

Episode #1 — The Inaugural Episode (8/3/19)

Meet Jenni and Jody and find out why we homeschool with the end result in mind

Jody: In this inaugural episode, we're going to introduce ourselves and talk about what Cradle to Calling (or C2C, as we like to say) education is all about. Then next week, we will kick off a four- week series on reading. You'll get to hear from some powerhouse speakers in the homeschool community. But first, let us introduce ourselves.

Jenni: Okay, so I'm Jenni Stahlmann

Jody: And I'm Jody Hagaman.

Jenni: And we are two homeschool moms with nearly 30 years experience between us.

Jody: You make me sound very old.

Jenni: Well...

Jody: Nah, no we're not.

Jenni: If the shoe fits!

Jody: Maybe we are.

Jenni: Together, the Stahlmanns and the Hagamans have 10 kids, including one on the autism spectrum, one daughter-in-law, another daughter-in-law and son-in-law on the way. We each have a child engaged. And one grandchild with another one on the way. So let's, let's just take a minute. We'll tell you our, our resume, just kind of a quick snapshot of who Jenni and Jody are. First starters, we co-hosted a weekly parenting radio show for more than six years. The last three of those years. the show was syndicated in different markets, different radio stations throughout the country. Um, we also wrote a syndicated weekly parenting newspaper column for six years and that newspaper column still exists actually in some areas. Um, we've written freelance articles for a wide range of publications including The Old School House magazine, Focus on the Family's Clubhouse and Clubhouse Jr. magazines and a whole bunch of regional magazines and newspapers. Jody and I also co-own a Florida registered, uh, umbrella school that provides legal covering for Florida homeschool families. We currently sit on the board of directors of our local homeschool group and we consult with families throughout the U.S. And Canada about a wide range of parenting and homeschooling issues. Jody and I began traveling around the U.S. And Canada speaking about homeschooling after Jody posted her son's homeschool story on our parenting website, which is now closed, and it went viral. You're going to get to hear that story in just a few minutes. Um, we've written some ebooks and some curriculum and this week is our -- this episode is our inaugural podcast. Uh, earlier in the week we also launched a YouTube

channel and a new blog our new online home fromcradletocalling.com. In Jody's, uh, personal life she was a corrections officer. Um, and that time that she spent in the prison system really helped motivate her to try to figure out how to help the next generation of kids make good choices and live up to their potential. In my previous life, I was a journalist, and I wrote for newspapers and magazines and oddly I covered education, childcare and healthcare, not realizing that those things would sort of be prophetic about what we're doing now.

Jody: So are some fun J and J facts. Well, first off we are epic besties. Our friendship is really stuff of legend. People often want to...

Jenni: Yeah, people actually sometimes ask us to just talk about friendship.

Jody: Yeah, yeah.

Jenni: Because we are really such good friends.

Jody: So we live six houses apart, not on purpose. That was totally God's plan. Um, Jenni's second child and my third were childhood besties and we are currently both raising toddler girls who are also besties.

Jenni: They really are. They really are besties. It's the cutest thing in the world.

Jody: On, on certain days of the week, Ari, my little nugget, goes down to Jenni's house and she calls that "Rhema Day, it's Rhema Day!" And that, that's Jenni's little girl, her little two-year-old. So, and our husbands are besties and the Stahlmanns and Hagermans do life together like one very big family.

Jenni: This is true. So Jodi, tell us the story of how you came to homeschool. This is the story that really went viral, because I think that a lot of people understood and, I think it really resonated with them. So tell us the story of what happened.

Jody: Well, this is a story of almost 20 years ago. Let's just start there.

Jenni: Yes!

Jody: And um, I was much younger then. Um, Chase, who is at this moment, he's 31. And um, he had come to me when he was about, I think he was about 11. So, the beginning, very beginning of his seventh-grade year and he was really struggling with some emotional stuff. Not that he was unstable, but what he was dealing with was, um, the kids in his click, if you will, were beginning to participate in things that he just, he just didn't want to participate in like alcohol and...

Jenni: Gosh, seventh grade.

Jody: Yeah. I mean it was really quite a thing. And so he came to me and he said, you know, "Mom, will you homeschool me?" And I remember this moment so much like it was yesterday, we were-- I was standing in my hallway and my Illinois home that my husband had built for us and was standing by the stairwell of the door going downstairs and I looked at him and, and I was panicked. I just remember feeling panicked and I said, you know, "Honey, um, okay. Let me

pray about that and maybe we'll make that decision next year." And he looked at me with those big chocolate brown eyes that he always had and melted my heart and he said, "Mom, why not now?" And I didn't have an answer. And, and I remember standing there feeling so convicted that I was pushing my kid off and I, I, you know how that God speaks to you in that still small voice and he said, "You tell him you'll pray about this." And I said, "You know what, Chase, I'm going to pray about that." And sure enough, God said, and so we did. And, um, it was probably, not probably, it was the very best thing that ever happened to our family. And, um, you know, and when I-- one of the things that is very interesting, I know that a lot of people struggle with, you know, "I'm not qualified." And I remember thinking to myself, I didn't have a college degree. I was what most would consider uneducated. And I'd had a little bit of college here and there and, but I didn't complete school and I felt inadequate, make no mistake. Um, but I'll tell you what, when God calls, God leads. And one thing, Jenni, that we often say is, we are not called to homeschool our kids. Our kids are called to be homeschooled. And when we know that that's true, there's always a way.

