

The Goals of the High School Years *C2C Podcast Episode #19*



- Jody: In this episode, we are turning our attention to the high school years. If you follow the C2C approach since elementary, then by high school, your homeschooler has discovered her interests and developed at least one of those interests into a passion. Now in the high school years, it's time to create a strategy for helping her become the very best candidate for her unique next step, the step that immediately follows high school. In today's podcast, Jenni and I are going to talk about just how to do that.
- Jenni: So before we do, I just want to remind anyone listening today that we also have a Facebook group. And in that group we talk, um, we have lots of discussions. We answer questions. We ask some questions sometimes, and every week we do a Facebook Live video on a different topic. And those topics tend to be a little more specific. Like I know, um, we did one on a fun way to study 50 States for elementary school students. And we did one on how to help your kids start a business. And....
- Jody: We even gave an e-book away on that one.
- Jenni: We did. That's right. So you can always go back and watch any of those that're archived in the Facebook group. But the Facebook group is called Homeschooling from Cradle to Calling. And if you just go on to Facebook and search that, you'll find that, and then just request to join the group and we'll let you in.
- Jody: All right. So fun.
- Jenni: So we are talking about the goals of the high school years, and this has been, I guess, a little bit of a series that we've been doing. We started with elementary and we did a whole show on the goals of the elementary years and some new boxes to check off in that season of education. Jody, you and I tend to do things more in these big groupings, like elementary, middle, high school. And then we did an episode just on middle school. Today, we're doing a high school. And actually the next one we're going to do is all about the years leading up to official homeschooling. We're going to talk about preschool.
- Jody: Yes.
- Jenni: So let's talk about high schoolers. By the way, can I just say? The high schoolers are my favorite.
- Jody: Yes, they are.

Jenni: I really do have a heart for families who are struggling with angsty teen years. And I know that the teen years are not without their struggles, but honestly, every season of childhood is not without their struggles. I mean...

Jody: No, I'm struggling with the angsty "threenager" years.

Jenni: Yeah. Well, there's the toddlers wiping their hands all over everything. And then there are the, um, then there's like the eight-year-old years who ask like 75,000 questions - and I - that age wears me out. When they just want to talk to you about something really difficult for you to listen to, not difficult 'cause it's challenging, just you know, they have a million questions or they just - It's just - every season has its challenges. Right?

Jody: I'm in the "why" season.

Jenni: With a three-year-old.

Jody: Oh my goodness. Everything is "why." Everything. It could be, "Let's go potty before we nap." "Why?" I'm like, "Oh no. Uh-uh." But you know you have to give an answer. Right? You can't just be like, "BECAUSE I SAID SO!!!" It's like, "Well, because we don't want you to wet the bed."

Jenni: Right. "Well, we want to get all that pee-pee out so you can have a nice, happy sleep."

Jody: And I took your little spiel on, "Okay, get the last drop!"

Jenni: Yeah. "Let's just get the last drop."

Jody: 'Cause I always get the, "I don't have to go."

Jenni: "I just went." Um, so the teen years I find, although yes, you can have, you know, an angsty moment. I remember with my boys, I remember them coming to me and saying that they felt angry, like unexplainably. Like, inexplicably and angry. And I...

Jody: I have that problem.

Jenni: There's always an explanation for my anger. It can be pretty out of control, but...

Jody: "I just feel mad!"

Jenni: I don't typically just feel mad for no reason.

Jody: No, me either.

Jenni: But the high schoolers can, they're going through some hormonal shifts and um, but I, on the whole, Jo, I know you and I have both felt and let's see - between the two of us, how many teenagers have we personally been through in our own families? I've got five, three, so eight teenagers? And I have got to tell you...

Jody: Well plus, plus my half that, I mean, I've had him...

Jenni: Oh, your...

Jody: ...that kind of- Mm-hmm.

Jenni: So this is your soon-to-be son-in-law who's been in your family for many years. I know. Well, my soon-to-be daughter-in-law has been a part of our family for five years.

Jody: You've got to, kind of count her too, because we had to....

Jenni: So that would make it ten.

Jody: I actually had to deal with anger with him, like we had a whole.... Yeah.

Jenni: In the teen years. So, between the two of our families, I guess we could say, then we've had 10 teenagers, that we've had to - but it's different with the additions, because we did not parent them all the way through.

Jody: It's much different.

Jenni: So let's just talk about our eight that we've had come all the way through. And I have to tell you...

Jody: We've got plenty to talk about right there.

Jenni: And I have to say, I don't fully, I can't fully wrap my mind around the sentiment that these years are terrible it's sort of this public, um, opinion that teenagers are awful. And I....

Jody: They're just - they're the reward.

Jenni: That's what I've said. I said, all through my parenting, I feel that teenagers are a reward for years of great parenting. It really is, because first of all, they're highly capable.

Jody: Oh yeah.

Jenni: They can run the household.

Jody: And they're stronger. They have more energy than I ever thought of having.

Jenni: They have amazing mental acuity. They can think quickly, they're witty...

Jody: Super creative.

Jenni: They're - yeah, and then...

Jody: They're super fun. They make me laugh like nobody's business.

Jenni: There's so much fun. And you know what else they do for a short period of time? They make you cool for a short season.

Jody: I know.

Jenni: So you're out of that season now, because now your

Jody: I know!

Jenni: Your youngest is in her twenties. So she's not cool anymore. I forget what it was. Something came up the other day and like, you didn't know what it was. I was like, "Oh, you don't have teenagers anymore."

Jody: I was mad. I'm like, "Urrgh, I'm not cool anymore."

Jenni: Right, so for a short season, you get to know, like, what the lingo is, what the cool shows are, the music, like, you get to - 'cause you get a little glimpse at pop culture through the eyes of your teenager. And um, so all that to say, I love the high school years. This is my absolute favorite time in all of parenting. Honestly, this is my favorite.

Jody: It's super sad when you - like, I've come to the end of mine. I'm super sad.

Jenni: Well, you get to start over with Ari, who's your grand baby.

Jody: Well, we've got a long time.

Jenni: I know it's a long way from 3.

Jody: 10 years. I have 10 years. I have a decade before I become cool again. I'm in the uncool club.

Jenni: You get to be vicariously cool through - we have a teenager now who just turned 14 and - I know, she's been - she was always the baby. So it's a little bit...

Jody: She's my favorite.

Jenni: It's a little bit, um, ethereal. I feel a little, uh, I don't know. It's like "The Twilight Zone," or something.

Jody: Okay. So I'm just going to talk about the experience we had last night. So we had an experience where two of the Stahlmann kids got up on the stage. I have to tell you, I watched them sing this operatic song that blew my mind. I was so sucked in that I was teared up and lost in the moment. And I'm watching this little Edie-B stand up there, that's what we call Eden, stand up there and belt out this opera. And I was like, "WHAT?!" and Samuel who directed and produced and....

