

Carole's Educational Journey Takes a 180 Degree Turn

Episode 230

Rachel Winchester [00:00:01]:

Whether we come into homeschooling kicking and screaming, or in a more gentle way, we all have our own path. We each face challenges that we must overcome. In this episode, you'll hear about the early years of Carole's own journey and how we can all experience great joy in homeschooling. You're listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. This is a podcast to help you homeschool simply, inexpensively, and enjoyably. Carole Joy Seid has been helping families homeschool for several decades now, and I'm Rachel Winchester, fellow homeschool mom and director of operations here at Homeschool Made Simple. Today, Carole shares how she traded in academic rigidity for a true love of learning. Listen in.

Rachel Winchester [00:00:49]:

Alright. Today, we're gonna do a little time travel with Carole going back to the early days of the homeschool movement. And just so you guys know, she's out on her front porch again, and you'll hear the birds twittering, and you might hear some bells chiming later. But hello, Carole.

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:10]:

Hello, Rachel. Eat your heart out. I know you wanna be on my porch with me.

Rachel Winchester [00:01:15]:

I do. Every one of us wants to be on your porch with you right now.

Carole Joy Seid:

It's a little bit of paradise. Just saying.

Rachel Winchester [00:01:21]:

It is. Some good naps can be had out there for sure.

Rachel Winchester [00:01:29]:

In the seminars, you talk about how you first heard Dr. Raymond Moore on the radio program Focus on Family back in the day and how that really set the stage and

changed your own personal journey. And so I kinda wanted to go back to before that and kind of have an idea of where you were before because all of us, when we you know, people listening, maybe they're already sold on homeschooling or maybe they're deciding to homeschool, but all of us have kind of our own personal journey of how we come to this decision. And there's probably some resistance at some point in the process. And so I thought we could talk about your experience of where you came from and who you were and what you heard that day and kind of what set you up to hit this trajectory that you've been on for a long time.

Carole Joy Seid [00:02:26]:

Yeah. Yeah. So I guess, you have to understand that I came from extremely liberal, "progressive" schools in the East Coast. And, the philosophy in my generation was very much earlier is better than later. My generation probably was the 1st generation to ever even think about going to preschool. I personally never went to preschool, but preschool kind of was invented in my childhood here in America. And, this idea of, you know, the earlier you do something, the better. Now granted in my generation, it was generally accepted that you'd never teach a child to read until 1st grade.

That was very much a part of the culture. But the idea of getting children kind of, institutionalized at an early age began in my generation. And, I went to a college that was part of the Union of Experimental Colleges. The there was change in the wind. Everyone was reading *Summerhill*, which basically taught anarchy for children and embraced it and accepted it. It was just, you know, experimental schooling really came into vogue in my childhood and in my college years.

And by the time I met the Lord at 21, I had always been an art major. So education wasn't something I put a tremendous amount of thought or time into. Although I was always kind of hanging out with children, they always interested me, but it never occurred to me to be a teacher. And then, when I met the Lord and lived in the commune in California at Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, that is when the Lord called me to work with children. And and he just put this burning in my bones to evangelize children. And my friend said that I was like the Pied Piper, because everywhere I would go, there'd be children, like, following me, and I'd be leading them to the Lord while they're playing hopscotch on the sidewalks there in Costa Mesa. And it was just something that God did supernaturally, calling me to the children. And so my first exposure to education as a believer was at Maranatha Christian Academy, and there was a teacher there named Gracie Cloud, who some of our listeners will know because she was so instrumental in Christian education and in the, Calvary Chapel movement.

