

Speaker 1 ([00:01](#)):

Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast and just like that, the whole world became homeschoolers. Welcome to the dark side, my friends. So I've been seeing a lot of kind of funny memes and posts floating around Facebook these days with the school shutdowns. I know a lot of parents have been thrust, maybe this is your one of them, thrust into this world of unexpected homeschooling. And I've, you know, been amused at some of the different jokes I've seen floating around. But let's be honest, like this is brand new territory. If this is your situation and I know it can be extremely disorienting and just kind of feel bizarre. So in this episode today, I wanted to walk through some of my tips and recommendations from not only someone who was homeschooled, like I graduated homeschool myself, but I also homeschool my own children.

Speaker 1 ([01:01](#)):

So I definitely have some things to say on this topic and I think you'll find them encouraging. I'm your host Jill Winger, and this is the podcast for the trailblazers, the Mavericks, the makers, the homesteaders, the modern pioneers, and the backyard farmers. If you've ever found yourself disenchanted with conformity and you kind of like to swim upstream while the rest of society rides the river of least resistance, well you have found your tribe. So first off, I just need to say that I am dealing with a head cold. So if I start to sound more like Kermit the frog as we progress through this episode, that is why it is not Corona virus. It is your standard standard run of the mill head cold. So just so you know, that is what is going on in my life right now. But anyway, back to homeschooling.

Speaker 1 ([01:53](#)):

I know I want to acknowledge that. You know, all of the funny Facebook memes and posts I've seen from homeschool moms almost like, ha ha, look at you guys. Now you're in our boat. Like all of that aside. I know that this school shutdown situation, if you have children, it is an adventure. For some of you, it is also extremely disorienting and also may be traumatic for some of you. And I just want to reassure you, like both sides of the spectrum on that. As far as emotions and feelings go, they're valid. Like don't please don't feel shamed or uncomfortable or less than because you see some moms rocking it right now and you're just trying to figure out like how to brush your kids' hair in the morning. Cause I, I've honestly been on both sides. I get it. And there, there's a lot of different factors coming into play here.

Speaker 1 ([02:46](#)):

So my purpose in this episode is to offer you some encouragement and to help you feel like you don't have to live up to some crazy unrealistic standard in order to thrive over the next couple of weeks or however long it may be. So my credentials to speak on this topic. I was homeschooled, some of you know this from K through 12. And then went on to college, got a couple of degrees, like very successful as far as the academics I did after that. And I also have been homeschooling my own children for I guess five years now. I have two in school and I have a four year old who will become my third, which will be interesting cause I've never homeschooled three children at the same time. So that'll be a learning curve. But anyway, very much entrenched in the homeschool culture, both in the 1990s homeschool culture, which was completely different scene full of like poofy perm hair and denim jumpers and tennis shoes to the culture now, which is thankfully a little more stylish and just a little more, I think, maybe a little bit better at being culturally relevant in a good way.

Speaker 1 ([04:03](#)):

So anyway, all that aside, I get the homeschooling thing. I'm very familiar with it. And I wanted to use this time just to give you some of my thoughts on this topic because I have a lot of them and I'm seeing online and with my local friends who are in the situation of school shutdown, there's a really wide range of reactions. I'm seeing a lot of moms post, you know, my kids are home, help me get my home set up like a classroom. What do we do from eight to three? How do I get the curriculum? We're going to have school time, like public school, like equivalent at home for this whole period. So we have that on one end of the spectrum and then we have the moms who are like, I don't know how I'm going to get through the day and not murder my offspring.

Speaker 1 ([04:51](#)):

And so I feel like a good healthy approach to this lies somewhere in the middle, right? Middle is your friend. Let's stay away from the extremes on both sides. So the first thing I just want to say is relax, relax. It will be fine. Even if the schools are shut down the rest of the year. Now I'm not a, you know, accredited teacher person with a bachelor's degree in education. But I'm just going to say from my own experience and watching how people learn and watching how children work, I'm going to guess that your kids are not going to be behind on academics, even if they're shut down the rest of the year. Call me crazy, but I'm pretty sure it's going to be fine. Even if you didn't really do much for the next few weeks. So I, I think one of the biggest mistakes that can come in this sort of situation is if you feel like you have to mimic the public schools schedule, right?