Jenni: And we're going to talk about that.

Jody: ...funded this whole thing. I was blown away. I was so blown away that, like, I couldn't talk to anybody else. I'm like, "No, I have to process this and unpack it a little bit because that little Edie-B and that little Samuel Stahlmann, they babysit the three-year-old and they do all kinds of stuff for us. But to see them like that...

Jenni: I know. And that's really what we're going to talk - we're going to really dive into that today.

Jody: Most adults couldn't do what they did. And I don't mean the gift of the song. I'm talking about putting together the production that they put together. It blew my mind.

Jenni: And we'll talk about how that all came to be and how our kids can become truly an expert in their field in high school and how the high school years can be harnessed for really powerful results. We're...

Jody: Well, let's talk about it. This is so good.

Jenni: We're gonna- Yeah, this is so much fun. So, um, but what was weird about that whole thing, Jo, is that Edie was always the baby.

Jody: Yeah.

Jenni: She was the little...

Jody: She still is when she walks in this room. Where I'm like, "Oh, the Edie-B."

Jenni: She's a little bit - she's not.

Jody: Okay, well, let me tell you. Every time, in my household, we call her Edie-B. That's like our little nickname for her.

Jenni: But her middle name does not start with a B.

Jody: No, but we just - it just goes well. And whenever her name gets brought up in my household, nobody can say her name without going, "Awww..."

Jenni: I know. I know, she has that effect on people.

Jody: She does.

Jenni: She's always been sort of the quiet Stahlmann. Stahlmanns are not quiet, typically.

Jody: And she's sweet.

Jenni: But she's the quiet Stahlmann. She's sweet. She's so laid back and easy going. And...

Jody: She, my favorite.

Jenni: ...she's kind and...

Jody: I say that about all of them at some point or another, and I'm like, "Well, that one's my favorite."

Jenni: I feel that way sometimes, too. Like I - with all my kids, with seven kids, I go through seasons. I have a season where I'm like...

Jody: Let's not talk about the seasons.

Jenni: And then I have seasons where I have one kid who is NOT my favorite.

Jody: "I'm gonna kill this one. Just kidding. Just kidding."

Jenni: And we do say this right to them, too. 'Cause we love them. And we're honest. Alright, so let's talk about the goals of the high school years as homeschoolers. So first and foremost, Jo, we really feel strongly that the number one goal of the high school season is for our children to define success for themselves. They have to decide what success looks like, so that they have a target to aim for. Right? Because you know, we've heard all the little colloquialisms, right? Like, you know, if you don't have a plan...

Jody: You don't know where you're going.

Jenni: ...you don't know where you're going. If you don't have a plan, you'll get there every time.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: You don't have a goal you'll hit it every time.

Jody: Or you don't know when you get there or - all of them.

Jenni: Yeah. I mean, it's just basically, got to know where you're headed in order to make a plan to get there. And that really means for them defining what success looks like, and they need coaching in this. They need somebody to walk them through the process of deciding, um, do you feel like your life as an adult will be successful if you do not have a family? Is that super important to you? Um, is it important to you to travel and see the world? Is it important to you to, um, you know, have a career of some sort? Let's talk to them about what adulthood looks like in their mind's eye. And then, um, talk about a plan to get there.

Jody: These questions are super, super important. I can remember a couple of our kids sitting down just really having it concrete in their mind. "This is what I want to do." And then when you start asking those questions, I had one breakdown in tears going, "But I can't do that, but I want to be a mom, too. And I want to have a family and I can't do this career," because there are some careers you just can't.

Jenni: Well, I have an extended family member who is, um, an FBI agent. I've talked about that on the show before. And he is, um, in his late, late thirties, now, he's not married and we've discussed this. And he has said in his line of work, he cannot comfortably have a family, at this point in his life, because he sometimes has to leave at a moment's notice. He has to go to other countries. He's in very dangerous situations. It's what he wanted. It's what he signed up for. But he also doesn't want to abandon a wife and children, um, in the midst of those responsibilities and duties. So these are all things that are really important to discuss with our kids.

Jody: Well, and other things to think about, too, you mentioned, you know, like, where do you want to live? And so, I mean, there are certain things you cannot do in certain parts of the country or the world and those are important.

Jenni: And certain jobs, you have to be willing to be flexible. So if you want to - if you've got somebody who wants to be a pastor, you're probably going to have to be flexible about where you live, because you're going to go where there's a

need and you're probably going to move around. Are you comfortable with that? Are you a person who hates change? Or are you a person, like me, who loves change and craves change and diversity? "I want an adventure."

Jody: Right. Just don't take me out of Florida.

Jenni: Yeah, no, I'd never. Never - never north of Tampa.

Jody: No. No. No.

Jenni: Unless it's called Hawaii and then I might never come back.

Jody: Let's talk about strategy.

Jenni: So after we've defined success, now we have to create a strategy for becoming that successful adult that they have envisioned and pictured. Um, and that'll be pretty much what we talk about through most of the show, but another goal is - so that's a whole thing in and of itself creating a strategy. Another goal is to then become the best candidate for the next step on their path. And we'll talk about how to figure out what that step looks like, um, in today's episode. Um, another goal, and this is super important and one that I think is so often missed, but for a high school student, they have got to learn how to make, manage and grow money.

Jody: It's super funny to me because, um, "funny" in like "strange" in the fact that money is the one consistent thing you are going to need throughout your life. And yet we don't focus on it. And actually we lie to ourselves and say, "Well, we can't focus on the money." Well, okay. You kind of have to live and you need food and shelter. So that might be an important key.

Jenni: And some people want a lot more than food and shelter.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: And they're going to need money. And also what if your kid - it's almost like, especially in the Christian world, it almost feels like it's - people feel like it's sinful to talk about, um, teaching our kids how to create money, how to create an income, how to market themselves, all of this feels so worldly.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: But it's a reality. You know, if your kids want to build an orphanage, they're going to need to know how to make money to do that.

Jody: Well, I remember every one of my kids, I have asked multiple times as they were, you know, trying to figure this stuff out was I would say, "What kind of lifestyle do you want? Like, literally, what kind of house do you want? What kind of cars do you want to drive? How do you want to dress? Do you want to travel?" And my oldest one, especially, he had some tall dreams and well, he went to law school. He's a lawyer, so he's good.

Jenni: Right. And he married a lawyer. So they're okay.

Jody: They're good. Um, and my youngest, she has, uh, she's very verbal about it. She wants certain things. And so one of the things we talk about with Grayson is, "Okay, Sydney has these expectations." Now I say this without being, we're not demanding of him. We're not, "But like, look, you got to know what you're getting into here."

