

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. So as you can imagine, I get a lot of questions that come my way, whether it's via email or social media. And there's one question in particular that resurfaces every couple months or so. And it always makes me scratch my head a little bit cause I'm not exactly sure how to answer it. And the question is, how do you homestead with children? So I spent some time thinking I've distilled down, some of my theories and philosophies, which may be slightly controversial, but I'm going to dive into them in today's episode. I'm your host Jill winger and for the last 10 years I have been helping people just like you who feel disenchanting with modern culture. I'll help you leave the rat race and create the life you really want by learning how to grow your own food and master old fashioned skills.

Speaker 1: [01:00](#) So for us, my Christian and I, my husband, children, or our future children at the time were a really big motivator for us getting into the homesteading lifestyle back in the day. When we bought our property, I wasn't even pregnant yet. We were still, you know, a year into marriage basically. And so kids felt kind of far off down the road. But even so, like we knew that with the land and the property and the plans we had for it, that we wanted it to be a part of the legacy that we would give our children. Now a big piece of that, if you remember back in episode number one, way back at the beginning, I talked about how Christian and I were raised in town and we always had had this longing for the rural lifestyle. And so we just wanted to give that to our kids, which I think is really normal.

Speaker 1: [01:54](#) You kind of want to give your kids what you never had and we just hoped that they would appreciate the lifestyle and the process. But anyway, from day one we knew that we wanted our children to be a big part of what we were doing. And that's really held true. Mesa, our firstborn at the time of this recording, she's nine and a half. And the day, literally the day we brought her home from the hospital, we took her out to the barn and introduced her to the animals, which looking back, that feels like a very first time parent thing to do. I don't think we did that with number two or number three, because by then you're just like, eh, it's another one. It's all good. Um, but anyway, so we took her out to the barn and then she was out there with us really from that point forward.

Speaker 1: [02:41](#) We had dairy goats that were kidding when she was a newborn and you know, there were things going on. I had my horses that I was working and she was just coming along for the ride, whether she was in her little car seat or in a stroller or in a front pack or whatever. She took naps out in the barn and she just

naps in the goat pen. I would nurse her wherever I could find a bucket to sit down on. And that was her reality from newborn until now. And so when our second and third borns came along, they just rolled into that same routine. I had little tricks, like I had an old play pin and a fly net. Um, I'm trying to remember where we got it. I think Amazon might have them still. It's been awhile since I bought one, but they have these nets that go over the top of play pins or strollers, which are a godsend.

Speaker 1: [03:35](#)

So I bought a couple of those. I would stick them in the shady barn in the summer while I was riding my horse or cleaning pens, put that net over the top so the flies wouldn't bother them and they would nap in the barn and they loved it. And they've been very much exposed to animals in the dirt, in the manure and the, the, the soil and the vegetables since they could walk, which of course has meant they've eaten a lot of dirt. And occasionally, uh, probably a little bit of poop in the process. But I think in my theory it just makes them that much more robust in their immune systems. But anyway, that's a topic for another day. But all that to say we don't really know anything different. We don't really know what it's like to homestead without kids. So I understand that if you are in the middle of homesteading and you're looking at having your first child, or maybe if you already have children and you're looking to move to a homestead property, that can feel a little bit formidable or foreign or you're not quite sure how it's going to work.

Speaker 1: [04:42](#)

So while I cannot speak to someone who had children in the city and then moved them to a rural lifestyle, I did kind of want to break down, I call it my parenting and Christian's parenting philosophy for lack of a better term, and just kind of break down how we view Parenthood and how we view child rearing and how that has come into play in being able to run a homestead as well as several businesses and have children and have everything operate as smoothly as it can. Obviously there's some chaos involved occasionally. But there's definitely kind of a mindset that we've approached parenting from or within and that has really made all the difference for us. Now, I've been, I guess a little hesitant to dive into some of this topic because I didn't want to offend anyone honestly. And I know that actually it's becoming more and more apparent to me as my children get older and I'm around, you know, different types of parenting and different types of families that our philosophy of raising is unique and kind of old fashioned in our day and age.

