

Influential Books That Shaped a Generation of Homeschooling Educators

Episode 231

Rachel Winchester [00:00:00]:

What gave the early homeschool movement its great success? Oftentimes, it was because parents had a strong understanding of child development. They owned their role as experts and entrusted themselves to the process. In today's episode, Carole shares some of the books that were hugely influential on her own homeschool journey and ones we need to read ourselves.

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, a fellow homeschool mom to 3 kids.

Whether you're a veteran who needs fresh vision or a newbie looking for clear direction, this episode is for you. Don't worry about reading this whole list tomorrow, but figure out what you need for your next right step and go from there. Listen in.

Rachel Winchester [00:00:51]:

So last time in episode 230, we got to hear a little bit about Carole's story of how she came into the homeschooling movement. And today, I wanted to talk to her about how she gathered that information and kind of how people decided to homeschool and found the research and all these things. Today in our world, people are always looking on Pinterest for ideas and googling and who do they follow on Instagram or social media and get ideas there.

But, really, you guys in the original homeschooling movement were really going to the source. I think that's something unique about that time in the homeschool movement. Carole, I'd love for you to share a little bit about that, how you guys were gathering information and, who were some of the most influential voices at that time?

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:42]:

Yeah, Rachel. That's a big difference, isn't it, from your generation to my generation? Yeah. The times, they have been a change in, as Bob Dylan saying, for us in my generation. So I would say, Rachel, that most of us started in the homeschool movement almost universally by reading the books of Raymond Moore and his wife Dorothy. And, Focus on the Family probably gave out in the millions of copies of his books because he would be on continually because he had such a huge following. I think Dr. Dobson was just shocked by the whole thing because no one saw this coming. It was just like a meteorite falling from the sky. This this movement that was birthed out of a couple radio programs.

Like, what? Who even listens? You know, I mean, it was just Yeah. It was an amazing thing that the Lord in his sovereignty birthed in in our culture and in our country.

Rachel Winchester [00:02:45]:

And it's cool to go back and you can still listen to that radio program.

Carole Joy Seid [00:02:51]:

What are they on?

Rachel Winchester [00:02:53]:

I think Focus on the Family has it on their website. I think we can include it in the show notes so that people can go back and listen to that original broadcast.

Carole Joy Seid [00:03:00]:

That would be wonderful. Let's do that. So, the first book that I think focused on the family gave away was the book I think it was yes. It was *Homegrown Kids*, a practical handbook for teaching your children at home, and the foreword was by Dr. Dobson, interestingly. So maybe this wasn't the very first book that they gave away, but it was the first book that I was exposed to. But it really wasn't that much about homeschooling. As I said, it was really in our last podcast, I mentioned that because it was more about child development than it was about anything, which is very pertinent. Because now nobody cares about child development, they're just worried about what their Instagram feed is gonna look like.

But back then, we wanted to know how children worked, how they ticked. So *Homegrown Kids* was the first book I read of his. But to go back to the original books that Dr. Moore and Dorothy wrote that changed the course of of education, there were 2 books that they wrote. One was called *Better Late Than Early*, and the other was *School Can Wait*. And those books were nothing but research, research, research. And,

they were scholarly books, particularly *School Can Wait*. If you're not a professional in the educational world, that book might be a little intimidating. But *Better Late Than Early*, I think, is more much more accessible.

And, that was the second book. And *Better Late Than Early*, although it's not available in print at this time, I'm praying and hoping that it will be brought back into print. It is absolutely essential for us as parents and educators. How did you listen to it, Rachel, when you listened?

Rachel Winchester [00:04:50]:

Yeah. You can if you just search it, you can find the audio through your library or, like, Hoopla, I think, has it. But I think you can find it on if you just search it, Google. You know?

Carole Joy Seid [00:05:01]:

Marvelous. Okay. And if you pay big bucks for it, it's worth it. Don't you know, we waste money on silliness. I think that would be a book that I'd spend a \$100 to get my hands on. It is such a significant life changing book for our culture. So some of the other books that the Moores wrote were, *Homespun Schools: Teaching Children at Home*, what parents are doing and how they're doing it, so a lot of testimonies of families. And then homestyle teaching, which gets a lot schoolier, not my favorite of their books.