Jenni: Yeah.

Jody: This is reality.

Jenni: This is the person who's gonna feel, um, cheated in life if she has to always struggle. Not that she doesn't understand that there will be seasons.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: And we don't want our kids to put all their hope and all their trust in money at all. We want them to learn to be content both with little and in much. But we want them to understand how they're hard wired. I have a great friend who I would consider to be one of the most successful people I know. She also makes very little money, because that's not important to her. She doesn't even care if she doesn't have WiFi. Like for me, that's like food and water and WiFi.

Jody: Right, right, right.

Jenni: To me, it's like an absolute, like, necessity. Right? She doesn't care. She doesn't need television....

Jody: That is the bill you pay.

Jenni: Right. If I have to pay, I have to choose that one's getting paid for sure. Um, and she doesn't care if she doesn't have television, she doesn't care. There's a lot of, like, what I would consider earthly comforts that she does not require. She's very happy, super happy with simple things. And she's...

Jody: Low maintenance.

Jenni: She's low maintenance. She's an artist. Um, if she can create art all day, she's super happy. You know, she doesn't need very much. And she does - she gets whatever. She knows how to create the things that she needs. And her line of work is so fulfilling to her soul. And so she works with, um, people who have special needs and she does an amazing job. She feels like she's contributing so much to the world. And she is. And she is really happy. She also did not need to have her own family. She's the person who makes family wherever she goes. And so she didn't feel the need to be married and have kids, but she makes other people's kids feel like they're her kids. And so it's really important that our kids are become self-aware in high school.

Jody: I was gonna say, they understand themselves.

Jenni: Yeah. They're introspective. And they can ask these questions and be honest in their answers and not answer what they think is the right character, but what they really need. Um, but let's just be real here, on the whole, money buys choices. And if they want to do big things, if they want a big education, they're going to need to know how to create the finances to fund that education. Um,

if they want, let's say your kid has a dream to, um, like, I have a boy who wants to produce musical theater on Broadway that does for the word of God, what Hamilton did for American history. Right? Um, brings a whole new awareness and excitement about the Bible and the stories of the Bible to Broadway. So that costs a lot of money.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: So, like, he's going to have to know how to create that. Right? Okay. So that's one of the goals. And then last of all, on our list, is our kids have to know how to defend their faith. They need to know how to defend what they believe, um, their worldview. So that means, first of all, they need to know what their world view is. And then they need to understand why they believe it, not just to defend it, because it's an elite club and they have to be right. It's not about being right against other people's point of view. It's about...

Jody: Knowing why you believe and being able to stand up for it without the pressure of succumbing to the pressures around you.

Jenni: That's it. That's exactly it. So that's a goal for high school. So let's talk about, um, what boxes we need to check off in the high school years. 'Cause they're really - we think they're really different than the elementary and the middle school years. Okay. So, um, first let me just say this. I needed to make a little disclaimer. You have to know what your local laws are and you have to follow your local laws. So if you live in a state where you're required to do these specific subjects in high school, then make sure you're doing them. How you do them is subject to discussion. Um, but so I'm - that's my disclaimer. And now I'm going to push that aside and get to what we think the boxes....

Jody: Yes.

Jenni: So in the other years we have what we call the Daily Do's in elementary and middle school, and these are the things that you have to do every day. Things like reading and math and writing and that kind of stuff. In high school, it's a little bit different. So we don't call it that. We call it the strategy. And a little bit later on, we're going to talk about the call, the super important phone call that we think that you have to make in order to figure out the strategy. But the strategy is going to depend on what your student needs for their next step. So we'll get to how to figure that out, but it's going to look different for every kid. Like, I've got a kid who, um, has a specific school in mind and they have a fairly low acceptance rate. Yet, when I look at the - I looked at the academic requirements, the academic requirements are kind of average. So I called the school and I said, you know, "Why - I don't understand why you have a low acceptance rate..."

Jody: "Because it doesn't match."

Jenni: "It doesn't match. Like, if you want a 3.1 GPA, that's pretty average."

Jody: Right.

Jenni: "So, why the low acceptance rate?" And for them, it really has to do with community service. And they're looking....

Jody: Their website doesn't say that.

Jenni: No, no. I had to do some digging. And so that gave me - that's - I- that - a light bulb came on and I said, "Oh, wait a minute. So, let me ask you a question, then. Would an Eagle Scout weigh heavily on their application?" "Yes, ma'am. Oh, yeah, it would." "Oh, okay. So..."

Jody: "We're doing that."

Jenni: So he had already been a scout and he'd already been kind of on this path, but scouting actually is not his favorite. He's a theater kid. And so like, it was his favorite when he was younger and he was really interested in plants, but when he started really venturing into music and theater and he also started to mature and take on some very adult responsibilities, he began to get very frustrated with a lot of the Scouts in the troop who were wanting to, like, goof off and pull pranks and go in the woods and smoke pot. This was - it really - he saw the hypocrisy. He saw that, like, the scouting model was, he liked the scouting model. He loves the Scout Law. He loves the Scout Oath. He feels like those are the principles he wants to live by...

Jody: They just weren't really following up.

Jenni: ...but, he didn't see that the Scouts were taking that to heart. And that was frustrating to him. Plus he's not super excited about the dirt and the heat and the bugs. And he kind of was like, "Nah, I really want to be in the air-conditioned opera house." But when he figured that out that this was going to really help on his path, it became a priority. And because it became a priority, we had to make some changes in where he put his focus on what he did. And he, like, he plays a lot of instruments and although that's super fun for him, it isn't a necessity. So he was doing, um, honor band for trombone and it meant taking private lessons. And it meant, um, a lot of focus on trombone. And I said to him, "Trombone's not going to be your primary instrument. Piano is gonna be your primary instrument. And, um, it doesn't really necessarily play into your goals as a theater producer. So, I think you're going to have to let this go, because you're going to have to use that extra time and money for Scouts." And so that's what we mean by the strategy. Like, you really need to have an idea of what the end result looks like, and you need to reverse-engineer it.

Jody: So, just to back up for one second, because that's a very mature conversation. And I - one of the things I just want to add is you have to have a great relationship with your kid to have that conversation and for you to be the voice that has weight.

Jenni: The influence.

Jody: Uh-huh. And that's a big deal. And it also takes an immense amount of maturity to be able to lay down a thing you like, because he's not a Scout kid. Like, that's not his favorite.

Jenni: Yeah. And he has a lay down something he likes for something he's not thrilled with.