Jenni: Cause it's not about us anymore.

Jody: It's not about us. Absolutely not about us.

Jenni: My story was a little bit different-- a whole lot different. So my oldest child is autistic and, and he began full time, like all day, year round schooling when he was three. So, 12 months out of the year for the entire day, we would send them to school and, and we needed to, because his behavioral challenges were so difficult that we needed help. We knew we needed help and he needed help. He needed help that we couldn't provide. The school that he was in was phenomenal and they were so interactive. I got to go a few times a month and the, the school had, um, that two way mirror so I could come in without disturbing him and I could watch most of his day. And they were great about communication. We had a little composition book that went back and forth from school to home.

Jody: Like a code journal.

Jenni: Yeah, just-- code journalists. Something that, that we talk about a lot. It's something that we've done with our spouses. It's something we've done with our kids where we write back and forth to each other in a journal. It's really kind of fun, because with our kids, or in some of their spouses too, we hide it. I remember one time one of my sons wrote it, wrote me a little note and put it on the blade of our ceiling fan in the bedroom, and I got up...

Jody: Oh, no!

Jenni: To go to the bathroom, and I flicked the fan on and it went flying off the fan!

Jody: That would scare the tar out of you.

Jenni: But anyway, so the school would code journal back and forth with me every day. So they would tell me a little bit about his day. And then at night I would tell them about our night. And it really helped create continuity between the two environments. I mean we had shared language and...

Jody: A shared heart, too.

Jenni: We did. And we felt so connected. So, that was my experience with school and they loved my input and they wanted our input. They wanted-- they would, they would ask us questions about home and they wanted to know like what his favorite things were. And um, and then I go to put my daughter in school. Uh, she's a year and a half younger, but it was many years later, because he had started at three.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: And she of course started at five. So I'd had a few years under my belt of this experience and I don't think that it occurred to me that this was unique, because number one, he had special needs, but number two, because this was just an amazing school. It was a school specifically for kids on the autism spectrum. But when Sky was getting ready to go to school, we knew that we were not going to put her in public school, because we didn't want her learning things that were not true and that were contrary to the word of God. And we weren't really sure what kind of an influence she would have from her peers. So we put her in a private Christian school and right out of the gate I called and said, "When can I come observe?" And they were like, "What?!" You know...

Jody: "Who's the crazy mom that wants to come at school?!"

Jenni: And they were like, "Why?" And I was like, "Ah, that's what you do." And then I said, you know, "Well, so that we could have like the same vocabulary." And they thought, "Oh no!" And they were really, I could tell this was not going to, they thought I was coming into check on them and I just want it to be the same kind of team that I was with my son's school. Well, they weren't having it. So, finally, I convinced them to let me come but it already, things were a little shaky because of that and I noticed something. I noticed a couple of things: At home, Sky would had this really interesting coloring technique. She would color in her coloring book pages and everything would look like a rainbow. And it took her a lot of time and she was willing to spend the time on it. Then she started bringing these papers home and it would be like a big capital A that you're supposed to color in and it was like one red crayon scribbled like somebody had an accident or something!

Jody: Bloodshed on the paper.

Jenni: It was like a big scribble on the page, and I thought that she was bringing home someone else's stuff. So finally. I was like, "Sky, you keep-- what is this? Who's is this? You keep bringing somebody else's stuff?" And she's like, "No, that's fine." I was like, "You did this?" "Yeah." I said, "Honey, this doesn't look anything like what you do, what's going on?" "I don't know." So now, I really needed to see what was happening and as I was getting closer and closer to the time that I went to go visit her, another thing started happening. They had this system, I think a lot of schools use to use this. Maybe they still do, I don't know. It was this card system. You got a green card in the beginning of the day and then if you like misbehaved, you had to hand it in and they give you a yellow card and then if you misbehaved again, you got the dreaded red card and you had to go to the principal. And I noticed that she started bringing home yellow cards and I was like, "Uh,oh!"

Jody: And if you know Sky...

Jenni: Here's the thing about Sky. Sky is the kid who really wants to be obedient. She really does.

Jody: She does.

Jenni: She just can't always.

Jody: I know, bless her heart.

Jenni: So, um, I, when I went into observe, I figured out right away what was going on. They had them sitting, not at individual desks, it was kindergarten. They had them sitting at these tables of like six to eight kids.

Jody: Oh my goodness. I couldn't control myself in that environment.

