that and as soon as the days would start to get shorter in the fall, I would just be filled with this sense of dread. And especially after the holidays, January, February, March, when the days just drug on and on, I would feel like I was going stir crazy. I cleaned the house obsessively. I felt like there wasn't enough to do. The hours on the clock just barely crept by and I hated every minute of it. Now fast forward to where we are today and I have drastically changed my tune.

Speaker 1: [01:02](#) Honestly, I kind of love winter now, maybe even a little bit more than summer. I know it's shocking, but it's true. So if you ever struggle with winter as a homesteader or maybe you just feel a little bit down and you dread those long winter nights. Keep listening. I'm going to give you some of my own personal tips and I'll be sharing what prompted my transformation. I'm your host Jill winger, and for the last 10 years I've been helping people just like you who feel uninspired by modern life, I'll help you create the life you really want by learning how to grow your own food and master old fashion skills. So I think like in our society, I won't say in recent years because I think it's been this way for a long time, but it's trendy to complain about the weather. And if you go on Facebook or you're on any sort of social media like nonstop, as soon as the weather changes, people are going to be complaining and wishing it was summer and wishing it wasn't cold or wishing it wasn't snowing or raining.

Speaker 1: [02:10](#) So it's, it's kind of the thing to do and I'm always amazed actually at how much people just like to talk about the weather in general. Whenever I post anything weather related on my Prairie homestead Facebook page, it's usually super popular cause people just love to talk about the climate in their area. But all of that aside, a lot of folks really, really seem to hate winter. And it's the thing to do to post memes and things complaining about it and wishing for flip flop weather and so on. So I used to be one of those people. I used to be someone who absolutely dreaded those long winter days. I used to be someone who felt like I was literally going crazy in January and February and I would just, and dream of the spring and the summer when I could be outside. And for me it really was based around the idea of not having enough to do because as a brand new homesteader and a new mom, the bulk of my activities,

since I wasn't working outside of the home, it was outside, it was planting a garden and it was riding my horse and cleaning the barn and mowing the lawn.

Speaker 1: [03:21](#) And so everything I did was outside and obviously for seven months of the year in Wyoming outside is kind of a non-option unless you're going to be wearing coveralls and snow boots. And so I would find myself honestly just bored though, extremely bored during the winter. So like I alluded to an inter that's changed for me and there's been a number of things that have changed. But first I wanted to share with you a study that I found just about a month ago. I thought it was fascinating and it really underscores some of my own thoughts and I think it might be a little bit of inspiration for you as well. So this was a study that was done on residents of Norway. Now if you want a place with crazy harsh winters, Norway, is it? So from about November until January, the sun never comes up really above the horizon.

Speaker 1: [04:16](#) So it's kind of dim. It's not very bright. And the study did some research on residents of Norway. And it was really surprising because they discovered that people who live in Norway, and actually this holds true for many other Scandinavian countries, they had lower levels of seasonal depression than you think. So, you know, seasonal depression is something that's a big issue for a lot of United States residents. I am from the Pacific Northwest up in the Idaho panhandle and we had very dark, very dreary, gloomy, falls and winters, really a lot of rain and not a lot of sunlight. And it was a considerable issue for a lot of folks. Now some of that is related to just a lack of vitamin D and you can resolve some of that by just getting more sun or sitting under special lights. But it's not always related to that.

Speaker 1: [05:13](#) Sometimes it's just the mindset of being depressed that you're stuck in the house and it's cold and you have to wear coats and it's just not that same happy summer vibe. So anyway, this study found, and I'm quoting it here, this article, I read that quote, people in Norway view winter as something to be enjoyed, not something to be endured. And that quote really, really stuck out to me because I feel like back in the day, especially for myself, but I know for many of you listening that many Americans, especially winter, is to be endured, right? We get through Christmas and then we're like, come on, we just want spring. We just want the green grass and the flip flops and we don't really winter for what it is now. Maybe you live in the South or in more of a tropical climate, so you don't really have a full blown winter.

- Speaker 1: [06:07](#) But I just want to celebrate this idea or acknowledge this idea that everything has a season, right? And even if you live in a place that is a little more tropical, not quite as snowy as Wyoming, there's still a seasonal aspect to what you're doing and where you're living. And so it's really key. I believe that we embrace those things and kind of settle into that seasonality. So when we get back to our Norway example, Norwegians are really particular to look forward to and celebrate the things you can only do during winter. So of course things like skiing or winter sports are a big deal. But this is the part that I love the most. They also celebrate coziness. They actually have a special word for it, I can't pronounce it, so I'm not even gonna try. It starts with a K. but they love this idea of coziness and they relish in candles and you know, wood stoves and fires and having those special warm drinks and cozy blankets and they allow themselves to just soak in the darkness and soak in the winter season and relish in the quietness of it.
- Speaker 1: [07:17](#) And it really shifts their mindset. And so I just thought that was so inspiring. And when I get back to my own story, I accidentally kind of adopted that mindset even before I read this article. But that's what really shifted winter for me when I stopped looking at it as an absence of warm weather and started appreciating it for what it is and allowing myself to roll with it. And I think nature is a really great example for us. There are times in nature when you know, spring, the energy is different, energy is more bright and vibrant and everything's growing and everything's coming alive and there's so much movement. You know, summer is the same. There's a lot of things to do. There's a lot of things happening and we roll with that. If we're in the garden, we're planting and harvesting and weeding and there's so much activity and then we shift into fall.
- Speaker 1: [08:10](#) Things slow down a little bit, but we're stocking up, we're canning and we're preserving and we're harvesting. Uh, and then winter. For me, I love the quietness and the stillness. And I'm a high energy person. I tend to be a little bit hyper, but learning how to lean into the slowness has been really, really beneficial for me. And not keeping up the same pace. 24-7, 365 is actually really good for us cause I don't think our bodies were meant to do that, right? Just like, we need a day of rest each week. We also need those seasons of rest, whether we're doing business or we're gardening or we're homesteading or whatever we're doing, those seasons of rest are key. So I've learned to really just crave that hibernation during the winter months and those dark evenings, like I find ways to fill them so they don't feel so empty and daunting.