Jody: Because in the end, it has a bigger - it's bigger - it's better for the bigger picture. it's important that, along the way, like, this is nothing that's

automatically happened in high school that, "Oh, I'm this person now. And I'm going to be mature." Those decisions, if you start way back in elementary and you work this approach, if you will...

Jenni: All the way through.

Jody: ...all the way through, you will see, because you're maintaining relationship and you're watching them grow and you're observing and praying - you're partnering with God and your kid to see what's best and they're making some of these decisions and they consult with you, but you watch this process happen and that's how you enjoy your kids in their teens, too. Because you're watching all of this and your relationship is - there like a friend! A friend you want to hang out with.

Jenni: Not a friend, in the sense, that you excuse bad behavior.

Jody: No, no, no.

Jenni: But, you're right. And that is part of the transition that has to happen in the high school years. There is an emotional transition that has to happen. And it takes all of the high school years. It's not something that happens. It's not a one-day event where you just suddenly pass the torch off, like, "Okay, now I stop being - I'm now not the adult. And you are. Boom! Go! Magic fairy dust - you're now responsible." It's like a four-year process of letting go of the reigns and giving them that responsibility and giving them that independence. So you mentioned earlier on, this same student we're talking about, who's named Sam. Sam, um, made this decision that he wanted to pursue music and musical theater at the end of eighth grade. That's really the key time.

Jody: Oh yeah.

Jenni: And if you start in the - you said this in the very beginning, Jody, if you start in the elementary years developing interests. When he was in elementary school, he grew everything under the sun. I mean, like if I was eating a piece of fruit, he was like, "Oh, can I have that pit?"

Jody: No, he was growing stuff at my - he was like, "Aunt JoJo, you want to grow that?" "No, but you can."

Jenni: Yeah. He was.

Jody: And he would, like, bring me pots of stuff and I killed it every time.

Jenni: Or then he'd take it back and revive it and send it back.

Jody: I'd kill it again.

Jenni: He's like - that was his thing. And so they go through all these different phases. He went through a phase that my whole family was not thrilled with where he was like obsessed with logical fallacies.

Jody: Okay, that was kind of fun.

Jenni: For him.

Jody: He was like "Red herring!"

Jenni: He was like, "Ah, that's straw man argument. Sorry, busted." You know, it was very annoying. Um, but that's okay. So we got him lots of books on that and he studied that. That's what you do in the elementary years, you let them develop all of these different interests. And then something begins to emerge in the middle school years. And that's when you make that definitive decision to start pursuing something. So for him, it started with music. It really was music that he was pursuing and he was playing trombone and he was loving that. And then he started playing other instruments and then he started writing music and it all just began to develop. Right? And so he loves opera and he loves musical theater. And what happened at the beginning of high school was he came to me and he said, "We don't have a really great, um, theater program for homeschoolers in our area. I would love to start one. What do you think?" Of course, my heart sunk for a brief second. Because my first thought was the thought most parents have, "I don't know how to do that. I don't have the first idea how to do that." And then the voice of reason rose up and said, "You don't have to, because this isn't your thing. This is his thing. So if it's gonna succeed, great. And if it's not, that's - he's going to figure out this is not what he wants to do." So I said to him, "Well, why don't you write up a proposal and why don't we give it to our local homeschool group and see if they're willing to host it?" Because he knew he would need a space. You know, you need to think about things like insurance. You know, you're not going to have a bunch of kids get together. What if one of them breaks their ankle? You don't want to get sued. So that's why partnering with a local homeschool organization is a great idea. Our local homeschool organization is a 501(c)3. Um, they have insurance, they have a space where they can host something like that. He talked about how he would fund everything. He talked about, you know, he had to think through these things. So his...

Jody: Supervision and loosely.

Jenni: Loosely. We needed to know like he was going to do all - it was going to be completely student-run, but he needed to have a parent advisor who would basically chaperone and be physically present in the room, you know, just so that there weren't any problems. Um, and in the beginning, actually, he didn't actually even meet on their campus. We met at local libraries. Because he needed to meet at a time of day when the co-op wasn't functioning. And then he, um, he didn't have any money at first. So he chose a play that was in the public domain. Um, they did "The Importance of Being Earnest." He didn't have to buy rights for that, but this was all stuff that he had to research and find out. And then he had to figure out how to create audition material and how to - now it helps that he has been in, um, professional productions since he was eight years old. So he understood how to do some of this.

Jody: Okay, but what's important in this is for one, if your kid's not passionate, they're not going to do this.

Jenni: No.

Jody: They're going to quit midway through or...

Jenni: And Mom and Dad, you should not be saying, "You know, you should think about starting a blah-blah-blah."

Jody: No, no.

Jenni: They have to bring that to you.

Jody: Yes. The other thing is the beauty of it is, this is my favorite part, is they get to figure out if they love it or if they hate it, or it's just, "Eh, okay," because it's here, at this age, at this time, that they can figure out, like, "I don't want to pursue this professionally."

Jenni: Right.

Jody: Most people are figuring that out in their twenties, thirties, forties, and fifties, even or older.

Jenni: Right. Or they know what it is, but they now have put all their eggs in a different basket and they feel like they can't jump ship.

Jody: I just had somebody, yesterday, tell me that their kid went through, well, their kid went through physical therapy school. Physical therapists now have to have a...

Jenni: Bachelor's for sure - master's.

Jody: No, master's degree. And she doesn't want to be a physical therapist. She doesn't like it. So now what? She's working for her dad, an attorney.

Jenni: We have to really make sure that they get out there and do these things. And that's what high school's for. High school - I mean, middle school starts that. In the middle school, we talked about apprenticing and job shadowing and interning. That gives them a glimpse of it. But really by high school, we have to submerge them in it and they need to start developing these supporting skills. Um, and we'll talk about that as we get a little bit further down. So you get the idea of, um, strategy and we'll break this down a little more specifically for homeschooling. So the second box after strategy that we need to check off as homeschoolers is high schoolers is - well, Jody, you and I call developing their "T." Think of the capital letter "T". The capital letter "T" has a lot of depth in one area and just a little bit of breadth in other areas, in additional areas. We have, um, a friend whose daughter is brilliant. She's talented, she's amazing.

Jody: In everything.