Jenni: She was, like so over-stimulated and excited. She's super social and she likes to be the center of attention and she was just soaking in all of this excitement and all of this sensory input. There was like stations set up all around the room of fun stuff and she did not know where to look first. The last place she was gonna look was the teacher talking about the front of the room.

Jody: Oh, poor kid.

Jenni: And so I could see like there was just too much stimulation for her. Right? And plus, then they spent half the day pushing in their chairs in lining up. And I thought, this is how they're using their time? They're learning how to be, how to work in like a factory. Like, you know, "Everybody push your chair!" They have this like long cord with beads on it and you'd have to go hold onto your bead...

Jody: Oh, my goodness.

Jenni: ...and that's how you stood in line.

Jody: Wow.

Jenni: And then it was like, they wouldn't let her have a water bottle at the table and we were big on the water break. It wouldn't let her wash her hands before her meals. And she was freaked out. They were like, "No, we're just going to squirt a little hand sanitizer." She was like, "No! We wash our hands before we eat!" So, all the way around, this just wasn't going to work. And I thought, well if I can put her in public school and clearly private school's not working, I'm going to have to homeschool her. And I didn't really know what I was doing either. And then of course I made the mistake of like reading everything under the sun. So my poor child, I started out...

Jody: Guinea pig.

Jenni: I totally did what we tell people not to do. I brought school into my home. Homeschool does not mean bring school into my home. We did-- I'm talking like pledge of allegiance at the start of the day.

Jody: You did the weather thing too, which was kind of cool, but...

Jenni: It was kind of cool. We did that for years and years and years. We did the "What's The Weather" but, but no, we did like the whole, like we started the day with the pledge of allegiance and I had a blackboard and lessons and oh no, we did it all.

Jody: Well you came into it after I did, because when we first brought Chase home, nobody homeschooled around where we were at. And so I knew one family and they knew another family and they took me over to that family's house and they let me observe and they did all computer programs that switched on schoolhouse. And so I'm like, "That's what we'll do." It grades everything for you. He just sit there and do his little homework and we'll be done. And we homeschooling and oh my gosh, I'm surprised that kid didn't have like bloodshot eyes and brain overload. Right? And so that did not-- we chuck that thing right out the window, and then we got Bekka, which you need a stinking degree to run that program. And I was like, we are-- I can't do this like I can-- I cannot do this. And so he ended up with no curriculum.

Jenni: Yeah. Well that was sort of my story too because I was so overwhelmed by all the curriculum that I wanted all of it.

Jody: Cause we're like all or nothing girls.

Jenni: Yeah. So I was like, "Okay, we are going to do classical education and Charlotte Mason and the principal approach a little bit of textbook." I mean it was like...

Jody: By the way, you will know Latin by the time you're eight.

Jenni: Yeah, totally. And then I had poor Skyler, who honestly, I figured out, it took me about a year of torturing this child. Maybe not a whole year, but most of the year, I tortured her. And I remember one day just saying, "Skyler! Sit still and pay attention!" And she, you know, here's the thing, that poor girl, she really is obedient at heart and she'd be like, "Okay." And she would try-- and what I figured out, finally, I figured out was that Skyler Stahlmann is totally capable of sitting, of sitting still and she is totally capable of paying attention, but she cannot do them at the same time. It's one or the other. So once I figured that out, I thought, well, let's try a couple things. We got rid of the chair and I gave her a gymnastics ball.

Jody: Yeah, those are great.

Jenni: And she just like bounced her way through every lesson and it was awesome. She-- we would do out-loud reading and she would hang upside down and that was perfect. She did her math facts doing jumping jacks. The more that kid could move, the more she learned. And the more I let go of all of my ideas about what I wanted homeschooling to be and just started really focusing on what she needed it to be, the more she blossomed.

Jody: So I think, I think part of all of this as, as new homeschool moms too is, and I think it's important we talk about this is you know, you were new in your family and I was new in my family of being the first ones. We were pioneers of...

Jenni: We were also both new, new in our communities.

Jody: That-- right.

Jenni: But I also knew one of their families.

Jody: Right. And so we were bombarded and put-down and persecuted really for homeschooling. I had...

Jenni: We didn't go out during the day. You stayed in the house during the day.

Jody: No, but even, even like within our family I had, I had one, well when I went to pull Chase out of school, I went to, it was a, you're talking, we were at a small-- We lived in a small town. 60 to 80 kids in a graduating class. So when I pulled Chase out of school, the principal of that school I went to high school with!

Jenni: Wow.

Jody: We were friends. And so I'm thinking he's going to totally, he knows me. He knows that like, you know, I'm going to do what's best for my kid. And it's not about him personally. And I went into that office and I said, I won't say his name, John Smith. Um, you know, I explained to him and I said, has nothing to do with your education system. It has nothing to do with anything really at the school. This is about my child and what's best for my kid. My kid needs to be home, and I know what he needs right now. And he looked at me, I'll never forget this, I was walking down the office and he was mad, very angry. Chase was honor-roll student, a great athlete, super popular, great kid, right? Very well-behaved. And I was taking him

Jenni: From their school.

