

Character Development is at the Heart of Homeschool Made Simple

Episode 250

Rachel Winchester [00:00:03]:

I want to start out this episode by saying thank you. Thank you for listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. This episode marks 250 episodes since we first began this venture in April of 2020. It is a joy to send these episodes out into the world knowing they are providing encouragement and help to listeners like you. We love hearing from you. As we reach this milestone. We are celebrating all that has happened to this point and looking forward to what lies ahead in the next chapter. If you have questions or ideas you'd love to hear in upcoming episodes, we'd love to hear from you. You can submit those at homeschoolmadesimple.net/ideas. 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 through her seminars and consulting services. And I'm Rachel Winchester, a fellow homeschool mom using this method with my own 3 kids. In today's episode, Carole and I reflect on the podcast and share our hope for the next generation of homeschoolers. Listen in.

Rachel Winchester [00:01:16]:

Today, we have an exciting milestone. This is the 250th episode of the podcast. Congratulations, Carole. How does it feel?

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:26]:

Congratulations, Rachel. It feels like I'm ready for the old folks home when you use those numbers, but we're just warming up around here.

Rachel Winchester [00:01:35]:

Yeah. Did you ever think you would make it to this point?

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:39]:

Never in a 1000000 years. Never. No. This was a little whim that grew into a very large tree, and we're so enjoying doing it.

Rachel Winchester [00:01:51]:

Yes. It's been a fun ride. It's been a fun ride. When you think about it, do you have any episodes that stick out? Like, wow, I really loved that episode, or that was something I really enjoyed recording or a person I enjoyed talking to?

Carole Joy Seid [00:02:05]:

Oh, well, I would say my favorite interview ever is with David Arroyo and the story of his childhood, which was very turbulent, very, very sad. And, they're coming into this information and just jumping in with both feet as a family and going on to produce a Rhodes Scholar, 2 Stanford graduates, one with a doctorate from Stanford, one Cornell grad that's in process, all using this method, which seems so counterintuitive. And so it's it was so encouraging to hear, you know, the story of children of immigrants, rising to that kind of academic level. But beyond the academic level, Rachel, of course, what I love from David's interview is the heart of the father intervening in his children's lives, taking leadership, being a person of confidence when you have a conviction and a call and your children will follow. And the spiritual depth of the Arroyo children because they're not just smart, but more importantly, they're godly. And I love the kids, and I love their story, and I've stayed in their home. David is now on my board, and it all started with him listening to a cassette tape, seminar of mine many years ago and, all that the Lord has done. It's it's so that was a joy.

But, you know, we didn't start out to really ever do anything beyond maybe a couple little recordings. It it really started, as you probably remember, when the board was pressing me to do a podcast. And I was like, are you joking with me? Go away. I don't have time to even think about something like this. And then when we were, in the middle of COVID, which I hate to admit, but I loved the silence and solitude and all those hours of reading. But during that time, the Lord kind of poked me in the ribs as he's good at doing and said, well, you know, you have time to do it now. And so I picked up my little hand recorder that I have used in the past for things, and I just started walking through my bookcases and talking about the books that were in my house that I love. And that, I think, maybe was the first podcast.

I don't remember the details, but it started very kind of organically. And like Topsy, it just grew. So we've had some really exciting things. What are some of our statistics, Rachel? I know you know numbers better than I, but how many downloads have we had in in these years since we've been gone? Can you remember numbers?

Rachel Winchester [00:05:00]:

Yeah. I think we're a little bit over 700,000 downloads.

Carole Joy Seid [00:05:05]:

Yes. That's amazing. And, you know, all glory to God and all thanks to our listeners because, you know, I'm just sitting here with a little recorder in my house, but the listeners are who put this you know, put the wheels on this little wagon and have shared it with their friends and relatives and great aunts. And it's, you know, it's so fun. And I think years ago, you showed me a picture that we're on every continent in the world

Rachel Winchester [00:05:35]:

Mhmm. Yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:05:36]:

Which is interesting to me. Yes. How did that even happen? I know. But yeah.