And I used to go and just hang out in Gracie's classroom, and she would play guitar and the kids would worship their hearts out. And I used to love when she would sing the Psalm, "Unto thee, oh lord, do I lift up my soul. Oh my God. I trust in thee. Let me not be ashamed. Let not my enemies triumph over me." And then one of the verses was, which just made me giggle because they're like 2nd graders. "Remember not the sins of my youth. Remember not the sins of my youth." And I would just giggle. It was so cute because it's just verbatim King James scripture. And the kids would be just singing, and the Lord really brought revival, not only in the Jesus movement with, you know, college age kids and and that age. But at Calvary Costa Mesa, Ernie and Debbie Retino, I guess Ernie, was the chaplain of Maranatha Christian Academy. And in 1974, the Lord brought revival to the school, and children were praying for one another. There was a little boy that was severely, severely disabled. And every night, his parents would bring him in his pajamas to, the elder's prayer.

Pastor Chuck and the other pastors, would anoint people with oil and pray for them quietly just in the classroom there at Maranatha Christian Academy. And they would bring him every Saturday night before they put him to bed. They would carry him to be prayed for. And one day, the children in his special ed classroom, they had this very, very unique, wonderful teacher. I don't remember her name, but she was exceptional. And it was a small group of kids. And one day, the kids said to the teacher, I think we should pray for whatever the little boy's name was. And she's like, well, what do you want us to pray about for him? And the kids said, for him to be healed.

And she's like, oh, yeah. Of course. And so they prayed for him, and he was healed. And yes. And I don't have any documentation, you know, to turn to, but I'm sure I could scratch a surface and find some of these stories that have been documented. But the Lord was moving at Maranatha Academy in such an amazing way that the children were leading the teachers. The teachers really didn't know much about what the holy spirit was doing. The children were leading the the thing, and it was just so beautiful.

And, so that was my first exposure to what is a Christian philosophy of education, because that was all brand new to me. I'd been a Christian maybe a couple months. And then, I when I left, you know, Southern California at that point. I went back east and I went to graduate school for education because my degree in fine arts from one of the top 20 colleges in America qualified me to either work in a pizzeria or drive a taxi cab. So as my mother had warned me, always listen to your mother, by the way. Just a little extra footnote there.

Carole Joy Seid [00:08:19]:

But anyway, so I went back east and I went to graduate school.

AD

We are taking a quick break from this episode to let you know about our ebook, 5 Essential Parts of a Great Education. We wrote this ebook to introduce you to the Homeschool Made Simple method of homeschool. It lays out what we consider to be the 5 essential parts of a great education, and you can get the ebook on our website at homeschoolmadesimple.net/ebook. And did I mention that it's free? If you like what you hear in this episode, the ebook will build on the ideas we share here. Download it today and begin deciding what matters most in your child's education. Now back to the show.

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:02]:

I went back east and I went to graduate school and, got my master's in education. And the philosophy in my classroom settings was, again, earlier is better than later. Although, interestingly, when I cleaned my attic out a couple years ago, I found, the one textbook that I saved from grad school was just called *Piaget*. It was just the title of the textbook. And it wasn't written by him, but it was all about him and his philosophy and his research and his approach. And, of course, Piaget's philosophy was very, very different, which was later is better than early, and that was based on his research that he did in Switzerland as a physician, also starting with his own kids, but then expanding into his community there in Switzerland. So he was the one bright light, that shone, but everyone studies Piaget, but nobody would dream of doing what he taught. And so then I worked in, early childhood education, preschools, and then all the way through junior high.

And, my work was always, you know, kind of based on this premise of the earlier you get a child, the better. And then I started, teaching school, and I was hired at a school down in Florida, and they sent me off to Pensacola, Florida, to be trained in using their curriculum. And the Kool Aid that was to be drunk was our children in this philosophy of education run faster, jump higher than any other children. And that earlier is something that we brag about, something that we test about, and it's the reason that people write very large checks to these private schools for their children to attend because their kids are doing things on a, you know, trajectory that is, quote, superior to the kids that are going to conventional, private, and public schools. So, again, just really, you know, drinking in the earlier is better philosophy.

And then, I got married, and we were living in another part of Florida, and that is when I first heard the word homeschool. I mean, I don't know if it was called homeschool when I heard about it, but I was in a home birth, kind of group of of families. And, one of the women, Tina, was hanging out with me one afternoon.