Jody: Uh huh. And as I walked out and he looked at me and he said, "Well, I won't tell you, 'I told you so' when you fall flat on your face," and I will never forget those words because it was so beyond...I was broken. You know, that it really, part of me was angry, but the other part of me was terrified. And then I go home to hear one family friend who is a teacher who was like, "Who do you think you are? Who, what do you think makes you qualified? You think you're more qualified than I am to teach your kid?" And I had another family member say, "Well, you're gonna ruin him. He's going to hate you." And those words are hard. And I know a lot of people hear that, hear those types of things.

Jenni: And I think a lot of people, it turns a lot of people's decisions in another direction.

Jody: It does, sadly.

Jenni: Yeah. Well let's fast forward because let's talk about how you fell flat on your face and how much your child hates you. Tell us where that boy is right now.

Jody: That boy now has since got, he earned a -- in Florida we have what's called the Bright Futures Scholarship. So he got an academic scholarship for undergrad.

Jenni: So he had all of his undergraduate school paid for in full.

Jody: Yep. And um, was an ambassador for that university and is still connected to them in, in certain ways. He went on from there to law school and had uh, obviously passed his bar first go around, which is from what

Jenni: A deal it is.

Jody: Yeah. I didn't really know that at the time if I'm being really honest, but then I found out later it is really is a big deal. So yay! He was also, this was, this was super exciting. The first L1

Jenni: So -- the first year law school student.

Jody: Yep. To be president of the Student Bar Association at his school, which is a really big deal.

Jenni: It's a big deal.

Jody: Yeah. Um, he now works for a -- a non a nonprofit coalition who they bring awareness in regards to the federal budget and spending and he will be this year interviewing all of the presidential candidates

Jenni: on his weekly radio show

Jody: He has a newspaper column as well. And he also is, I feel like such a bragging mom right now. He also is an adjunct professor at the law school that he graduated from.

Jenni: So you're not a bragging mom. What you're doing, Jody, is you're telling the listeners, you're giving them hope. This is a boy who asked to be homeschooled, um, by a mom who had no idea what to do, terrified who chucked the first few curriculum that she purchased. And, and you really did wing it.

Jody: Yeah. We did.

Jenni: I mean all the way through with Chase, you really did wing it. But what you didn't realize is those were the seeds for you of what we now call C2C education because this, this really works and it can really bring tremendous results. So in our camp, our little wiggly girl who couldn't sit still, who kept getting her card turned in...

Jody: Poor thing.

Jenni: ...yellow graduated in 2017 she graduated from homeschool in 2017. She graduated with 63 college credits and a 4.0 GPA. She was accepted into Berklee College of music in Boston, which is the only contemporary conservatory in the world. And it is a very competitive school as a whole. But the program that she applied to is extremely competitive. So the overall acceptance rate is about 32%. It fluctuates a point or two each year, but her in the year that she was accepted her program, which at the time was the vocal performance female vocal performance program had a 9% acceptance rate. And so she was accepted. Um, she pretty much had her first year taken care of because they took some of those 63 college credits. She tested out of some of her introductory classes and um, and now she is set to graduate next year. Um, so, uh, in May of 2020, she'll graduate, so she will have been there for three years.

Jody: That's not all.

New Speaker: That's not all. And in her final year, this school started a new program called the Thrive Scholarship where they, um, they look at the student body and they, um, determine, uh, just a small handful of students that they feel are the most likely to succeed. And they picked, Skyler Stahlmann as one of them.

Jody: So exciting.

Jenni: And they paid for her entire final year. So over \$50,000 she was awarded in scholarship money.

Jody: Well, and not only that, she is, has her own company.

Jenni: She is the CEO of a company that, um, Berklee is very much behind. Um, in fact, someone made a statement and they said, Harvard has Facebook and we're going to have Harmonet, which is Skyler's company Harmonet

Jody: So exciting. Well, and she just got chosen for the Beantown.

Jenni: Yeah, the Beantown Throwdown. So there's a, there's an annual competition in Boston where 11 of the best schools, and when we say best schools, we're don't just mean in Boston. We're talking Harvard, MIT, Tufts, Brandeis. I mean, some of the best schools in the country, 11 of them come together. Berklee's, one of them. And they um they put, each school has one student company to represent their school.

Jody: They have to be chosen

New Speaker: They have to be chosen by the school to represent them in the Beantown Throwdown. And those 11 companies -- do a presentation in front of 120 investors, and there's some really great, um, awards that they can win and prizes that they can win. Uh, so, so Harmonet, her company, was chosen to represent Berklee, which is a really big deal. And that will happen in November.

Jody: Did you, I don't know if you mentioned this and maybe I missed it, if you did the Thrive Scholarship, how you get chosen for that is, is really what they're saying is you're the most likely to succeed.