So and then, *Minding Your Own Business*, which is a brilliant book way ahead of its time, a common sense guide to home management and industry. Basically, they're teaching your child and teaching you how to help your child to be a worker bee, to start their own business, to work in the home, to be a teenage millionaire? Not really. But you know what I mean.

Carole Joy Seid [00:05:59]:

Right? Have you read that one, Rach?

Rachel Winchester [00:06:02]:

I think I've read parts of it, but just that yeah. Giving people that ownership. You can do this. You don't have to wait until you're 22 to start a business.

Carole Joy Seid [00:06:11]:

That's right. Or to teach a child to to work, you know, the importance of teaching a child to work when they're very young. Mhmm. Such a key component of Dr. Moore's philosophy, which is the three leg stool, which is, Rachel?

Rachel Winchester [00:06:23]:

Work, service, and study.

Carole Joy Seid [00:06:26]:

That's right. Work, service, study. And so without the work and service component, you're a very miserable person sitting on a one leg stool. But getting that balance in their character through work and service is the key to what he taught us. And then he wrote a book called, *Homeschool Burnout*. That was its first edition, and then people were threatened by that title because nobody wants to be told they're not teaching people to homeschool correctly. So then he renamed it and went from being what they considered a negative title to a positive title. *The Successful Homeschool Family Handbook*. So he was being more positive. That's good.

Rachel Winchester [00:07:12]:

Which that one's much easier to find, and it's such a good little pick me up to read again and again to just get that encouragement we all need. Get people's stories, but their writing is pretty easy to read and the chapters are pretty short. So it's just easy to pick it up and be reminded. Oh, yeah. I'm totally doing the right thing.

Carole Joy Seid [00:07:31]:

That's right, Rachel. Yes. And I love that book because it is family testimonies. Like this family, this woman worked at NASA and quit her job to stay home and, you know, educate her kids. And this family lives in the hills of Kentucky and they don't have indoor plumbing. And their kids did, you know so it's just fun to read about some of the early pioneering families and how successful they were.

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Believe it or not, we are already planning our 20 25 seminars. We would love for you to join us in person next year. J. J. and I will teach you how to create a rich family culture that holistically educates your kids. You'll learn about living with your children in an understanding way, including work and service in their education, building your curriculum around history, and cultivating a love of reading that will grow lifelong learners. Families tell us these seminars feel like a breath of fresh air. Registration includes mom, dad, teens, and nursing infants, and you'll receive color coded handouts that are the key to your success in this method. It's a great time for both parents to get on the same page about homeschooling. We hope you'll join us for one of our 2025 seminars. Nothing has the impact on your homeschool like a day set apart for being refueled and refreshed. Visit our website at homeschoolmadesimple.net/seminars, and fill out the form to let us know where you live. You'll be the first to know when we're

coming to your neck of the woods. We can't wait to see you in 2025. Now back to the show.

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:13]:

So then another pioneer in the homeschool movement was a woman named Ruth Beechick. And, my favorite book she wrote 3 little books, and you have those books, I think, Rachel, and I'm looking for them on my bookshelf. But do you remember what they're called?

Rachel Winchester [00:09:35]:

I'm reading the math one right now. I can't remember the title of it.

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:42]:

Oh, I found them. I found them. Okay. 1 is a home start in reading, an easy start in arithmetic, and a strong start in language. So 3 little tiny booklets. They were very inexpensive in their day, but now people are probably, you know, paying huge scalping fees for those books. But then she wrote a larger book and it's called *You Can Teach Your Child Successfully*, grades 4 through 8. So the little booklet started you out and that's all you needed.

Imagine that, they probably cost a dollar each. And then, you can teach your child successfully, took you all the way up to high school. Hello. Talk about the simplicity of homeschooling in that day and age. And then, let's see, so Ray Ballmann wrote an excellent book, also very research based, and it's called *The How and Why of Homeschooling*. It was published by Crossway. And then, John Holt, of course, we mentioned him in our last podcast, but he was the other founder of the modern day homeschool movement. John Holt was a researcher in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and he wrote many books about education trying to kind of, redeem the public school and private school world.