Jenni: In everything, but she didn't develop her T, she developed, like, she tried to develop, like, a capital "O." Like a big circle that encompassed everything. And then what happened was she really never developed any one particular area. So she ended up having to take a gap year. 'Cause she wasn't sure what she wanted to do. She did go to college. She went to an excellent college, but she still didn't know what she wanted to do in college. So she just kind of, like, tried a whole bunch of different things. That was a really expensive process of self-discovery and graduated from college and ended up working in the field that she had been working in in high school, that she didn't go to college for. So, um, that's the opposite of developing a T. That's developing an O. Right? want to develop a T, where they get a lot of depth in one area. And this is - these - we're talking about their interests. Like, we're not choosing what this is. Their interests are choosing what this is. And so, um, maybe your child, um,

you know, has a love for, um, mechanics. Like they're just a mechanical kid. They're really mechanically inclined. And so they're doing a ton of things to develop that, but maybe at the same time, they also like to draw. You know, maybe they also like to do theater. It doesn't mean they're going to go into theater professionally, but those other interests, just a few.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: It's like the top of the capital "T." It's just a few things, because, otherwise, you end up developing a Jack of all trades and a master of none. Um, then another box to check off. Um, we really need to hone. We started this in the middle school years. We're going to really master it in the high school years. And that is, um, organization and time management. Right? We broke this out from other life skills, because it has to be a focal point in the high school years. But at this level, let's just briefly say all of life skills, at this point, the goal is mastery.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: Right.

Jody: They have to be masters at time management, for sure, or they're not going to get anything done.

Jenni: Right. They do. And they have to be master communicators. They have to be master organizers. Um, anything that has to do with the - you're basically going to be producing an adult. By the time your child is done...

Jody: Let's think about that for a minute.

Jenni: Right. By the time your child is done, they should be able to - while they're still in your house, really, they should be able to fully run a household.

Jody: Absolutely.

Jenni: A hundred percent run a household. They should be able to plan and prepare all the food. I tell this story a lot, but you know what? I didn't have this in my upbringing. And I graduated college. I don't even know what I did in college for food. I know I had the meal plan, the college meal plan for a while. I did live on my own with a bunch of other students, but I don't even remember how we managed food.

Jody: I hear a lot of Ramen and watermelon stories from people, 'cause they're cheap.

Jenni: I had those! I had the - cereal! I lived on - cold cereal with milk I think I ate that three times a day. I ordered out a lot, a lot of pizza. Um, donuts. I ate donuts. My husband is trying to - oh, yes. There was a point in my life where my husband's signaling a story. There was a point in my life where I lived on, don't tell me, I - don't ask me how I was skinny. I was. But I lived on Dunkin' Donuts. And um, I mean, I lived on Dunkin Donuts. And I actually started, um, having a nutritional deficiency and the skin on my fingers was peeling off. And I went to the doctor and I had some sort of nutritional deficiency, 'cause I was living on donuts.

Jody: Oh my gosh, that's horrible.

Jenni: I developed type two diabetes later on in life. Which I have now beat, thank God, through diet and exercise. But yeah, I don't - so I - the bottom line is I didn't make food in college. I remember becoming a, quote-unquote, "adult" living- I was- I had an adult job in New York City and I was living in Hoboken. And I remember the first trip to the grocery store in my new apartment. And I was walking around the store and I was like, "What do I buy? Milk! The people buy milk. I'm going to get some of that. Bread. They buy bread." And I came home and I had all these, like, ingredients, but I didn't have any like...

Jody: Plan or recipe or...

Jenni: ...plan. And I will tell you, honestly, I reverted back to...

Jody: Bad food, probably.

Jenni: I did. I reverted back to eating out.

Jody: Process, packaged, eat out.

Jenni: So I worked directly across the street from the empire state building on 44th street and fifth Avenue. And I - they had a great little, um, like, an eatery. It wasn't a restaurant, really. 'Cause you just - it was almost the grocery store, but not. Anyway, we had like prepackaged food. They had like sandwiches and sushi. So I would get sushi every day. That's what I lived on.

Jody: Oh my goodness.

Jenni: And I never took food to work with me, ever. Like, that concept was foreign to me then, because I really didn't have any life skills. This is not the story we want for our kids. It wasn't, until...

Jody: This is what not to do.

Jenni: This is what not to do. It wasn't until I was married. And then I was like, you know, it was like an epiphany. I was like, "We should, like, create a meal plan, like a menu. What do you think?" So we had to go buy cookbooks, because we didn't know - it was really right at the start of the internet. So, like, that wasn't a thing, really, back then, like you didn't really Google stuff like - it wasn't - Google didn't happen, right? There was no Google. I mean, we have the internet and we used it a little bit, but barely. So we went out and bought cookbooks and I remember opening up a recipe and it said "make a roux." And I was like, "A what? What is that?"

Jody: Did you even pronounce it right?

Jenni: Probably. It looks like rendezvous, but roux.

Jody: Yeah, I would have been like, "what is that?"

Jenni: "What's a 'roox'?"

Jody: Yeah. I would've. I would've been like, "What is that?"

Jenni: Um, but I didn't know what it was and it didn't tell - It said "make a roux." And it said, like, "with butter and flour or something like that." And I was like, "What is that? I don't even know what that is." Um, another recipe, obviously, this was an advanced cookbook. I didn't understand. I needed, like, "Cooking for Dummies," but another one said "to make a bechamel." And I didn't know what that was either. I learned. And I remember, like, in the beginning, it was really expensive. Because we - I was like, "Cardamom? We don't have cardamom." This recipe calls for cardamom. Like, we don't stock that. We didn't stock anything but salt and pepper, if we we're lucky. So we had to build up a spice, you know, repertoire and I had to learn all this stuff. So the goal of the high school years is mastery for life skills.

Jody: Our ceiling should be their floor, for sure.

Jenni: Without a doubt. Um, so we've got organization, time management, a mastery of life skills, which we can put those two together, I suppose. Um, strong communication skills. Specifically, um, at this point, we did - we focused on writing in the middle school years. I think in the high school years, it's speaking. They need to take a public speaking course.

Jody: Absolutely.

Jenni: They need to be able to make all the phone calls. Like, they should be setting up their appointments. You know, if they have a doctor's appointment, they should set it up. They should be - if, you know, if they have to figure out how to do something, well, who would you call to find out how to do that? And then make that phone call. They should be doing a lot of the communication, because they - by the time they leave their high school, they should be strong verbal communicators. Um, they started learning study skills in middle school. Again, this is the time of mastery. They should be master studiers, if they're going to go on to higher education. Hey, if they're not, they don't need anything further than what you did in middle school. They only need to learn how to learn something for their own life if they're not going to go on to higher education. Um, but if they are to go on to higher education, then part of their study skill process is going to be studying for tests, SAT, or ACT or whatever they're going to do. And then last of all, and we said this earlier, financial skills. Um, so those are the new boxes, um, really quick. Uh, you know, we'll put it in the show notes.

Jody: Yeah.

Jenni: Okay. Um, let's talk about developing strategy, 'cause this is really what is unique in the high school years. We talked about the all-important phone call, but before you can figure out who to call, we kind of have to figure out where they're going to go career-wise. And you know, Jody, I don't know why, but we have found, as we've traveled the country and talked to people, that families are really resistant to, um, figuring out the career path. It's like, we're saying a dirty thing.