Speaker 1 ([05:59](#)):

It's just not something that works well in the home environment. And I say this to new homeschoolers, even when there's not a school shutdown. You know, a lot of times new homeschool moms will be so zealous for this new adventure and they're gonna, they're like literally go nuts making their house into a public school classroom. And I'm like, you know, if that's really, really your jam, that's fine. I have seen very few homeschool moms be able to stick with that level of intricacy for very long. The public school is an organization and organism all on its own and trying to mimic all that on your own is a recipe for burnout slash disaster. So we don't try to do that at all. We never have. Homeschool for us is very organic, very laid back. And it just, it's, it's much different than a public school classroom and that's okay because it's not public school.

Speaker 1 ([06:55](#)):

So I think the first thing to do is erase these, expectations you're placing on yourself that you have to become your child's public school teacher cause it's just not necessary at this point in time. Honestly, I think if I was in the situation of having my children home from public school for this time, like if I was in your shoes and I wasn't already homeschooling, I think, I would keep it pretty minimal to be honest. I feel like there's so much distraction right now. We as parents are distracted, our children are feeling that. And if your routine is turned upside down on its head, it's going to be really hard to have a ton of structure. So even like right now with our homeschool, we're still on track doing our same stuff because life hasn't really changed for us that much. But I feel like my kids are distracted right now just cause I'm distracted with some different changes that are happening due to the whole world.

Speaker 1 ([07:51](#)):

Basically on quarantine. So, give yourself grace and I would say err on the side of chilling out versus trying to be super teacher mom. So if you do want to stick with some sort of book or worksheets or curriculum, you know, I know some of you are going to be more comfortable doing that and your kids

will be more comfortable having a little bit more structure which I get and we like some structure in our house for sure. There's a lot of online resources right now. There's one called Khan Academy, it's K H A N academy.com. A lot of homeschoolers use them, lots of different lessons and worksheets and things for all the subjects in different grade levels. So that's a place to start. If you kind of know where your kids are in there, their learning or their, you know, curriculum at school right now, you can kind of pick up where that left off and use Khan Academy or a similar online resource to bolster that up a bit.

Speaker 1 ([08:55](#)):

I know some of you had the school system send you home with iPads or books or lesson plans, but others didn't. So I know that also kind of plays a role. But as far as like going out and buying homeschool curriculum, I have a lot of folks asking me right now like what homeschool curriculum do you use? And I'm happy to share with you what I use, but I feel like it would be a little bit of a mistake to go buy some pretty pricey curriculum books, just for the next, you know, couple of weeks or even month or two just because it likely doesn't jive exactly with what they're learning in public school. So it's going to be hard to figure out where they are in a different curriculum and to actually have it just flow like you would want it to flow.

Speaker 1 ([09:40](#)):

So I think it would end up being pretty cumbersome and probably fairly costly. So hopefully you kind of have an idea of where your kids are in their math or their language arts and you can just use some different free resources online and just keep on trucking with what they're doing. Here's, here's what a lot of people I think misunderstand about learning. It doesn't have to always be in a formatted workbook or on some sort of lesson plan. Some of the very best learning comes very organically. And I'm going to invite you to think about just for a minute how you learn as an adult. Very few of us, like if I think about the times when you're learning something that you're passionate about, let's say, I'm assuming if you're listening to this podcast, you have some interest in old fashioned skills.

Speaker 1 ([10:35](#)):

So let's say you've been wanting to learn how to make sourdough bread. So what do you do when you're into sourdough bread? Well, as an adult, you maybe research it on the internet. You get some books, you watch some YouTube videos, you dive into the rabbit hole of sourdough. You read a bunch of stuff, you listen to a bunch of voices in it and you try it right. And that feels good. As an adult, we're into that. We're excited. It's interesting. We want to do that. We're drawn to that. Now contrast that to the last time you had to take a class or a certification or a training, because it was required of you like for work. You know, you have to do this class, get the credits, call it good, blah blah, blah. Like contrast your level of excitement between those two learning experiences and also how well you retained that information.