Rachel Winchester [00:05:42]:

That's amazing. We've heard from, like, families in Australia and Canada? I mean, not that that's a close neighbor, but just all over the place, you know, maybe they're missionaries, but also just Australian people and native people in those places, which is really exciting.

Carole Joy Seid [00:06:02]:

And, you know, when you're doing a podcast, you just have no idea what's going on. But the fun for me is that when I consult with families, I hear the little secrets that I don't know about. Like, one day, I was consulting with a lady, and she told me that she dropped her children off at this really prestigious private school. And it was right after summer break, and and she had had such a beautiful summer with her kids. She felt such closeness with them. And she dropped the children off, and she just started crying. And and she said to me, I just decided I'm just gonna listen to a podcast on homeschooling. And somehow, she found my podcast.

It's just so great and and just ordained of the Lord's mercy, and she listened to it, and she said, that's it. We're doing this. And she and her husband pulled their kids out, and she's never looked back. Wow. And it was all just that day. I think she maybe put in simple homeschool or something. I don't know. And and our podcast came up, and you just never know the divine appointments, the cries of people's heart.

Jesus said those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled. And so when when I hear the stories of how people tried all sorts of other things, and then they found our podcast, and they they all say the same thing. And that was it. That was it. We've never listened to any other like, they just have found what they're looking for

and the peace, the the bearing witness in our spirits, you know, when we know that something is right for us and our family.

And what an honor and a privilege to be just used of the Lord to change children's lives because that's what this is all about. This isn't this isn't a rock star phenomena that we could care less about any of that nonsense. We we have that eternal concept in our minds and printed on our eyelids that someday these children are gonna be in heaven, and we're gonna have a part in getting them there, and that they're gonna have purity, and they're gonna have innocence, and they're gonna be, untouched by the things of the world. And if we can be on the team of these precious families to get their children across the finish line to keep them godly and, incidentally, also smart. You know, we don't care if they're smart if they're not godly.

Rachel Winchester [00:08:33]:
Just so happens.

Carole Joy Seid [00:08:36]:
But if they get both, it's a it's a bonus. It's no extra charge for the smart part. But we want them to be godly, and then hopefully smart as well and well educated. It's just a privilege to do this. I always say, I can't believe I get to do this. And I particularly feel that way when I, you know, I'm done consulting at the end of the day. I think to myself, I can't believe I get to do this because that's the personal touch, you know, where you're hearing back. Podcasting is tricky because you don't know if anyone's even paying attention or could care less.

Rachel Winchester [00:09:10]:
Yeah. Exactly. Did they just start the episode but never got around to finishing it?

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:14]:
That's right.

Rachel Winchester [00:09:15]:
Who knows? But there's one story I remember after we played an episode about, technology and, like, media and removing the media in your home and different things. You were answering some questions that we had that were submitted to us. And somebody on Instagram or, like, created this post that was about how after they listened to that, she moved the TV out of their living room and completely rearranged their living space because of what she heard that day. And I was just blown out of the water. I was sending it to everybody on our team, like, oh my goodness. Look what happened. You know, isn't this amazing? Like, this is what we live for is to see like, that

just completely changed the way their family lives and interacts with one another. It's not about, like, moral high ground or something of not having a visible TV or something like that.

Rachel Winchester [00:10:08]:

It's just about that completely reoriented their family to be about, oh, when we're in our living room, we're about spending time together. We're about being present with each other. We're not about just being couch potatoes and lounging around. We're here to be with each other.

Carole Joy Seid [00:10:25]:

And correct me if I'm wrong. So it was a movie that she made. It was so precious. And and she filmed herself taking the TV down, and then I believe she put a bookcase Yeah. Where the TV was and put a plant and, you know, whatever. It was so adorable. But, yes, you're right. You just never know how you're impacting people, but then it's so fun when you when you get the feedback and you're like, wow. There are people out there that are that are really applying the things that we're teaching. It's just it's a beautiful thing. It's a rewarding occupation.