I think we were both pregnant at the time with our first. And I she said to me, have you ever heard of Susanna Wesley? And I said, you mean, like, John and Charles Wesley? And she said, yes. They're mother. And I said, yes. I have heard of her. And she said, well, do you know that she taught her children herself? And that she had 17 children, 13 that lived, but 17 total. And I said, I I didn't know that. I had never heard that she taught her children.

So that was the only thing I ever heard about, and that was the first time I ever heard about someone teaching their own children at home. And then as time wore on, we moved back to California and no. No. I'm wrong. We were living in Tennessee, and JJ was 2 years old, and we were living on an 8 acre farm, out in Bellevue, Tennessee. And I heard my first program on homeschooling. And according to the statistics from Focus on the Family, that program had more following and more response than any program they have ever had in the history of the program. And that was about 40 2 or 3 years ago.

And I was driving in our little yellow Volvo station wagon. Every all hippies drove old Volvo station wagons. And this Volvo station wagon had no air conditioning, of course. And we were driving in Tennessee, put that together in the summer, and, we're driving to Sunshine Grocery, which was the health food store near Vanderbilt. And I planned the trip so that I could listen to focus on the family. It had just come on the air. And I had worked in a tape duplicating library in, Newport Beach when I lived in the commune called one way tapes. And we duplicated tapes, cassette tapes, and then we would shrink-wrap them to books.

So we did Corrie Ten Boom and Howard Hendricks and different authors, and then we would, you know, attach the cassette to the book. And and one of the authors was James Dobson, who had written a book called Dare to Discipline. That was the only reason I was aware of him or knew of him. And then he came on the radio, but he was like an old friend to me because, you know, I've been duplicating his tapes. So I planned my trip to hear his program, and it was a live call and talk show. And you could call and just, you know, ask questions and things. So I'm driving along. JJ's in the back in his car seat with his little diaper and t shirt on because that's all I ever dressed him in.

My father felt like we treated like he was homeless. He had no shoes either. We were complete hippies. So anyway, I'm driving along and, and this this old gentleman comes on and doctor Dobson's just oh, in and on over the sky. Oh, he's so oh, I've longed for this. Oh, he and I'm just thinking, well, who is this? I never heard of him. So he comes on, and he's recommending that people not teach their children to read until they're,

like, 7 years old. Now I taught in schools that taught children to read and write and do arithmetic at 2 and 3.

I'm not exaggerating. And so here was this crazy man who must have escaped from an asylum somewhere, who is telling people not to teach their children to read till 7. And even, I think, may have talked about keep your kids home till they were, like, 9 years old. And I was so upset, Rachel, that I almost drove off the road. I was, like, shaking. I was so upset. I turned the radio off and thought, I just can't believe doctor Dobson, you know, has entertained this man, this guest, this crazy person. So soon after that, we moved back to California.

And I was visiting with a friend I lived in the commune with, and I was at her house. And, her kids went to kind of high powered Christian schools there in Orange County, and I saw this man who I heard on the radio's book on her bookshelf. And I said, Laura, who is this guy? She goes, oh, I don't know. I said, can I borrow this? She said, oh, you can have it. So I took it home in order to discredit it, disprove it. But I didn't really have any interest in reading it, so I just put it on my bookshelf. And, JJ had just turned 3. We're living down at the beach, and he's taking a nap.

And the holy spirit gave me a little poke in the ribs the way he does with his elbow and said, if you're gonna have any integrity about, you know, discrediting this person, don't you think you need to read his book? And I was kind of, like, shmarmy and kind of rolled my eyes and said whatever to the lord. Don't ever do that. But, anyway, that's what I did, true confession. And so I took the book off my bookshelf and I opened it in the middle because, little secret, I never read nonfiction books from the beginning where you have to hear what they're gonna tell you, then they tell you, then they tell you what they just told you. I just wanna cut to the heart of the matter, and so I just open it in the middle and start reading it. And I open it up to what 3 year olds do developmentally. Well, that got my attention since I had a 3 year old, and so I'm kinda reading out of one eye because I don't wanna give doctor Moore the satisfaction. I'm reading his book.