Speaker 1: [06:03](#)

You know, imagine that, obviously we like old fashioned things, but when I see a lot of the systems or the mentalities that a lot

of kids are immersed in these days, we're very different. So I understand that what I am about to explain and dive into could be offensive. I understand it could feel very strange. It's not my intent to cast judgment on anyone's parenting style. It's not my intent to say that our way is the only way. But, this is something I do feel strongly about, at least for us. This is what works for us. And I really like the fruits of this philosophy that I have seen come from our children and how they're growing and how they're progressing. And I just like the results. So, anyway, not to be judgemental, not to say that there's only one way to raise a kid cause there's plenty of different ways to do it, but this is ours.

Speaker 1: [07:02](#) So here we go. Let's see if I get some emails over this. Okay. So, I think the biggest thing that we do and have done that has enabled us to homestead and do businesses and have children and keep everything running is that Christian and I have never taken the mentality that our life revolves around our children, which I know that sounds slightly shocking and possibly disturbing considering the climate of today's parenting world. But let me explain. Our children are very important to us. Our children are a priority to us. There are many choices we make where the children are the primary factor in making that decision. You know, obviously we homeschool, which is a sacrifice timewise and convenience-wise we choose to do things like that. But Christian and I have always maintained that we as adult humans still have a mission and purpose on this earth.

Speaker 1: [08:11](#) Um, that's beyond just the children's mission and purpose. And I hope I'm explaining that clearly, but I know a lot of times it's really easy for relationships or parents to become very, very centered around the child. And it's all about the child's dreams and the child's goals and the child's activities. And while we absolutely are making sure our children are having the resources and the time and the focus, they need to have their own dreams, goals and projects. Christian and I still have our own, which I noticed is somewhat rare and a lot of parents, maybe not a lot in some, it's rare in some parents, they just really, really easy to let the world revolve around the child. So we, we generally don't do that. We're on our own path on the journey, but we invite the children to come along with us while they're in our home.

Speaker 1: [09:01](#) And while they are under our care. And I have noticed that I think our kids really like that. I think children like being a part of the bigger story and the bigger vision and the bigger adventure. And I have this hunch that I think with small children, it can be a little bit disorienting to them when they're the center of the

universe. And at first it might seem like they're fighting for that, but when they actually get it, it doesn't feel good when you're eight and you are the center of all the adults worlds around you. I feel like that breeds a lot of negativity and poor attitudes and insecurity in the child. So I want our children to know they're, they're important and they're valued and they have a very, um, much a priority and Christian and I's life, but they're expected to come along for the ride cause mommy and daddy have things going on.

Speaker 1: [09:56](#)

They're expected to be a part of that. So that's been really crucial because I think a lot of times when the parents build this parallelization of, I can't homestead because it's going to take my focus off my children. There may be a little bit of that dynamic where there's been so much focus on the child for so long, the parent feels like they literally can't have their own hobby or their own dreams or their own goals because the child takes all of that. And there are definitely times where our life revolves around a child's activity. Like take fair, for example, we had our first four H fair experience this past year that was intense and our whole family revolved around fair for that week. Right? And that's totally fine, but it's not like that 24, seven, 365. Um, okay. Also kind of in conjunction with that, we expect our kids to pitch in on the adventure or on the journey and they have responsibilities.

Speaker 1: [10:54](#)

Now when you first start this plan, it can take more of your time, especially if you have kids who are maybe not super keen on the idea of chores or they're very young and you have to make sure they're not hurting themselves or feeding the animals the wrong food or leaving a gate open while they do their jobs. But it does two things. Giving your children responsibilities or chores, not only helps them feel like they're a part of the bigger picture in the bigger adventure, it also takes a little bit of a load off of you or sometimes a lot of a load off of you as the homesteading parents, especially as they get older. Our oldest is only nine right now, but she is extremely useful. Like is, is useful as an adult in some aspects and her knowledge and her skills and how she helps us.

Speaker 1: [11:50](#)

She does chores every morning. She handles the, the care of our horses, like single handedly puts them on the hay, takes them off the hay, make sure everybody has water. She handles her goats, she milks her goat. She has started taking over our sourdough starter. So she's feeding the starter. She's learned how to make pancakes. She's learning how to make bread. Our seven year old does all the chicken chores, so there'll be days at a time that I don't even go out to the chicken coop because he

is getting the eggs, he's checking the water, he's giving them feed. Some days it's not perfect. Some days he forgets things and we have to guide him through that. But not only do they have ownership in our lifestyle, it's their lifestyle too. But it makes life easier for Christian and I to have some more team members as a part of the, the game plan.