Rachel Winchester [00:11:09]:

Yes. Well, I thought kind of along those lines, you know, whenever I talk to some veteran moms and stuff, they tell me yeah. I've heard them multiple times talk about how going to your seminars and really using your method with your children. It taught them how to be, you know, one mom said to be a human being instead of a human doing and to not be so focused on the doing the right things or doing certain things or whatever. But to really have this, like, settled being about themselves, was that something you intentionally sought out to do, do you think, or is that just a fruit of what you your ministry and what you ended up doing?

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:52]:

Yeah. I think I think it is just the fruit of of the things really that Dr. Moore taught, that Charlotte Mason taught, Edith Schaeffer taught. Just that the way we live life, you know, it's really reformation theology. The way that we live life under Christ is that everything we do is as unto him. So how we change our baby's diaper, how we arrange a little centerpiece, in the middle of the table when we're gonna have dinner, how we sew curtains for our living room out of, you know, scrap fabric that nobody really wanted, and we make a thing of beauty out of them. But, you know, whatever we find our hand doing, we do with all our heart as unto him. And so I think the character building aspect of this method is the foundation. You know, as I consulted yesterday with the family, I realized that they drunk some of the Kool Aid, but they had never

applied the character building, the the discipline, the authority of the father in the home.

So many things were missing, and and it was like the wheels had come off of the trolley. And bringing them back to and I said to them, I don't care about academics right now. Your son is very intelligent. I care about his soul, and something is very wrong here. And so going back to laying the foundation of first things first, and as CS Lewis said, and then second things will follow. But when you seek second things first, like academics, you don't get either. And so we put first things first, which is, are our children going to heaven? And then we can worry about whether they're going to Harvard, which, God forbid, they go. But if they go, they can and and, you know, I really shouldn't say that because of as I see what the Arroyo boys have done and the impact they've had at these schools at Oxford and and Cornell and and, Stanford, You know? And David said to me, Carole, I hear people say I would never send my children to those schools.

And he said to me, well, I would be embarrassed to admit that my child couldn't stand in that environment. And, of course, his children have turned those schools upside down, and and they've started, like and they're athletes. And so they're also they're geniuses, and they're also athletes, and they're musicians. So the things that they're doing, like like Luciano starting a bible study for all the wrestlers at Stanford, of which he is one of, and now he's coaching at Stanford with the team, I believe, the last I heard. We need to do an update with David and see where everybody is. But how the impact of these kids, one of his sons, his first son, who went to, Chapman, which is a secular school in Orange County, and how the professor, the Jewish professor said to him, I need to meet your parents. I've got to meet your parents. How did they produce someone like you? And so they invited the the professor and her husband over for dinner, and they have become best friends.

And the professor is still not a believer, but the impact that, their son had at Chapman and went going on to become a Rhodes Scholar at Chapman, the first one they've ever had actually at Chapman, and going to Oxford, but she wanted to know about his parents. Smart lady.

Because it's that spiritual and character foundation that is what we aim for, and then we'll worry about, you know, where they're gonna go to graduate school or, you know, all that. Those things are of secondary interest to me. I just wanna be sure that they are on fire for Jesus. That's that's our marching orders as a ministry. Lighting a fire in children's hearts for Christ that will never go out.

Rachel Winchester [00:16:07]:

Yeah. It reminds me of Philippians 2 in verses 14 through 16. It says, do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent children of God, without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life so that in the day of Christ, I may be proud that I did not run-in vain or labor in vain.

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:33]:

Woah. Yes. Yes. And Paul always talked about people being his crown and his joy. And our children are that. You know, when we raise godly children and, you know, people meet them and talk to us about our kids and how much they love them, that's it. It's not always the case when they're little. They can be a little bit, you know, monstrous ish when they're little.