Jenni: Yeah. Yeah. It was really, it was really quite a blessing and mind boggling. But I think the reason that all happened, I mean in her first semester she took a very, became very a vocal about an issue that was happening at the school and um, actually became a spokesperson in a sense for it and was on many of the news channels there.

Jody: And because of that, the Washington Post contacted her and asked her to write an article about what was going on at Berklee, which she did. And she got an opportunity to work with the administration on helping to rewrite some of their hiring practices. So right out of the gate she was identified as somebody who really, um, you know, was a cut above. And I don't say that in a bragging way. Here's what I want to say. First and foremost, our kids are supposed to be the best and the brightest.

Jody: That's right

Jenni: Why? Because they represent Christ. They are here to represent the Kingdom of God. He is the creator of the universe. Our kids have that Creator living in them if they have a relationship with Him, and because of that, number one, they should be incredibly creative.

Jody: Yeah.

Jenni: Number two, they should be people of excellence. They should, they should have the favor of God upon their lives. They should have, um, they should have a position of influence because we want our kids to make an impact in their generation.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: And that's really what Cradle to Calling education is about. Jody, when Chase was about 12 years old, he had an epiphany. Now it came and we're going to talk a little bit about, and later on the show, we're going to talk a little bit about how that process evolved. Because it's the same for most kids. Even if their, if their field is different, the process is the same.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: But he became aware that he had a love for politics and then he spent a lot of time as a student really developing that, that love and he took the love him and evolved or grew it into a passion. And how did he do that? He went to TeenPact.com. Listen, if you're listening to this and you're not familiar with TeenPact, go to TeenPact.com and check them out. We'll link to that in the show notes too. It's an incredible organization for homeschoolers and it's a Christ centered organization about government. Um, he did speech and debate, which made him a sharp thinker, which made him

Jody: A hard worker.

Jenni: A hard worker, passionate, passionate about what he was doing and a great speaker. All necessary for what he was doing. He also had his own, um, business all through high school and college that, uh, really provided a substantial income for him. And that was a gold star on his resume, literally all the way through college, law school, and even after law school, people really found that to be important and impressive.

Jody: Well cause it's not common. And I think that's part of, of the homeschooling story that we should all have is our kids are not average, and they're not common. Well, we're part of the Kingdom of God and they're supposed to take these mountains for the kingdom.

Jenni: So what you, for those who are listening and aren't familiar, there's this philosophy that there are seven mountains or spheres that influence a culture. Now, let's see if I can remember him. Ready. Oh my God. Government, education, religion, media, media, celebration, which would be like arts and entertainment. Um, family and education. Did, I said education.

Jody: You said education. It's not health.

Jenni: Government, education. Business.

Jody: Business.

Jenni: Okay. Yep.

Jody: Good job. Good. And pulled that right out, Girlfriend.

Jenni: Well our kids are going to be called to one of those mountains

Jody: Right.

Jenni: Right. And we want our kids to take that mountain for the Kingdom of God.

Jody: Yeah.

Jenni: These are, these are big assignments that they have in their lives because they are the laborers of the harvest.

Jody: Right.

New Speaker: You know, we're supposed to be, the word says that we should pray for laborers. And not only are we praying, we're praying for the people that we're raising up to be the laborers.

Jody: That's right.

Jenni: Right, and that's to C2C education is all about.

Jody: So when it comes to C2C, you've already kind of hit on it. Let's talk about what, what our mission is. Our mission is to really help families, specially tailor each child's education to their own unique calling because they'll have one.

Jenni: That's right.

Jody: We all have one.

Jenni: That's right.

Jody: And C2C is built on a strong foundation of what we call the Four Essentials. And we believe that these Essentials really undergird the actual homeschooling method. And without these, these systems just crumble. We have to have these four things.

Jenni: So the here are the four things. The first one is we have to be able to hear God. We have to and our kids have to be able to hear God because he's the only one who knows the end from the beginning. And he's the only one that knows what curriculum really is best. We can have all the different ideas that we have. We can go to conventions, which we do encourage you to do. And we can hear and get fired up about all these different things, but at the end of the day, only God knows.

Jody: Or it's in vain.

Jenni: And I'm going to tell you something. It may look very different than what you thought. We only told you about two of our kids. We have 10 all together and we've got amazing success stories and huge epic failures.

Jody: That's right.

Jenni: In the midst of the process

Jody: That's right

Jenni: Really, really big -- we have big wins and big losses throughout our journey as does everybody who pulls for any length of time. But I'll tell you this, it was God who told us that Sky was supposed to go to Berklee. That was a scary decision.

Jody: Yeah.

Jenni: That is not a Christian school.

Jody: Well, you know what, you said have said this a lot and it's so true. But when our kids go into military, they want to go and decide when to go in the military. Everybody gathers together and they pray for their safety and they really like undergird and lift you up, lift the parents up in arms and we're going to pray for your kid. But they're not so much. That doesn't happen so much when your kids call to the secular world to a secular call, and right now Sky's called into the secular school and the secular music industry, and we as parents should be gathering together. We are in our group, but as a church we should say, you know what, that child is called there, and we should be standing in the gap and praying and lifting her up. We have all the attacks of the enemy.

