



**Cheat Sheet by Allison Burr**

**Episode 5**

# **Reading Aloud Imperfectly**

**Guest: Jim Weiss**

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## Meet Jim Weiss

Jim Weiss is the master storyteller behind [Greathall Productions](#). Since 1989, Jim has been producing award-winning audio and video recordings for children that bring classic literature, mythical tales and history to life. Jim and Greathall Productions have received more than 100 major national awards. In addition to recording fabulous stories, Jim also gives live performances in libraries, stores, schools and community events around the world, and has even performed at the White House.



## In this Episode

In the final segment of this two-part interview (see [Episode 4](#) for part one), Jim shares his heart for storytelling, and especially the importance of reading aloud imperfectly!

Jim also cautions against trying to achieve a level of perfection in our storytelling and reading aloud that is unsustainable and causes more damage than good.

Jim strongly believes that sharing stories and books is critical in the media-driven age we live in.

He urges families to build a culture of story in their family, as it will create a heritage and is an unmatched way to teach morals.

## Cheater's Guide

Use this guide to skip to parts that most interest you, or [listen to the entire podcast](#).

- 2:25 Letting go of the idea of a “perfect” storytime or read-aloud time.
- 3:38 The problem of striving for perfection in reading aloud and storytelling.
- 5:45 Jim distinguishes between the parent’s best efforts and perfection.
- 6:38 Creating lifelong learners and godly children rather than perfectionists.
- 8:25 Jim’s reminder that a discussion isn’t always necessary after a story.
- 11:07 How often should we check for comprehension when reading aloud and storytelling?
- 13:21 What about kids who think they are too old for stories?
- 16:02 The value of talking about the authors behind the stories.
- 19:38 Jim shares some of his favorite segments, anecdotes, and stories.
- 20:04 The foundational aspect of Greek mythology in the Western world.
- 22:55 Teaching your children Shakespeare.
- 26:50 Take the pressure off yourself: perfection is not the goal!
- 28:07 Final thoughts on creating a culture of storytelling amongst your family in a technological world.

**What you can do [in this media-saturated world]  
is offer your vision of how you think we can best operate  
and how we should respond and participate in the world...**

**One of the most powerful ways to do that is through  
the stories you choose. Through our stories, we choose  
the examples of what not to do and of what to do.**

**Because they are stories, they are memorable and stay with us  
on a much deeper level than saying “do this” or “don’t do that.”**

–Jim Weiss

# Major Takeaways

## 1. Our goal is never product-oriented!

Our goal in reading aloud is not to be able to then declare, “I have read aloud perfectly.”

Rather, you are engaged in a process, and processes are inherently messy, meandering, and myopic. But press through; plow on.

You are acting out the importance of fortifying relationships—not simply admiring the completed goal.

## 2. Sometimes the teacher hat needs to come off: don't always ask your kids questions about the stories they have read or listened to.

Let the story seep into their hearts and souls. Let it linger, and let the magic of a beautiful story penetrate the soul of your child.

There is undoubtedly a time and a place to train your children in viewing culture with worldview in mind, but sometimes beauty is simply beauty and art is simply art.

## 3. Tell stories to your kids, and watch them grow into storytellers themselves!

Start a culture of story in your family, and reap the results.

In this media-driven age, put the stake in the ground for your family.

Stories will link you together, and they provide a unique way to teach and pass along morals and values.

## Show Notes

You can find all of Jim Weiss's recorded stories at [Greathall.com](http://Greathall.com), and he loves hearing from you, so get in touch with him there.

You can also visit the show notes from [Episode 4](#).

Many thanks to all the kids on this episode's **Let the Kids Speak!** The books recommended are:

*[Little House on the Prairie](#)* by Laura Ingalls Wilder

*[The Princess and the Goblin](#)* by George MacDonald

*[What Would Jesus Do?](#)* by Mack Thomas and Helen Haidle