But as they get older and the Lord begins to refine them and they repent and turn around and go the other way because of the constant loving, nurturing, shepherding we are giving to their hearts. What, priceless treasure they become in our lives, and then our grandchildren. And it goes on and on. I mean, this is the most this is the reason we're on the earth. On our deathbed, this is the only thing we'll care about. Is are our children gonna be with us in heaven? It's all that matters, and that's that's the only thing we take with us to heaven Mhmm. Is our children and hopefully our grandchildren.

Rachel Winchester [00:17:42]:

Yeah. You could do all the things, but if you don't have love and if you don't have that soul eternal life, then

Carole Joy Seid [00:17:52]:

That's right.

Rachel Winchester [00:17:52]:

It's all for it's all for naught.

Carole Joy Seid [00:17:54]:

It's just wax fruit.

Rachel Winchester [00:17:56]:

Yeah. It reminds me of a conversation I had recently with a mom who she has older kids, and she's about 10 years ahead of me probably. And we were kind of talking about her family, and she was saying they have some guiding principles in their family.

And so, you know, and so it kind of it draws boundaries, you know, of, like, well, you know, our son and they don't even you know, some of their kids are in private school, and we're not even we're just meeting for spiritual, like, encouragement and stuff. Yeah. For discipleship. And so but they have these guiding principles that basically protect their family culture. And the 2 of us were talking about that.

Because, you know, we see other families where then I think it really comes down to not having these guiding principles. And that then it allows for things to come in and start taking off, like, oh, well, we didn't protect our time together, or we didn't protect our child's imagination, or we didn't protect their purity. And so then things just little by little erode those areas of time together or child's innocence, their time to be bored and create things.

And so I really appreciated how she you know, they they discussed, like, our guiding principles, and they, you know, encourage they basically use those with their kids of just, you know, you're not gonna date anybody until you're out of high school. So, like, we don't want you to get distracted, like, so just be free to not have to worry about that. You know, you don't have to worry about that. And you don't have to worry about us letting you have a video game system that then we're going to have to regulate. You know? Don't worry. You don't even have to worry about that. We're not not gonna even try to fight about it. You're just not gonna have one.

And I just love that. You know? It's just like we as our family, because they have a vision for something bigger and not it's not about stifling their kids and all the things they're saying no to. It's about we want to make sure you you get bored and you make things. And, you know, their oldest daughter, like, was water coloring all these Christmas cards and giving them to different people that she has relationships with and stuff. And it's so sweet. And, you know, if she was just plugged in all the time, would she do that kind of thing? Or if they hadn't nourished in yeah, nurtured that sort of, artist artistic, like, bent in her, or if they hadn't made her be present with people in church and in their community, would she have fostered those relationships that then she wanted to, you know, pour into? So I just I think having those guiding principles and saying, this is who we are, and this is what we're going for. And then, sure, it blocks off things, but it's so that you can protect this really rich, vibrant living thing that is gonna give life to so much more. Yes.

Carole Joy Seid [00:20:56]:

Yes. Yeah. And and it's like Jesus said, don't build a building without a plan. Like, consider the cost and and lay that out before you build the building. Don't don't build the airplane while you're flying it. Right. So as your children are growing up, if they

know this is what we do, this is our family culture, this is who we are, and we're proud of it. Like the Sears family, William Sears kids, and grandkids were raised to say things like, we don't eat foods with numbers or colors in the ingredients.

We don't shop in those aisles of the supermarket. Like, they have a family culture, and they're proud of the way that they live their lives. And it gives kids a sense of belonging. Like, we know who we are as a family, and we're not ashamed of it. We're not pushing against the GOADs because it's actually a positive thing that makes us who we are. It's like when you go to a certain summer camp or you go to Coldwater or, you know, a certain college, and you have this culture and you're proud of it, and you wear the school colors, and you, you know, you get a car that color and, you know, whatever. It's because belonging to something bigger than you and something that's more, something that you have to reach for and aim for, it gives you a sense of, I don't know how to explain it, but you you you're proud of belonging to something that is bigger and harder than you would naturally do alone. And that's what we're trying to do as families.