Jenni: Yeah, because the kid who's at the front lines in Afghanistan has the could lose his life.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: The girl who's called to the secular music industry could lose her soul.

Jody: That's right.

Jenni: I mean this is, the stakes are really high, and we're not at all, this is a sober job won't have here.

Jody: You know, it really is. I, I mean I see it with my son. You know, Chase is in politics. I mean, Oh my word, you know,

Jenni: It's scary.

Jody: It's very scary. All this different stuff is coming at him all the time, and all we can do is parents. The most we can do is pray.

Jenni: The most important thing we can do is pray, and we have to be really hear God.

Jody: Oh yeah.

Jenni: Jody, all along the way. You know, God directed you to mentors for your children. God directed you to certain programs for your kids. And the same is true for our family. Um, I have one son who wants to be a military psychiatrist and he, the undergraduate school he wants to go to. Um, for him it was really important that he found a school that for the most part had the same political leaning that he does cause he's got some very strong political views.

Jody: He cannot handle any kind of opposition in that way.

Jenni: No, he's not...

Jody: Oh, it enrages him.

Jenni: I'm just going to come out and say he cannot go to a really liberal school. So I had to find a fairly conservative school. So we picked Texas A & M, but God knows when we are praying and we can hear God, he knows. So we were just doing some research and we found out that Texas, my son wants to specialize in PTSD and suicide prevention in the military. So I was looking through Texas A & M's website and I found out that one of their psychology professors is doing an extensive research project on some alternative means of treatment for PTSD.

Jody: It's so cool how God knew that he was leaning this way, lean this way, lean this way.

Jenni: And I've got it all worked out. I know what's gonna happen here. So, um, so we have to be able to hear God and we have to teach our children how to hear God because ultimately at the end of the day when they're at a certain age, we're going to find out they know God no longer talks to us. He talks to them. That's a that was a little hard for me.

Jody: No it was hard

Jenni: I was like, wait a minute. No, no, no. Tell me. And He's like, no, no. I'm going to tell her. I tell him. Right. Okay. The second foundation or the second essential here is that we elevate relationships. Relationships have to trump everything else. And it has to start with the relationships in our household. Homeschooling is an extension of parenting.

Jody: Yes.

Jenni: So parenting is really important. Third, we have to train their character and their constitution. So let me quickly define these in the C2C way. When we say character, we're talking about their, the sum of their moral and ethical traits. When we say constitution, we're talking about the sum of the traits that lead to success, right?

Jody: Yup.

Jenni: And then last of all, we have to be willing to develop passion and purpose. Now C2C is ultimately a goal driven method. It is homeschooling with the end result in mind. And we believe that there's three general phases. The first phase is to discover their interests. Interests cannot be brainstormed. You can't Google an interest. Interests have to come from experience. So our job as homeschool

parents at first is to give them a wide range of experiences. The next step is to develop passion. Now, passion is not something that you magically stumble upon. You don't just like I found my passion. It is something that you have to develop with time and attention. It takes perseverance and it has to start with something that they're truly interested in, right? And then once you've got that, those flames of passion really fanned and burning bright, then you can use that to create a strategy. Now in the homeschool realm, we think that this breaks down into three general phases. So phase one, discover interest. Phase two, develop passion. And phase three is to create strategy. But when you're talking about this in terms of, um, an entire schooling education, ideally you want to, to find interest in the elementary school years. You want to develop passion in the middle school years and create a strategy in the high school years, right? The thing is if you come into this in middle school, you still have to start with -- you have to start back at interest.

Jody: You don't get to cut out phase one.

Jenni: No probable not going to take as long. You know, it's not going to be all the years you would have spent in that. You're going to have to speed up the process a little bit, but you still have to start with the interest, develop that into a passion, and then create a strategy. And you know, here's what happens. At the end of the day, if you're starting this in 10th grade, chances are if you're really going to, if you're really going to teach them to their calling, they're going to take a longer route.

Jody: Yeah

Jenni: And that's fine.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: How many people figure that out when they're 40 right? I mean, we can really, really shorten the learning curve on this. They don't have to be 40.

Jody: Well, we say college is a very expensive way in a way, and

Jenni: time consuming

Jody: To find yourself.

Jenni: Yeah, let's not, let's not consider college 13th grade. Not every kid needs college.

Jody: Right. Right. Right.

Jenni: And if they do, we want to find the best college for what they need. And then we also acknowledge that there's something that we call the -- so these are phases, phase one, phase two, phase three. But we also have the pre-phase and the pre-phase starts at birth. Or maybe before. By the way, check out our vlog from this week where we talk about the before birth experience of learning. Go to fromcradletocalling.com and click on the link for Vlog and watch that one. That's pretty interesting.