Speaker 1: [09:09](#) And so for me, that looks like maybe some extra kitchen projects or reading more books. I always read more during the winter or I'm watching some more Netflix than I do. Right? There's nothing wrong with that. I would, I would recommend that instead of just going full on movie TV activity, you know, added some creation because that really will help boost your dopamine and boost those chemicals in your brain that make you feel good if you're struggling with some of those feelings of depression. And it also just reaffirms that you're still growing and you're still helping yourself become better and you're improving your skill sets as a homesteader. It's just some of those creative projects may be more indoors, like maybe fabric arts or kitchen based or maybe you're redecorating or painting some old furniture or learning how to knit or doing those sort of things versus being out in the garden or working in a chicken, chicken coop and creating there.

Speaker 1: [10:03](#) So, I disbelieve that if it was summer all the time, and maybe you live in an area where it kind of is summer, but I'm guessing that there's still some seasonality to where you live. But if it's summer all the time, we wouldn't enjoy it as much. I don't believe, I don't think I would appreciate it as much. And so allow yourself to be okay with the change in seasons and find those rituals that really set apart this season for you. And here's the other piece. And a lot of folks hate winter because it's cold, right? It's cold. You had to wear more clothes. It's uncomfortable when the air hurts your face when you go outside. But here's the deal. You won't die if you get a little cold. Like newsflash, you will not die if you're just a little uncomfortable. And I actually think it's really good for our bodies to experience some extremes.

Speaker 1: [10:56](#) And I used to think about this a lot, way back in the day when I would, was working as a vet tech and we would be doing cattle work sometimes hundreds and hundreds of cattle that we would have to run through the shoot and give vaccines and preg-check them. And it would be during miserably cold days. So we would put on every bit of clothing we had. And I had all these little tricks for keeping myself warm while I'm standing there trying to do my job. And some days it was miserable and I didn't love every minute of it, but I thought over and over during that time of my life, you know, when I'm cold, but then I'm able to come home to my warm house and take a hot bath. Nothing feels that as good as that. Nothing. And if you are out in the cold and you come into that hot fireplace, like nothing feels as good.

- Speaker 1: [11:40](#) It is such a pleasure to be able to do that. And when you compare that to when you're just kinda always warm or you're always comfortable, you don't appreciate that as much. So allow your body to have a little bit of an extreme. You know, being cold in the winter makes you appreciate. Being warm makes you appreciate that hot fire and sweating in the summer makes you appreciate a cool breeze or a shade tree or ice tea even more, right? When we're comfortable all the time and, and being comfortable is something our culture is so obsessed with, right? We've taken out every variable we can that will ever make us uncomfortable. But when we take that out of our life, we're really missing out on what makes us human. Getting out of that comfort bubble and doing things that stretch us, even if it's just sweating or, or being cold for a while and getting a job done outside and maybe having some cold fingers while you do it, it's okay.
- Speaker 1: [12:34](#) And it stretches us and it just, I think helps us relish life just a little bit more. Now, the other piece to this that has helped me be okay with winter is diving into projects that I love. Uh, and for me, my business was that project that made me feel like winter was actually more of a gift than a drudgery because winter is the time I get to not be so distracted with a million activities and being outside and going and doing, and I get to just deep dive into creativity and doing something that I'm really passionate about. And so I work, I run my business year around of course, but winter is the time when I rework my systems and I make things better and I do all the little things I've been ignoring and the busy-ness of the rest of the year. And I know that for me in December, right around the new year, it's this really special time for me.
- Speaker 1: [13:31](#) And I always have this sense of a lot of extra energy. Not just in my myself, but it just feels like that's the time when we're planning and creating and dreaming for the next season of life. And so I love to relish in that and use that extra time to make those dreams and set those goals and think bigger and clean up all the little details. And that is also a really key part of me liking these dark cold days. So anyway, that's just what I've done to be okay with winter to love winter, just a little bit more. And here's my challenge for you. If you're one of those homesteaders who struggle with the winter months, I'm going to challenge you to find something different, a new tradition or a new routine that you can adopt this year that will help you enjoy winter a little bit more.
- Speaker 1: [14:29](#) Maybe it's the warm baths, maybe it's a special essential oil blend that you only diffuse around the holidays. Maybe it's

some homemade soy candles that you light in the evenings and it's part of your bedtime ritual. Those I have, I do have a recipe for those on the blog. Hint, hint. But find something that really helps make your environment welcoming and more cozy and just enjoy the season for what it is. Now. Speaking of being uncomfortable, growth is uncomfortable, but it's so good for us. And if you are ready to take your homestead to the next level over the upcoming season, I can help you. I happen to have an entire library of resources I've put together for homesteaders just like you, and you can get complimentary access to library over at [theprairiehomestead.com/grow](http://theprairiehomestead.com/grow) and that's all for this episode. Thanks so much for listening and I'd love it if you would take a minute to subscribe and leave a quick review over on your favorite podcast player. That's it for now, but we'll chat more on the next episode of the old fashioned on purpose podcast.