By the way, that's the gentleman's name, Dr. Raymond Moore. So I read the book. I read well, not all. I never read the beginning. But I read from the middle all the way to the end. I read very, very fast, and JJ took long naps because I trained him too. And so I believe in lots of sleep for children. And so as a result, I read and closed the book.

Read the whole thing, you know, from the middle to the end. And then I sat there and I heard pastor Chuck's voice in my ear, and he was saying to me, be careful what you're exposed to because God will hold you responsible for that. And I just shuddered at the

thought because as I read the book, I knew that he was right, and I was wrong. And the whole premise of the schools that I taught at and the curriculum that I use from Pensacola, Florida were it was kind of a pride thing. It was that we're better than all the other schools. Our kids are smarter than all the other kids. That's why we take these big checks from you every month to for your kids to go here because look at what we deliver that no one else does. And it was arrogance and really spiritual pride.

And I saw that as I was reading the book because Dr. Moore was saying, you know, what is the best thing for your child? Not what is the best thing for your ego. And, oh, I was threatened by that. And then he told the he told about how children who are separated from their parents prematurely to be sent to school, when they're too young to be separated, go through, like, a mourning and and it's an incredible sense of rejection where they say to themselves, why doesn't mommy want to be with me anymore? And then he talked about how children will always find an adult parental replacement in that environment. And that if they're separated from that person for any reason, they will mourn as though there were a death. And I remembered a time when, that had happened when I was sick one day, and a little girl cried the entire day. She wasn't even in my class. But it's that same awareness of, like, you know, you're reading something or you're hearing information, and the Lord is, like, sending you, like, these flashbacks, and you're just groaning in your heart because you know, you know, that you participated in something that was actually damaging to a child. And who wants to do that? Nobody.

No one intentionally would wanna do that. But, I realized that I had. I had been part and parcel of that and just different situations that the Lord brought flashbacks of different children and just the trauma of being apart from their mothers and their dads and how that, you know, really wounded their little hearts and how they attached to me because I was the closest thing to a mom. You know, they had, I would hold them and hug them and give them lots of affection and things. But how sad. And even when I taught junior high, the parents would come in on parent nights and they would say, oh, our children love you. Whatever you say goes in our house, if you say the sky's purple and we say the sky's blue, well, honey, the sky's purple because Mrs. Carole blah blah blah. And and, you know, at the time, we all thought, isn't that cute? But it wasn't cute.

It's not cute at all. Because no one should usurp your authority in your child's life. And these were the things that Dr. Moore was saying, very, very clearly. The other thing, Rachel, is that he was it was all based on research. So Dr. Moore and his wife Dorothy were Piagetian developmental psychologists and they really understood child development. So the first book that I read wasn't even really on homeschool. It was

really just on child development. What is a typical, you know, like the Giselle Institute? What does a 3 year old do? What does a typical 4 year old do? What does a typical 5 year old do? Right on through to probably age 9 or something.

I don't remember what age the book ended at. But chapter by chapter, he was just explaining developmentally how to know your children, how to be an expert on them. Or to paraphrase Peter, how to dwell with your children according to knowledge. To know your kids better than anyone else, to be an expert on them and what that looks like. And if you really understand children and child development, you will not go far off in raising them and nurturing them appropriately for their age and stage, as they say in the Giselle Institute at Yale. And so I became a student really of child development from that time on, and it changed my entire philosophy of education, which had been very set in its ways. I thought JJ would read at 3 and drive at 5. And instead, I I just, you know, it was like someone took a tray, you know, that a waitress is carrying and just came up below it and hit it, and everything went flying.