Speaker 1: [12:43](#)

I also expect our kids to be uncomfortable and understand that being uncomfortable is not a death sentence and they will survive and all will be well. So let me expand on that a little bit. Sometimes our kids get cold when we're outside working on something. Sometimes they get cold when they go do chores in the morning. Sometimes they get hot. If we're out in the garden and it's sweaty. And there's bugs flying around and they're slapping flies off their face, right? Sometimes they get tired when we're out stacking wood as a family and we've worked, you know, an hour in and everyone's a little bit stiff and kind of getting tired of repetitive motion, right? I expect my kids to be okay with being uncomfortable. Now obviously none of us love being uncomfortable, otherwise it wouldn't be called uncomfortable. None of us crave that.

Speaker 1: [13:36](#)

But as adults, that's an important trait. I don't know a lot of adults who don't know how to be uncomfortable. And so I want my children from a very young age to know that it's okay to be hot sometimes. It's OK to be cold sometimes. It's OK to be tired. It's okay to be sweaty, you will not die. You will come out the other end and it will feel good. And that's something we really talk a lot about. I kind of seed that into my children from the time they're toddlers. You know, when we say things like, we're going to do this project, we're going to stack firewood, and it's gonna take a little while. And it's a lot of work. But when we're done, we're going to come in and have a hot fire and we're going to have this yummy soup and cookies for dessert.

Speaker 1: [14:22](#)

And it's going to feel so good because we pushed through the hard thing. And I literally have this narrative constantly in our house. It's hard, but you get to the other side and it feels good. Or you're cold but then you appreciate the hot fire in the house and the woodstove even more. Or when you're hot and you come in and have a glass of lemonade, it tastes that much better. And I want them to be aware that you can be uncomfortable in your life and you won't die. It will be fine. And so sometimes there's whining. Absolutely. There are still kids. Sometimes there's all my fingers are cold, my head's cold, you know, I'm sweating. I don't want to do this anymore. There's absolutely those attitudes, but we work through those and I

really like what comes out the other side. Um, and I think, I'm just looking at my notes here,

Speaker 1: [15:15](#) some of the, the other thing that I expect, and this kind of goes in conjunction with some of the other points, but I expect our kids to entertain themselves. And this is something else I don't see happening a lot in today's parenting culture. And I'll be honest, I didn't start this plan because I had some grand aspiration of being mom of the year. I started it cause I'm selfish honestly. And I don't have the ability to sit on the floor 24 hours a day and entertain my children, nor do I think that is good for them. So from the time my babies could sit up, you know, and not crash or sometimes they would still crash but I would put pillows around them so they wouldn't hit their heads. I would put them on the floor in a safe place with pillows around them and toys, put a basket of toys in front of them.

Speaker 1: [16:10](#) And this would be after we, they ate and they have cuddle times. So they felt like they were connected to me and mom was there and mom wasn't leaving them. But then I would say, here's your time to play and explore on the floor and mommy's going to go make supper or clean the bathroom or whatever mommy's going to do and you will be fine and I will be fine and you can hear me and you can see me from a distance, but I'm expecting you to entertain yourself. And honestly it didn't take a lot to get them to learn how to do that. They had things in front of them that were interesting. They wanted to explore, they want to put the big plastic toys in their mouth, the one to thumb through the board books. And we just kind of have built on that as they've grown.

Speaker 1: [16:53](#) And to this day, you know, I now have a nine, seven and four year old. They entertain themselves really well. They love that. Like it's not a sacrifice for them. We get done with our homeschool or whatever we're working on in the mornings and they're like, see a mom, I'm off. And they have a plan of which toys they're playing with, what they're doing outside, if they're going on the trampoline, if they're playing in the sprinkler, if they're doing Legos, if they're doing puzzles, like that's their jam. They entertain themselves. And so when people say, how do you cook and work on your businesses and work on your garden when you have kids in the house? And, and honestly at this point it feels pretty easy. There are exceptions. Trust me, but it feels pretty easy because they do their own thing and they love doing their own thing.