Speaker 1 ([11:28](#)):

It matters, right? Like it's a huge difference and our kids are the same way and please understand that. Actually I have a very much a hybrid view of this. I love self driven learning and project based learning. I also do think my kids need some structure. So I kind of do have a mix. But for you in this time of shutdown, dive into what your kids are, that what they're drawn to, what they're passionate about, and let that be the thing that springboards you into the actual structured learning. So, for example, right now my daughter Mesa is really wanting to cook, which I am so excited about. I'm like, dear Lord, please

let her want to be in the kitchen cause if all my kids hate cooking. That's gonna make me sad. But anyway, she naturally wants to, to try some recipes.

Speaker 1 ([12:24](#)):

And so as she's looking at cookbooks and we're talking about it, that's something she's interested in on her own. I'm weaving math into it. Fractions, measurements, temperatures. I'm weaving, reading comprehension into it. I'm reading, following instruction skills, all that stuff into it. And I, I have a purpose in it. She doesn't really pick up on it always cause she's so into the topic, it becomes very second nature to her. But just all of that to say, remember that really solid, impactful learning doesn't have to come in the form of lessons in a book or worksheets all the time. There's nothing wrong with those if that's how your kid is wired, but there's a lot of ways to learn new concepts. Hey friends, I'm interrupting this episode for just a sec so we can talk about seeds. I'm getting a ton of emails and messages right now from folks who are on the hunt for a reliable source of organic heirloom seeds and I just have to say I have fallen head over heels for true leaf market lately in the past I've gotten really frustrated when I try to find certain seeds locally because they're either sold out or they just don't have the varieties I want, but true leaf market is like having a virtual seed rack in your home at your fingertips, they have a ton of varieties including all the vegetables, the herbs, the flowers, the micro greens and their seeds have a very high germination rate and bonus.

Speaker 1 ([13:58](#)):

They ship crazy fast. Head on over to theprairiehomestead.com/seeds to have a look at their very user friendly website and add a packet or 12, maybe to your seed stash for this year. And now back to our episode. Some other things you can do if you're not going to go out and invest in a bunch of curriculum books, which I really wouldn't recommend. If you have, well I was just going to say younger children, but any but children of any age, send them outside people, send them outside. That is magical. Kids need to be outside so much more than they are. And I realize not all children like to go outside. It's sometimes it can be a learned skill if your kids are just not used to entertaining themselves outdoors. So you might have to help them with that up some boundaries and say, no, you're going outside for awhile whether you like it or not.

Speaker 1 ([14:56](#)):

And usually once they get out there, they'll kind of figure out how to occupy themselves. But especially with younger kids, nature is the greatest classroom. You can use that to prompt discussions on science and physics and chemistry and so many different things. Not to mention they're getting the fresh air, they're moving their bodies. I just can't say enough about kicking them outside. Another thing is books. I know these are like kind of like may feel like no brainer suggestions, but this is where the magic lies. And if you watch a veteran homeschool mom, you're going to find that a lot of them are using this stuff. Like it's very organic and there's still some workbooks and there are still some math sheets in there, stuff like that happening. But there's a lot of organic learning. Books are amazing and whether you're reading out loud, whether they're reading historical fiction I think is a fantastic way to teach kids history.

Speaker 1 ([15:56](#)):

You can combine that with discussions on the topics. My kids, through our homeschool co-op, we were learning some memory songs about world war two. And so we just naturally, we don't really have a curriculum book that's talking about world war two, but we learned these songs and then we started to look it up in different books. Then we started to look it up on YouTube and then we were watching a

history channel show the other day that referenced world war two and my kids were all ears because they were already engaged in that topic. So allow them to rabbit trail a little bit, allow them to dig deep and kind of dig deep with them. And I find that when my kids start asking the questions and they're prompting the discussion and I'm just adding value to that discussion, that's what sticks in their little brains far more than me saying, okay guys, we're going to talk about world war II today and we're going to run a report.

Speaker 1 ([16:47](#)):

Like we still do that as well. Like that's part of it. That's part of having discipline and structure because they have to learn how to write and stick with deadlines and such. But the best learning is the stuff that they kind of prompt. And then we go down the rabbit hole and it's really, really good. If you want to do some science experiments, there is a book and I had made a mental note to find the name of it before I started recording and I did not, I think it's called like 201 something, something science experiments. And it's an older book. I think the author's name is Janice van cleave. I will put the link to it in the show notes there. I have this beef with science experiment books. I'm just going to be honest, like I don't want to do crazy intricate stuff that I have to go to like three different stores to get the supplies for not going to happen.