That was kind of how I felt about my philosophy of education. It was completely changed. And soon after that, I had the opportunity to go hear Dr. Moore. My girlfriend, Judy and I, who's going to be with the Lord, and I miss her so much, but she and I really pioneered in this world of homeschooling. We drove up to Pasadena. We left our children home in PJs with daddy, and both of us, jumped in our car, and we drove up to Pasadena. And and Dr. Moore and Dorothy were speaking and also other people were there, Dr. Dobson, Phyllis Schlafly.

And Elmer Brooks was there, the creator of Math-It. It was kind of a lineup of great. And it was just an all day seminar that Dr. Moore just kind of planned and invited other people to be part of. And as Judy and I walked in thinking we're the only people that had not bowed our knee to bail, guess what? The place was packed to the roof. And it's just shocking because what had happened as a result of that program and the it was an idea whose time had come in America and in Christendom.

And, of course, simultaneously, the idea had also began to blossom in the most liberal, probably, area of the United States, where Harvard is located in Cambridge, Massachusetts. And the gentleman who kind of led that charge was John Holt. And he started an organization called Growing Without Schooling, and he was just a kind, gentle man who played the cello and loved children.

He and Dr. Moore, even though philosophically there were some differences, they still beautifully respected and partnered together for the benefit of children. And, that's how it all began. And so Dr. Moore was my only voice, really, and and years later as we

became very close friends, I used to say to him, I shudder to think where our son would be today if I hadn't heard that program because I was, you know, going on the trajectory that I had been taught as a school teacher and in graduate school. And Dr. Moore came in and just blew that to smithereens and changed everything. And, I'm just so grateful for his legacy and the legacy of Dorothy and of John Holt's legacy, because they freed up a generation of people to homeschool organically and naturally, without a lot of stipulations and expectations. And listening to your children, taking your cue from your children, and just how that changed the face of education in America and internationally.

Rachel Winchester [00:25:45]:

That's awesome. I love how just you tie it all together, and it's just that personal resistance of you are so entrenched in the formality of it and, of course, the rigidity of it. And there are definitely people who are approaching homeschool thinking, like, oh, I'm a teacher. I know what to do. Or they've seen the classroom environment, and they realize some of the, ways that it falls short for some students.

Or maybe it's parents who they had a bad educational experience, and so they're thinking, well, I wanna homeschool or I'm considering this as an option, but how could I possibly? Because I was barely able to do my math homework or whatever.

Just doing those things that we never imagined ourselves doing, but I'll realize that all of us have to come back to this. What do children really need? Yes. And that's really the best place to begin, and it's the thing that will keep sustaining a really great homeschooling experience.

Carole Joy Seid [00:26:49]:

It's true. And, you know, Rachel, let us never forget Dr. Moore's words, "Beware of having school at home." He would say to us, I would rather that you send your children to school than have school at home because it's the worst possible combination. So they're they're just sitting at a dining room table with their leg tied to a chair, filling in workbook pages or whatever it is that they're doing, and he would say, please, I beg you if that's what you're gonna do. Send your children to school. At least they'll have recess and gym and art class and music class. And, you know, there'll be some things that will be life giving in a boring dry day.

But if you're removing all the joy and just giving them, you know, it's like being robbed and then the guy just gives you one dirty sock back, you know, at the end of mugging you in New York City or something. That's the unfortunate thing. When people have school at home, it's the worst possible scenario for our children and for ourselves. If

we're trying to create a love for learning, a joy of living in our kids, we are not reproducing the classroom.

Rachel Winchester [00:28:00]:

Yep. I love that. Well, thanks for sharing your story with us.

Carole Joy Seid [00:28:04]:

Thank you. It was fun.

Rachel Winchester [00:28:06]:

You've been listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. If you like what you heard in this episode, please leave a rating and review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify, or share this episode with a friend. It means so much when you help us spread the message of Homeschool Made Simple with others. Thanks for joining us this week on the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. Remember, Jesus' commandments are not burdensome. What he calls you to do, he will enable you to do. Blessings.