I love that.

Rachel Winchester [00:22:35]:

It reminds me of the book *Hold On to Your Kids*. And I think that some parents think that, oh, if we enforce these sort of rules of, like, you're not gonna have a video game system, or you're not gonna date or something. If they don't if they don't have those boundaries, and they then let then it's gonna break the connection with their child. Yes. And I think I mean, that book and what you're saying is just it's saying, no. Actually, it's going to reinforce the connection that you have as a family to say, "I know that other people do that and that other people let their kids do that, but we don't do that. And so we're bonded to each other because we share that value."

And that actually when you start to break those values of, like, oh, well, we actually would rather our kid not do this, but we're gonna let them have a different value, then it's actually breaking that connection that you have with your kid.

Carole Joy Seid [00:23:32]:

Yes. And it's being intentional and being intentionally uncool. And, you know, that that little article that I read sometimes in the seminars, *Fly, Eagle, Fly*, about, we are intentionally uncool. And in our intentional uncoolness, we're actually super cool because we're not peer dependent, and we're not trying to be like everybody else, which is such a yawn. But we are, you know, marching to our own drum, which makes

us very attractive even though we're not intentionally doing it for that reason. Mhmm. Mhmm. People are drawn to confidence.

Yeah. And we're modeling that. Yeah. It's really important.

Rachel Winchester [00:24:17]:

Yeah. So if you wanna homeschool with confidence and raise kids who are confident, stick around.

Carole Joy Seid [00:24:26]:

Yes. And pray for us that this message will continue to go out. I think that's the last thing, to just, you know, encourage our listeners to help us get this message out because sometimes people feel like, but I'm the only one in, you know, Dubuque, Iowa doing this or whatever, which probably isn't true, but to share this message with other people because each of our listeners is an influencer in the true sense that we're not the ghastly meaning that it's adopted. But the true sense, we are all leaders, and we all influence people who trust us and respect us. And so sharing this method and and gathering people into the fold so that you don't feel like you're the lone ranger, because it is hard if you feel like you're the only family that isn't filling in workbook pages and and going to 3 co-ops a week. And so it's so important to have kindred spirits to hold each other's arms up. When one of you is like, oh, I don't know. I I think I'm just gonna call Bob Jones and have them send me one of everything. And then your friend's like, no. No. No. No. No. We're gonna have coffee tonight. Come on over, and we're gonna pray together, and we're gonna get you back on your feet. And then the next week, that friend might be losing it.

And so we do need one another. And so building intentional communities as you read a book or you listen to a podcast or you go to a seminar, getting your friends to go with you. Sometimes you have to do blackmailing things like pay for them to go or say, I'll take you out to a really nice restaurant when it's over or you know? So that you begin to build like minded communities wherever you live because we're better together, and we need each other. And, I I I feel like this is this is a message whose time has come for a whole another generation. Mhmm. As Dr. Moore taught us those things, you know, way in the dark ages, in the in the seventies eighties, and now for a whole another generation, actually, our kids and our grandkids now. So our we as the Pioneer Homeschool Movement, now our grandchildren are being taught with these methods, and and it works. And there's a reason that the kids you know, it's so fun when at a seminar, when I walk in the door, someone will come up to me and say, my mom homeschooled me with your methods, and now I'm homeschooling my kids with your methods.