Jody: No, it freaks them out. They think they're like, "Well, how would my kid know?"

Jenni: They don't need to know that. That's too much pressure. No, it actually relieves pressure. It actually gives you a tremendous amount of freedom.

Jody: We need to talk about the pressure myth of that in a FaceBook Live or something. It really is.

Jenni: That is a myth. That's a great idea. We need to write that down.

Jody: Yes we do.

Jenni: But you're right, because there's this myth of having to, um... it's like, if you know where you're headed, you don't feel like you have to get everything in.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: You don't feel like you have to accomplish everything in high school, because you can - you have the freedom to specialize in where they're headed. Right? So can they...?

Jody: Well, you know what it does. It gives you that freedom to say, "Oh, that doesn't fall into what we're doing. So, no."

Jenni: We don't have to do that.

Jody: We don't have to do that.

Jenni: We don't have to do that.

Jody: That is so freeing.

Jenni: It's so freeing. And you know what it feels like? It feels and tastes like victory. When you know where your child's headed, you're like, "Ahhhh...." you feel peace. "Wow. We have a path!" And let me tell you something, they can change their mind.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: They can change their mind. But if you've got a kid who is developing in a particular way and you've done this process, they're not going to make a radical 90-degree turn, for the most part, because they really, um, they really are designed in a certain way. Their calling is not from us.

Jody: No.

Jenni: They're calling is from God.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: So at the end of the day, that part's not really going to change. It's a matter of going through the process of being able to hear that calling. And it is a bit of a process and we can help along the way. Can God arrest them in this process and put them in a different direction? Yes. But if He does that, he's going to equip them. So we don't have to worry about it. In the meantime, as far as we're concerned, if we follow this plan of helping them discover their interests and then developing one or more of those into a passion and then figuring out what that looks like for a career, then what we can do is we can reverse-engineer that. And we could break it down with them and for them and figure

out what that's going to look like as far as, um, preparation and training. 'Cause that's really what we're going to ask ourselves. We have to ask ourselves, like, "so what comes after high school?" Well, if it's a trade, it's gonna look a lot different than if it's a profession that requires higher education. Or if it's a military or if it's the Police Academy or the Fire Academy or - there is going to be some level of training that comes after high school.

Jody: Well, and I think we have to shift our mindset in no matter where they're going. Whether it is the military, college or a fire school or technical school, whatever, the goal isn't that school.

Jenni: Right.

Jody: That's a means to the goal.

Jenni: Right. College is not the goal.

Jody: No. So if we change our mindset all through high school of, "Well, I'm just trying to get my kid in college." No, you're not. That's not because - then what? Like, what's the goal, because it's a tool.

Jenni: Well, then, they'll figure it out. No, college is a very inefficient way to find yourself.

Jody: And they don't always find that out. They go all the way through, sometimes, when they come out. Yeah.

Jenni: That's what I'm saying. It's very inefficient.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: It is not the way of...

Jody: Expensive and inefficient.

Jenni: And time consuming. And it doesn't often work. So, like your friend who is a physical therapist, went all the way through master's degree and now is in the workforce is like, "Oh, I don't want to do this."

Jody: Right, right.

Jenni: "Oh, that's a problem."

Jody: Right. So if we tweak our mindset of where the goal really lands, you know, we're asking to look way ahead. And I think we become very shortsighted as parents, sometimes, to think like, "I just want to get this kid through high school."

Jenni: We're going to use an example of that. And the reason we choose this example is not that we think everybody needs to be a doctor. I'm choosing this, because medicine is one of those things that requires a very long term vision. And so if you can have this kind of vision, you can make some really powerful choices. So we're using this, because it is an extreme case. Your kid's probably not going to have this extreme case. Um, and then after that, I want to give you a little

more of a tangible one, but, uh, maybe relevant to more people. So in medicine, if you've got a kid who says they really want to be a doctor, okay, first of all, we need to find out why that is. Like, if your kid says they want to be a doctor, but they hate math, they hate science, they don't excel in those areas. There's something in their idea of that, um, that is appealing to them. But it's probably not the medicine itself. Do you know what I'm saying? Like, there's something in it that's exciting to them. You have to help them figure out what that is. And it could be different for every kid. It could be, there's something creative about it. Like, maybe what they're really interested in is, um, more like nutrition or, um, who knows? It's going to be different for every child, but...

Jody: I have a real life example. It could be that they literally like a sterile environment.

Jenni: Yeah.

Jody: Like, the aesthetics of that...

Jenni: Yeah.

Jody: ...but they have no way to articulate it and that's where they experience it.

Jenni: That's true. That's a great example of what could be coming out of this. So we have to figure out - you know, we - I know a story of someone who thought that she wanted to do drama, but hated getting up on stage. And what she really loved was costumes. So, like, you've got to figure out what the thing is in it. Certain things will line up if that's really where they're supposed to go. Um, and so let's say it is medicine and they do, they love the math and sciences. Um, and so if that's the case, then we have to think in terms of let's try and get them to think about a potential specialty. Not because it's where they're necessarily going to go, because it's going to help you plan and prepare. So let's say they come up with, they want to be a nephrologist. They want to specialize in kidney, uh, medicine. Okay. That could change. When they get to medical school, they're going to be doing all different kinds of things and it could - their specialty could totally change. It may not change in medical school. It may change in their, um...

Jody: Fellowship, or...

Jenni: No, no. That's way down the road. What is it? It's not an internship, um, residency, that's it. Because in residency, you will, um, often do rotations and you may find a specialty in those rotations. Um, but it may happen during medical school when they're trying different fields. So throughout the whole process, they may, um, make some decisions that change. That doesn't mean that your preparation, at this point, is any different. This - we want you to give you this long-term vision so you can see how it can help you now. So for today, it's kidneys, that's their interest. Okay. Go with it. Google. Um, how do you become a nephrologist? One of the things that you're gonna find is that level of specialty often requires, and you just said it a minute ago, Jody, a fellowship. So the way it works is they go to undergraduate school, regular college, right? Then after that, they have to go to medical school and they have to be accepted into a medical school program. Then after that, they have to be accepted into a residency.

Jody: That's a lot of accepting.