And he finally threw his hands in the air and said it's hopeless, it can't be fixed, and he became a homeschool advocate and inventor and invented the movement called growing without schooling. And, he wrote a book called *Teach Your Own*.

So *Teach Your Own* was kind of his, and I think he did that with Patrick Ferenga, who, a hopeful path for education is the subtitle. Yeah. So he also wrote *How Children Learn* and *How Children Fail*. He was, you know, a well known, respected educational author, but completely jumped off the train and everybody about to have a heart attack when he started homeschooling, you know, that was that was pretty radical. And then another family that were hugely instrumental in the formation of the early homeschool

movement was a family that, lived in Northern California eventually and their names were the Colfaxes, David and Micki with the wife, m l c k l. David and Micki Colfax. And they wrote 2 books that became particularly his first book was a bestseller.

It's called *Homeschooling for Excellence*, and that book was published by Warner. And, it I love the cover. How to take charge of your child's education, why you absolutely must. Tom Brokaw, NBC News quote, David and Nikki Colfax teach their children at home and send them to places like Harvard, Newsweek Magazine, that California Colfaxes teach their children well. The Chicago Tribune, their efforts to teach their children themselves have been successful beyond most parents' dreams. So David and Micki lived up above Mendocino in Northern California, and they didn't have running water, or a road, or electricity, but they did have some boxes of books, and an old truck, and they would drive into town to the library and get like 50 books a week, and bring them home. They had no cell phones, they had no computers, they just had books. And I think a transistor radio that occasionally worked when they remind remembered to get batteries and could afford batteries.

But 3 of their sons went to Harvard on full scholarship, Grant being the first, and then he went to Oxford on a Fulbright, and then came back and went to Harvard Medical School, all in full rides. Their first three boys did that. Their 4th son did not wanna go to Harvard. I don't blame him, but by his choice, he did not go there. He he pursued another career path. But 2 of the boys were adopted, and 2 were birth children. So it wasn't a genetic gene pool, you know, miracle. It was one was from Alaska, a native Inuit.

Am I saying that right? From Alaska, one of their sons, and another was African American. And so it was this beautiful, kind of like test tube experience where does this work for all children, or is it just for, quote, my children that inherited my gene pool? And and their their story is such a beautiful story of their kids working hard. They had to build shelter, create they solar electrified their dad's goat farm, so that when they had dangerous deliveries with their goats, they could contact, you know, the vet. I mean, it's just an amazing story. So they're not believers, they're very outspoken about not being believers. It's not really a faith journey, it's just I think more of a common sense journey of how to create really smart, really, kids who take ownership for their own learning. And I think that's very much their parents were too busy to teach them, so they taught themselves. They were perfect John Holt experiment.

And then the book of theirs that I like much more, it's much more compelling, is *Hard Times in Paradise* by David and Mickey Colfax. An American family struggle to carve out a homestead in California's Redwood Mountains, and, there is some harsh

language. Yeah. I mean not as harsh as what you might expect in today's writing, but, you know, some annoying language. So I don't put it on my book lists because I don't want people to lynch me, but I do feel their story is worth reading if you can overlook that. If you can't, I just wanna give you the the, you know, forewarning now.

And then a woman who influenced me tremendously is a woman named Gladys Hunt. She, lived in Michigan. She and her husband were hugely instrumental in in the Christian world, but she wrote a little best selling book called *Honey for a Child's Heart*. And I bought this book at a bookstore when I was in Pensacola being trained to teach children to read it too. I know that doesn't necessarily go together, but that's when I bought my first copy of that book.

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:28]:

So, that book is huge. Then she wrote a sequel to it for older kids. She originally called it *Read For Your Life, Turning Teens Into Readers*. And I can't remember what the new edition is called.

Rachel Winchester [00:16:45]:

I think it's *Honey for a Teen's Heart*.

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:47]:

There you go. Thank you. Perfect.

Rachel Winchester [00:16:50]:

And I think there's even *Honey for a Woman's Heart*.