Jody: That's a good one. That's a good one.

Jenni: So we have, um, we've, we have seven core principles of the C2C education and we're not going to go too far into them because you know this is one podcast.

Jody: Yes. It's already a little lengthy.

Jenni: So it's a long one yet normally our podcast won't be this long, but um, but we want to just give you an overview of each of them quickly. Uh, and then throughout the course of this podcast, our goal is to really give you some, some how to some specifics, some nuggets we want to hear from experts in the industry.

Jody: Yeah.

Jenni: Jody, you and I will always talk at least once a month, just the two of us.

Jody: Cause we like to talk.

Jenni: Yeah, we have good conversation, which is fun for us, but we're also going to talk to lots of great, in fact, in the rest of this month we're going to be talking about reading and we are going to hear from some real powerhouse speakers in the homeschool community. We're not going to tell you who they are, but we've already done the interviews and they're really exciting. Stay tuned. They're really good. Yeah. Okay. So principle number one, we start with the end result in mind. That means every kid has a calling. Our kids are not an extension of us. They are their own people and their calling is uniquely their own. And it doesn't matter what we want them to be.

Jody: Oh goodness. You're going to hear us say this a lot.

Jenni: We say that a lot. Our kids are not an extension of us. I grew up in a Jewish community. I was raised Jewish and um, I had one friend that I connected with on Facebook. You know how you did back in like the mid to late two thousands you found all the people from high school you hadn't talked to in like 20 years. Right? And so I said, you know, oh, what are you doing? He said, I'm a lawyer. He said, well, you know, I had three choices. I could be a doctor, an accountant, or a lawyer. You said, I'm squeamish. I don't really like numbers. So I only had one choice. But that really is kind of a little bit what a lot of parents think that way. You're going to be what I want you to be.

Jody: Right. Right. Yeah, we don't want to be that.

Jenni: They have to be what God wants them to be.

Jody: So you know that that first core principle, we start with the end result in mind. So in everything we do, we ask what's the end result? What is the end result?

Jenni: Yeah, we want to get some bracelets printed out.

Jody: We do!

Jenni: That says what's the end result? So because it's not just an homeschooling, it's like in parenting, you know, like cause...

Jody: In your conversation that you're having with your kid.

Jenni: Because homeschooling is an extension of parenting.

Jody: That's right.

Jenni: You're having a conversation with your kid or you have to confront their behavior about something. Stop and ask yourself, what is the end result? What do I want to come out of this? And if I march in there and yell my head off, am I going to get the end result I want.

Jody: So and number two, we do everything with the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit. We have to have the holy spirit involved because man, otherwise I am just acting out of my flesh.

Jenni: Yup.

Jody: Cause I can do that. The ability we need to, the ability to hear God's voice. It's a promise, right?

Jenni: Yeah, it's a promise.

Jody: And we grow our own ability to hear God. We have to constantly be growing in our relationship with God. And we train our kids to hear God.

Jenni: Yep. Um, we are homeschooling again, as we said, as an extension of parenting. That's the third principle. Our relationship with our kids trumps almost everything. The only thing that trumps, that is our relationship with God.

Jody: Yeah.

Jenni: But other than that, our relationship with our children, it's more important than getting through the curriculum. It's more important than, you know, getting to co-op on time. Our relationship is not that we're telling you to not be on time. We are people of excellence. But our relationship -- we are their coaches and their mentors, not their judges and their jailers. We parent with an empowerment mindset, not a punitive mindset. In fact, Jody, we have a whole section in the manual that we have coming out -- Um, the to C2C homeschool manual -- we have a whole section on Empowerment Parenting. And when a child makes mistakes, our first thought is, okay, so what need was he trying to meet when he made that mistake? What's the root problem and how can we help him solve this problem and meet his need in a healthier and a more appropriate way?

Jody: And number four is we are all raising leaders. Now, Tim Elmore has a great definition, and he says that a leader is a person who solves problems and serves people. And we really feel like there's an addition to that. And that's also that they are there as an influencer, um, to their generation.

Jenni: They inspire greatness in people.

Jody: Yeah. You know, they pull out the leadership and other people, uh, we want them to be community minded. We want them, they know how that they know

how to identify problems and also find solutions. We can all see a problem, but are we part of the solution? And that they are people of excellence who love people.

New Speaker: Yeah. I remember Jody when your second child, Lexi was a teenager. We were visiting. We had to drop something off. We were visiting a housing complex for our, um, for people, men and women who, um, were transitioning out of a longterm drug and alcohol rehab program. And they had children there, and she saw these little kids and it was really, and it was situated in a pretty bad neighborhood. So like they couldn't ride their bike around the neighborhood, and there was no place for the little kids to play. And so, um, we were, she saw that and it broke her heart, and she saw this little empty plot of land in the back and she went to the, the church that ran this program and said, "You know, could I put together a team of people to build a playground for the kids?" And she did. She worked with the church leadership. She worked with, um, the

Jody: A contractor.