Jenni: It's a lot of accepting and it's a lot of years of training. And then after the residency, typically they have to be accepted into a fellowship. So knowing that you can say, "what are the best fellowships for nephrology?" If you Google that, you're going to find some answers.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: Go and look at their websites. What do they look for? On their website, it'll tell you some of the things that they look for in their fellowship candidates. Um, you can email somebody there. This is - we're going to talk about the phone call. At this point, you don't need to call the people. You're kid's not going into their fellowship tomorrow. Feel free to email, but you can say, "You know, I have a student who may be interested in nephrology down the road. What are some of the things that you look for in your candidates? Do you have specific residency programs that you recruit from? Um, are there specific qualities that you look for?" You're going to get some key information here about some supporting skills that you can start building into them at this stage. Uh, and then once you have an idea of fellowship, that'll give you a little bit of an idea of what kind of residency they need. You may find out that they, you know, they recruit out of the residency program, or they're looking for someone who, I'm making this up, but, you know, participated in some research projects during their residency. Oh, okay. So now I have to find a residency that offers some research opportunities, you know? Um, so then you're going to look for a potential residency program. Does this mean this is where they're going to go? No, but you're getting some information to help you where you are now. So then you just do, again, this is not super in-depth research, at this point, you're just getting some cursory information. What does it take to get into a residency program? What are they looking for? And that'll give you some ideas about the medical school choices that you make. Right? Then you look at the medical school that you're thinking about, or a few - a couple - I mean, two, three that might work for your student, at this point, could change, but for now. Once you have that idea, you may want to call those medical schools. Those people you may want to call, and you may want to say, "We're trying to plan undergraduate, but my student knows that medicine is her path, and so we're trying to make some sound decisions about undergraduate school. Um, and your program is one of her top choices that she's looking at. What are some things that you look for in your candidates?" They're going to tell you a whole bunch of things. One of the things we found out when we did this research was some medical schools like music students. Because music students, number one, understand how to do long hours of practice. They understand that practice can be tedious and painful, but this is kind of a funny thing. Often, musicians have finger dexterity and in surgical programs, that's an important thing. They have to have finger dexterity. So these are all things to be thinking about. Right? Um, and so once you have that information, now you have an idea about what medical schools, I mean, what undergraduate schools might be the best choice for the long-term plan that your student has. We're not just going to pick, you know, Colorado State, because that's where you went. Or that's where their grandfather went.

Jody: Are they like the mascot? Or the football team?

Jenni: Or are they... Well, let me tell you the real thing I've been hearing lately. There's - I'm not going to say what it is. There's a particular school in our state, that I now know, is the party school. And it's a good school. It's a hard school to get into. But I also now know it is the party school in our state. And I know that, because I've sat with a couple of students who have absolutely no idea what they want to do. They do not know what this school specializes in, but they are bound and determined that that is the school they want to go to. And once I put two and two together, I was like, "Oh, they just want to go to that school. 'Cause that's the party school." And unfortunately, because that's their mindset, these kids don't have the grades or the expertise to get into that school. Um, so it's a pipe dream and we have one kid who just decided he's going to go move to that town, go to the community college in that town, just so he can start building his social life in that town. Crazy! So what's the end result of that? Like what happens after that? If that's your goal, what comes after that?

Jody: Well, most likely, they're going to flunk out of school if they're partying that hard. But...

Jenni: Yeah.

Jody: You know, what is - there is no goal. So...

Jenni: There is no goal. They're going to end up having to get a job they're going to live in that area and they're going to be a townie up in that area.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: Um, okay. So, um, let's talk about the phone call to the college, because this is a phone call. It is not an email. This is, um, a phone call that you make after you've really done your homework. Now I am saying college. It doesn't have to be college. It could be a recruiter for one of the military branches. It could be an entrepreneur that your child - we knew somebody whose son had type one diabetes. And there was a company that made, um, the insulin pump that he used, that he - his dream was to go work for that company because they had made such an impact on his life. So what that family did was they went and visited the company and he got to see like all the different things that they do and, um, different opportunities to work there. Um, and that was in lieu of the college visit. They went and visited the company and that gave him a path and a plan. A path to follow. So, um, ultimately we want to think about what the next step looks like. If it is a college you're first going to do your online homework. And that means really understanding the school, understanding what their website says their requirements are...

Jody: Because there is nothing more annoying than calling them and being asked questions that you can clearly get on the website.

Jenni: Right.

Jody: It annoys us when people are like - when we know we are on the board of local organizations and stuff, and when we put information out there, we expect the people - go search there first. You ask me the things you can't get online.

Jenni: Right. Well, and that's the thing, too. It's also for your sake, if you haven't searched the website, then you don't know if you're getting special information.

Jody: That's true. And you don't know what to ask. The other thing, too, is it kind of gets them on your team, because you've now proven to them that you have - you are researched, you are interested in them because you have taken your personal time to get to know them. It's no different than an interview.

Jenni: That's right.

Jody: When you get to know the company and they were like, "Oh, you studied us."

Jenni: And you're going to ask them, what does the ideal candidate for your program look like? Tell me what the ideal candidate looks like, because that's really what you want to know. You want to help your child become, "What's the X-factor? What's the special thing you look for?" We have talked to so many schools, more than 60 colleges around the U.S. - admissions officers about all different programs. And in the midst of all of these conversations, one of the things we figured out is no two programs are looking for the same thing.

Jody: And they change.

Jenni: And they change every year. So you need to make the call every single year. You need to call in their freshman year, again in their sophomore year, again in their - you know, so that, you know, and what's going to happen is when you talk to one or two of these schools, they are going to give you the ideal plan for your kid. You're going to find out all the little...

Jody: It's great info.

Jenni: It's great. All the nuances of all the little things that you need to know. They're going to say something like "We want an entrepreneur." So you're going to realize, "I need to help my kid develop their entrepreneurial skills. We need to help them utilize their skills to start a business," which is one of the goals of the high school years anyway, is to make money.

Jody: So I have to just - I'm going to just like say a little secret here. So here's what happens. So you've made the phone call. You're calling these schools, you got this awesome plan for your kid from the schools that you called and your kid is doing some kind of out-of-the-box unique stuff, right? Now, the homeschoolers around you are like, "Wow, you do some amazing stuff!" They just didn't know you made the phone call.

Jenni: Well, and so, and plus...

Jody: So you look really awesome.

Jenni: Yeah, and plus, what you're going to find out is, as you start walking this path, developing their T, as you start helping them to become specialists in their area, they are going to figure out what they need. So like with Sam, when he started this theater troupe, which is now going into its third year, it's grown from eight students. We're now up to 42 students, they're getting ready to

produce their fourth show. He is an expert in this area. And now what he's doing is, now, he found someone - he's a junior in high school this year.

Jody: Just starting.

Jenni: Just starting his junior year. What he found was, um, someone to replace him. And he's super excited. He knows what to look for now, because he's done it for two years. Um, he is bringing her into this, and this year she's going to shadow him. And his plan is next year, he's going to put her in the producer/director position and he's going to shadow her. This way, when he leaves, he can hand it off. But in the process of that, imagine the skills he's going to gain in his own field. He wants to be a Broadway producer.