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:53]:

Woman's heart. Exact. So but *Honey for a Child's Heart* is the barn burner. You must own multiple copies because what I like to tell you kids families to do is give your child their own copy or at least their own colored highlighter, and let them, during quiet time when they're feet off the ground hour, give them each a color and let them go through that book and highlight the books that interest them. So when you go to the library, you take that book with you and then you're not going, no, you can't read the babysitter club. I told you you can't read the babysitter club. There's none of that. You just say, you can read anything in that book or *Books Children Love* by Elizabeth Wilson, which has literally probably a 1,000 titles in it.

And again, letting your child go through it with, you know, Susie's orange and Hillary's pink, and Joey's green. And and then when they go to the library, they know what they've already done their research on and the books they've chosen ahead of time.

Rachel Winchester [00:17:53]:

So is that kind of when you started really wanting to emphasize literature and reading kind of high quality books that kind of when that became important to you? Yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:18:05]:

No. I would say that started when I was probably in kindergarten. And I remember as a very small child, my mother asking me what I wanted for Christmas, and I would say, books. And she would say, books? Don't you want, you know, a mohair sweater or don't you want, you know, whatever the thing was. White go go boots. I my mother would have never suggested those. But that was a a a present I probably would have chosen by myself. But in my generation but, yeah, I mean, Rachel, I have just and, you know, the first time that I ever really, taught, I think, was some women in Huntington Beach right when I read Dr. Moore's book or maybe even before it said to me, you know, we noticed that you guys read to your son all the time, and that you have all these great books to read to him.

Would you share how we can become like readers to our children? And that was I had this group of moms that came over to our apartment in Huntington Beach, and I just went book by book, and talked about the author, the illustrator, you know, stories about what that book had meant to our family. And that really began when JJ was 3, because I remember doing that in in that little apartment. So, yeah, it's always been my passion, my thing. I've always read to children in classrooms. One thing that really shaped me Rachel is I had an amazing, librarian, Miss O'dell. And Miss O'dell, God rest her soul. I mean, she must she would have to be a 130 by now, but anyway, she is the most she was a huge influence on my life because we had this darling little library, and we have library class in our school. It was a little it was like a little private school, but it was actually a public school.

And, Miss O'Dell combined my two passions. She loved literature and she ran a camp, a very simple primitive camp, and we would go on field trips to her camp. So it was nature and books. Like, was she a kindred spirit or what? Yeah. Yeah. And then I had an amazing first grade teacher. But the woman who read to me, that I still remember to this day, was missus Massey in 6th grade. And she had these beautiful pearl earrings, and she would wear heels and, you know, always a dress, a skirt or a dress, and she was beautifully groomed.

And after lunch, and in 6th grade, we'd come back from lunch and she'd say, sit down and put your heads on your desk. And she would read us Kon-Tiki. And I still remember it. It stands out of anything in all the years I went to school of a woman who read us a

whole book and treated us as though we were intelligent enough to pay attention and to listen. And it was the high point of our day, but even more, it was the high point of my whole childhood. Yeah. Because no one ever read to me.

Rachel Winchester [00:21:09]:

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I have a couple teachers. I can remember them really reading, and they were 2 of my favorite teachers. And, you know, it's probably because they were my literature teachers, and they chose to teach literature by reading to us.

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:25]:

Reading. Oh, that's so good. Yes. And in grad school, my kitty lit teacher, and I don't remember her name, but boy did she have an impact on my life. She would read, you know, Winnie the Pooh poems to us and beat out the rhythm and all that, and, oh, I loved her. I loved her. Yep. These are the people that make the impression.

So yeah. So those books in terms of gathering books, and then the third in that group is the *Read Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease. And I have multiple editions of this. I went to hear Jim Trelease when J. J. was about 4 or 5. That was the first time I heard him, and I think I heard him the first time on Focus on the Family as well. He used to be on a lot.

And, I went to go hear him, I think it was in Chino Hills in California, and I still have the handout that was advertising him coming through our little bookstore. And, he was another person who just completely changed my life. Yeah. Nobody like him.

Rachel Winchester [00:22:31]:

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