Speaker 1 ([17:42](#)):

I have gotten so many science experiment books and given them to Goodwill because I refuse to spend my life setting up science experiments. And maybe that will shock you. I think a lot of homeschool moms would have to agree. So if we're doing science experiments, which my kids love, they've got to be fairly simple with basic household ingredients. It's kinda like how I cook. You have my cookbook, you know what I'm talking about. So I like this book and I'll get you the name in the show notes. It's pretty basic household stuff. They're like half a page each, so they're not this crazy intricate involved, like pull your hair out, sort of science experiments. But that's a good thing if you have, you know, elementary, junior high age kids, I think they'll have, they'll get a kick out of that and then it'll open up the discussions on all of the science topics and you guys can go down those rabbit trails.

Speaker 1 ([18:32](#)):

What else do I have on my list here? Oh, this is a big one. Bring the kids along on what you're doing. If you guys aren't used to being at home altogether for a long period of time, this might be something that feels a little bit foreign, but it's really powerful. So if you're in the kitchen, have them come in with you. I know that it's not always easy and yes, there are times when I still like sneak in the kitchen to do stuff by myself because I just want to get it done without a million questions and spills. But when I can bring the kids in with me and have the patience to help them measure and stir, stir and talk about things, those are some of the richest times we have. And the same goes for when I'm planting seeds or we're out in the garden or I'm cleaning house.

Speaker 1 ([19:19](#)):

Like if you can, bring them along with you. I am a firm believer that children want to be a part of the bigger story. They want to feel like they're have a role. And it's so common in our culture to always be relegating our children to children approved stuff. And not that that's bad all the time, but our kids, my kids love to know that they're needed, like they're a part of this family and I need them to get stuff done. And you would not believe the way their faces light up when they solve a problem for me. Like, I'm like, Oh my gosh, kids, the horses are out. Can you go catch them and put them back in? I can't get

outside right now. They rise to that occasion that is like their best stories and memories. Like they love it. So you know, obviously taper that to your children's ability and don't put them in dangerous situations.

Speaker 1 ([20:16](#)):

But even when I'm like I'm sending my seven year old out to load up the wood box before the snowstorm, teaching him how to start a fire. Like they take so much pride and it builds so much confidence. So be thinking how can you bring them along in what you're doing? It really, really impacts them. So one other little tip, I kind of mentioned it with the outside idea, sending them outside. There is going to be a detox period, I think for everyone. If you're not used to this lifestyle, I would expect grumpy attitudes, some bickering as you guys settle into this new temporary routine. But just give it time. And I would say even if your kids push back on you when you're like, let's read some history fiction or let's go outside on a nature walk, I think there probably will be some pushback.

Speaker 1 ([21:05](#)):

And I don't want you to think that we have this like Norman Rockwell idyllic lifestyle all the time where my children are like, yes, mother, I will bake a pie for you. Like that is not reality in our house. There's bad attitudes, there's arguments. My kids that will push back on me when I asked them to do something. But you kind of have just push through that and you know, still be the parent ride through it. And there's a lot of good that can come on the other side and I'm convinced that this little self quarantine social distancing period can have the potential to be something that our kids tell their grandkids. This is going to go down in the history books. This is something our world has never seen before. And how cool would it be if we can have the story they tell that this was one of the most memorable, intimate, positive portions of their entire childhood.

Speaker 1 ([22:03](#)):

So we have that choice. We get to lead the charge and I think there's a lot of good that can come out of these next few weeks. So speaking of being at home right now, whether you like it or not, with kids, and having lots of time, I wanted to give you an option. If you're looking to work on some projects, learn some new skills, stock up the pantry, you name it. Basically I put together every single resource I have ever created from the eBooks to the videos, the canning courses, the cooking courses, all the stuff. And I put it into one big giant master bundle and I've chopped the price down way past 50% so you can grab that for a limited time over at theprairiehomestead.com/masterpack. Go have a look and see what you think. And that's it for today. Don't forget to hit subscribe. So all the new episodes will show up automatically in your podcast player. And if you enjoyed today's episode, pop over and leave a quick review and rating if you're so inclined. It just helps more people find this podcast and I greatly appreciate it. Thanks so much for listening. We'll catch up next time on the old fashioned on purpose podcast.