I'm like, yes. That's success. That is that's what we long for and look for is that continuity, that this is the way we do life and, doing it for generations. I think of NC Wyeth, the famous illustrator, who homeschooled his son, Andrew Wyeth, and his grandson, Jamie Wyeth, and how these, generations of continuing to homeschool their kids as free spirits and as artists and how they all posed in each other's art and how n c Wyeth dressed up his kids and his grandkids, and he had all these fabulous costumes he created. And so he's illustrating King Arthur and Robin Hood and Black Arrow and, the yearling, and and how it he carried it through generations. And that's, you know, my dream for for your generation, Rachel, as you're homeschooling your kids and JJ's generation that now we can keep this momentum going for posterity, and what a joy it is to see the long term fruit of something. It's not just a fly by night philosophy that, you know, in the homeschool movement, there's always a flavor of the month, but this methodology is consistent. It's never changed because it's as old as time.

It's as old as the patriarchs. It's as old as, you know, just common sense research based education. It's not, oh, this is the fad for this year, next year, that'll be so over, but then we'll do something different, which is horrible. But this consistent thing of this is through history, as you look at the life of Joseph, if you look at how Jesus was raised as a child, how Moses was raised as a child, What were the consistent themes that are still relevant to raising our children today? That's what we're looking for. Not fads, but continuity and longevity for for the long haul. And that's that's what I think we're trying to accomplish at Homeschool Made Simple. We want it to be simple. We want it to be, academically rigorous, but most important, we want to build on the tradition of our faith, that that is what we're doing here.

We're raising, as Dr. Moore used to say, "Lords and ladies or kings and and queens for the kingdom of God." That's what we're trying to accomplish here. That's our number one goal. And once we accomplish that, I told J. J. when he was a teenager, I don't care if you are a garbage collector. All I care is is that you're a godly garbage collector. I would be proud of you if if that were, you know, your your choice.

And and I remember he kinda said thank you, meaning that he took pressure off of him. Right. Because he was academically very rigorous, but that can really burn you out. Even in high school, you can be like done. You know? And then as the years went on, he went on to get his doctorate, but not under any pressure from anybody. He just you know, he loves to learn.

But the important thing he the message he got was none of that matters. All that matters is, are you a man of honor? Are you a man of integrity? Are you gonna be a great husband and a great father and a great church man?

That's all that matters. In our communities, what someone does for a living, who cares as long as they do it as under the lord.

Rachel Winchester [00:30:35]:

Mhmm. Yes.

Carole Joy Seid [00:30:36]:

Yeah. I think of the Moravians, last thing I wanna mention, who, sold themselves into slavery, people from some of them from kind of lordly backgrounds, in Moravia. And they sold themselves into slavery in order to witness in the in the places that they would go as slaves. Wow. Yes. Those are people who are committed to the gospel. Mhmm. They weren't climbing the corporate ladder.

They're like, oh, I know. I'll be a slave. Excuse me? You know? But that's that's godliness Yeah. Right there.

Rachel Winchester [00:31:18]:

Yeah. That's awesome. Well, 250 episodes down, 250 more to go, not all at once.

Carole Joy Seid [00:31:26]:

Come come quickly, Lord Jesus.

Rachel Winchester [00:31:30]:

I'm excited. Would you wanna pray for our families as we close out?

Carole Joy Seid [00:31:34]:

I would. I would love to. Oh, father, we are just so grateful. We're so grateful for the things that you are doing. Your word says, unless you build the house, we labor in vain that build it. Lord, would you build your kingdom that the gates of hell as you promised would not prevail against it? Raise up mighty warriors. Raise up a Joseph. Raise up a Daniel. Raise up a Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego. Raise up a Ruth and an Esther. Let our children be used of you to influence and change the course of history. Lord, use us as your instruments to raise these children up, to be arrows that are on fire, that as we shoot them into the world, everywhere they go, the fire of God burns brightly, and it spreads like when Samson lit the the fox's tails on fire and sent them into fields. Lord, let our children be that fire that they carry with them everywhere they go, that they light up this world. They purify it. They exhort it. They activate it. Lord, use this generation and use us to mentor and disciple them for eternity. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

Rachel Winchester [00:33:12]:

Amen. 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.