Jody: He's doing it.

Jenni: So he's doing it. He's doing it at a small level right now. And he's figuring out what he loves and what he doesn't love. He didn't realize he wanted to do this until he started this.

Jody: Yeah, it's so cool.

Jenni: He started this out of a need and it became his passion and his focus in life. And he realized like, "I'm really good at this."

Jody: So you can apply this for anything your kid wants to do. This is not unique to theater or the arts, it's anything they want to do.

Jenni: Everything they want to do. Your kid wants to be a fireman 'cause we've had lots of people who've wanted that or a police officer. If your kid wants to be a police officer, call your local police department, there is something here for high schoolers. We have a program here called the cadets program where high school kids can join a cadet program. They get to do details with police officers. They get to go to competitions. Um, it is so cool.

Jody: There's an ROTC for a military. I mean, there's everything out there. It's just - and here's the other thing that's super cool. When you meet with an adult and they hear your kid wants to, like, try it out, if you will, they'll bend over backwards most of the time to try and help you, because they think it's so cool that this kid cares...

Jenni: And wants to do it.

Jody: ...and wants to do it.

Jenni: Absolutely. If your kid wants to be a Marine biologist and you don't - and you live in the middle of America, you might have to research Marine biology internships. We live in a town where that's a thing, because we live right on the Gulf of Mexico. We have families that come here and get an apartment for a semester or a school year. So that they can do the Mote Marine internship for Marine Biology in high school.

Jody: Maybe make sure they like to fish, first. 'Cause like I wouldn't touch a fish and I wouldn't want to be that.

Jenni: Yeah, let's talk briefly. 'Cause we're going to wrap up here soon, but let's talk briefly about things to consider when you're planning the high school curriculum. Um, we said one of the goals is that they should be able to defend their faith. So apologetics. There's a great book for you parents called "Mama Bear Apologetics." I can't recommend it enough. Um, read that book. They've got lots of resources and ideas. They've got a website with lots of great information. Um, the one thing I want to say, and this is sort of a disclaimer, um, yes, we want our kids to be able to defend their faith and why they believe what they believe. But let me just say this. Don't let them fall into the trap of thinking that everything biblical has to be scientific or have a historical explanation, because often, God does the unexplainable. And very often, he requires us to walk by faith and not by sight.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: Um, so one of - yes, we want our kids to study apologetics. Yes, we want them to have, um, the ability to reason and we want them to be able to just spot, uh, cultural lies. And we want them to know why it's a cultural lie, but at the same time, we don't want them to - we don't want to suck the faith right out of them. Again, make sure you know your state's requirements. Um, if you've got a dual enrollment program in your child's college bound, utilize that program so that you can get some college credits out of the way while they're in high school. Uh, understand what is specific to their industry. Understand the various skill sets and opportunities that they're going to need to under-gird their unique plan. If you're a student wants to become, you know, an auto-mechanic, get them out in the field, doing this stuff, apprenticing, working in the field and then asking, do they need some business skills?

Jody: Right? In the process of doing that, you want to coach them and teach them how to network, get to know people and maintain those relationships - they'll further out their educational - I've got my kids have networking relationships they still utilize way after college.

Jenni: Yep. And again, we talked about, um, you know, of course, if they need standardized tests, make sure you're using that time in the high school years to prepare them for that. Um, developing that capital letter "T." They need to be earning money along the way. Um, and of course we always want to focus all the way through, from infancy to, um, to adulthood. We want to focus on developing their character, which is how they treat the world around them, their constitution, the - some of those qualities in themselves that will govern their own success. And all throughout this series, we've talked about the important truths that we want to convey to our children. Um, we believe that there's a set of truths that we begin to teach our kids from birth up through adolescence, the beginning of adolescence. But then once adolescence happens, that shifts. And so we went into detail about these in our last show for middle schoolers. So we're just going to review them. And if you want to hear more about what we mean, um, go listen to the goals of the middle school years. But, um, between adolescence and adulthood, we believe that it's really important to feed our children's souls with seven basic truths. Um, first that they are performing for an audience of One that's God, they don't need to be man pleasing.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: Second, that their life is a stewardship, right? That they are responsible for the choices that they make. This flies in the face of that whole "Yolo!" mindset of "You only live once. So party it up now." No, it's "You only live once. So make every day count." Um, they're responsible for the maintenance and the betterment of every community that counts them as a member.

Jody: How about society owes you no debts? How about that?

Jenni: Yeah. I just want to say this one thing about the, um, what we just said, "they're responsible for the maintenance betterment of every community". Your family is the first community that they belong to. So they're responsible for the maintenance of your family and the betterment of your family to whatever degree that they're capable of contributing. We do not owe our children a big party. We don't owe them three meal preparations a day. They can do that themselves. They can learn, they need to.

Jody: We don't owe them a car.

Jenni: We don't. And like you said, society doesn't owe them favors. That's number four. Number five, they cannot control other people. Um, number six, uh, they are responsible for both their successes and their mistakes. They're responsible. No one else is. Um, and last of all, their time on this earth is finite.

Jenni: And so they, again, that flies in the face of today. I can't tell you how many kids today feel like, you know...

Jody: Gotta sow them wild oats.

Jenni: Because you know, this is the best time of their life. If this is the best time of their life, what are the multiple decades that follow? What is that going to - that's bleak. "Why live?"

Jody: Right.

Jenni: Like, no, you want to know that it's...

Jody: If the teen years are it, look out! That's a sad life, right?

Jenni: Yeah. Because, boy, that's over quickly.

Jody: Right.

Jenni: No, the best is always yet to come. You could be 80 and think the best is yet to come. It's a great way to live. So we want to teach our kids that, um, that their time in this life is finite and that they need to make it count.

Jody: Well, and let's remember, we teach by leading by example. So if we're saying we're miserable, we're unhappy and everybody owes me something. Maybe we should probably rethink that. You know what I mean? Like I should...

Jenni: I'm thinking we do need to rethink that. So if you have any questions about the high school years about making the phone call, if you're terrified, we know that there have been parents who, for one reason or another, it could be a

personality thing. Maybe you didn't go to college and you feel really freaked out at the thought of having to make that phone call to a college or to an employer. Um, that is something we can help with. We do help with that. So go to fromcradletocalling.com, click on "Contact Us," get in touch with us and say, "I'm totally freaked out. I don't want to do this by myself" or come into the Facebook group, "Homeschooling from Cradle to Calling" and say, "I heard your podcast. And I want to be able to make that call, but I don't really feel like I can do it,". And we would be glad to help you out with that. Thanks for listening.