Speaker 1: [17:41](#) They're happy immersing themselves in Lego or whatever playdough or whatever's happening at that moment. So that

has been crucial because there's a time and place when the kids are stacking firewood with us or helping me in the garden or doing their chores. But I don't make them work all day. And there's a, there's a time and place where I'm like, go, go play, be kids, take off your shoes, run around in the grass, eat some dirt, do your thing. And they're very, very happy and content doing that. So I think fostering that ability of your children to entertain themselves is crucial. Absolutely crucial. So those were some of the things I expect of our children. And I hold them to those standards and obviously, like I said, they're children. So sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. And sometimes there's learning opportunities for both of us.

Speaker 1: [18:30](#)

But I also like to call it, trying to think how I would describe it, planting or seeding the wonder of this lifestyle in them because I want them not only to see homesteading as being uncomfortable sometimes and working hard and doing things you don't want to do, but I also want them to understand the beauty of it. And so again, little little kids, young age, we talk a lot about just the wonder of this life. We talk about the wonder of seeds growing and I get excited and when I get excited they get excited. Oh my gosh, look at the bean seeds coming up. Or, um, isn't it amazing that we, you remember when we planted this tomato in the garden and now we have this big juicy red fruit on it. And here, let's taste it. And yes, you can eat it warm from the garden and you can snack on whatever you want.

Speaker 1: [19:23](#)

We talk about just the beautiful, amazing, miraculous parts of this lifestyle that a lot of kids I think may not a lot of times they actually do pick up on it because children have a beautiful way of viewing the world. But when they see an adult in their life also embracing those things and pointing them out and celebrating them, it just makes them that much more poignant to the child. Um, I also talk a lot about, I think I mentioned this a minute ago, how good it feels when the work is done. So I'd never, I think work is, is a beautiful thing. Work is given to us and we're, I believe we're to find joy in our work. And um, I love working. Obviously work can be done too much. We can, anything good can be taken in excess. But I believe work is a gift.

Speaker 1: [20:14](#)

And so I want my children to see work as a gift. That doesn't mean it's always a blast to be hoeing rows or digging up the garden or scooping poop. But I want them to see the gift of work. And so, I invite them to work with us. Sometimes they want to willingly, sometimes they don't. It's all good. We'll do it anyway. And then we talk about how good it feels when it's done. We talk about the joy of a hard day's work and how you

can enjoy the rest afterwards and they now point that out on their own and they dive into a project a little bit more bigger because I know what comes on the other end.

Speaker 1:

[20:55](#)

So all that to say, those were some of my thoughts and strategies and hopefully that gave you some inspiration. I just want you to know that it's not perfect and you might see pictures of us and the kids out doing our thing and my kids look like it's this blissful, serene childhood. It's not always like that. There's days they fight. There's actually a lot of days they fight and there's days when they whine and there's days when I lose my temper and there's days when the chores don't get done and something will get out or you know, they're kids. But all in all when I just take kind of a bird's eye view of this lifestyle that we're building together, I can't imagine a better way to raise your children.

New Speaker:

[21:35](#)

So if you are either looking to move into the country with your family or you're just looking to create more of that old fashioned on-purpose lifestyle where you are now with your children, maybe in your backyard or your apartment balcony, do it. It's so worth it. And there'll be tough days and there'll be amazing days. But no matter what, it's going to give your children an incredible foundation for what's to come as they grow and mature. So I have a little freebie for you if you are looking at this old fashioned on purpose lifestyle and wanting to incorporate more of that into your life, no matter where you live. I've put together a little collection of resources that you can get for free. If you hop over to theprairiehomestead.com/grow you can get instant access right away, and that's it for today. Thanks so much for listening. It was fun to hang out with you guys. If you enjoyed this episode, it would be super helpful for me if you could pop over to your favorite podcast player and leave a quick review because that helps more folks just like you find this podcast and bring homesteading into their life. And that's all for now. We'll hang out some more and chat about more homesteading topics on the next episode of the old fashioned on-purpose podcasts.