Jenni: The county government. She worked with a contractor and she had a playground built with, um, a little track around it for the moms and a bench for the moms to sit on as well. So we, that's, you know, that's, that's great example of leadership. We're also raising self learners. First of all, we had to say children are not containers that we pour information into. We'd like to think of them more as like hunter/gatherers of learning. Um, we also believe in the sense there are no teachers other than the students who are student teachers themselves. We can inspire them, we can mentor them, we can hold them accountable, we can help give them feedback. But ultimately they have to teach themselves. Cause if you have 10 people sitting in a room and you teach the same thing to 10 people, they receive it in 10 different ways.

Jody: Some may not receive it all.

Jenni: Um, self learners are curious. They ask questions, they learn in sort of a Socratic method by asking questions. Their curiosity drives them to learn. But also to find new information and new solutions. You can use textbooks, but the textbook or the curriculum should be a guide and not the goal of the education.

Jody: Right. So the number six core principle is we are raising people of passion and purpose. Oh my goodness. You're going to hear us repeat ourselves so many times about this. And like we said earlier, it's we want to raise people who find their interests, they develop passion and they create a strategy. And we're not talking about well-rounded kids. We're talking about developing a well-lopsided, T-shaped kid. So you go deep in that and that core interest, but you've got all these complimentary things as the top of the T, if you will, where there it's a little shallower.

Jenni: So a lot of depth in one area and a short breath and other areas. That's funny because um well rounded is a myth. It really is. And now in fact when we talk to universities, which we talked to college admissions officers, literally on a weekly basis, we talked to different college admissions officers and over and over we hear them saying, "Well, you know, we just want someone who's well rounded," and as soon as we did, we say, "Okay, so do you mean like, like they've done a little bit of sports and they've done like maybe student

government and they've done some scouts?" Every single time. They're like, "Well, no." And when we dig deeper, here's what we find out. They don't want well rounded kids. They want, as you said, Jody, well lopsided kids.

Jody: Right. Right.

Jenni: Yeah. We actually took that term from U.S. News and World Report. But honestly what it means is that they're specialists in a specific area. Yeah. And the last and final principle is that we are training the kind of character and constitution that supports leadership and supports success. We want kids who are courageous and wise. We want kids who are empathetic and who are optimistic. And I mean we're just grazing over a few of the characteristics. You want them to have grit and stamina. We want them to be people of excellence. We want them to have a high emotional IQ.

Jody: Growth mindset.

Jenni: Yes, a growth mindset as opposed to a fixed mindset. Right?

Jody: And these are all things we, we cover deeply in our podcasts.

Jenni: So here's, so we're going to wrap up here. Thank you so much for listening if you've stuck with us through all of this, but here's what we want to promise to you, not just in our podcast. Head over to fromcradletocalling.com because every week we've got two blogs for you. We've got this podcast, we've got two very short, about two minutes or so each vlogs with a hot tip where you can see two old ladies trying to be relevant.

Jody: Stop saying I'm old.

Jenni: Listen, with age comes wisdom.

Jody: Oh my goodness.

Jenni: You're very wise. Sage is that we -- sagacious...

Jody: We're Sherpas, we are Sherpas.

Jenni: We are the Sherpas.

Jody: Yep.

Jenni: Um, okay. And we...also go to Instagram at [cradle underscore](https://www.instagram.com/cradle_underscore) the number two underscore calling ([@Cradle_2_Calling](https://www.instagram.com/Cradle_2_Calling)). Um, because there we'll have some cute posts for you. Um, pictures. I, we're really new to all this. You just gotta bear with us, and listen, if you're good at this, please reach out and say, "Girls, let me give you some advice."

Jody: Okay. But we are having fun with it. I'm going to say.

Jenni: We are having fun.

Jody: Yeah. We are having fun.

Jenni: It's very different than radio and newspaper, which is what we've been doing for so long.

Jody: But we are teachable and we love to hear.. be nice you know. Be nice, okay. I'm just gonna say be nice.

Jenni: Yeah, we can cry too. You know, don't hurt our feelings.

Jody: No.

Jenni: But at the same time...

Jody: Be honest.

Jenni: Be Honest. Gently honest. Um, and, and also on Facebook now on Facebook, there's a couple of exciting things. First, just go to our regular Facebook page, which is "From Cradle to Calling." But if you want to hang out with us and chat with us and really connect with us, come into the "Homeschooling From Cradle to Calling" group. Just search on that search on "homeschooling from cradle to calling" in Facebook and request to join the group. In there, we talk about this philosophy. We ask questions. We're pretty active, a few times a day, so you can really, uh, give us your feedback. Give us your ideas, tell us what's working with for you, what's not. Ask us what's worked for us. That's where you can really meet with us and hang out with us. And of course, every Saturday morning on our website and then on all of the major platforms that we know how to access in our techno, noobiness.

Jody: Yep.

Jenni: Um, you can find our podcasts. Thanks for listening.