

EPIISODE 150: **Water Your Bamboo: How to Focus on the Process, Not the Outcome in your Homeschool**

- Sarah: [00:12](#) You're listening to the Read-Aloud Revival podcast. This is the podcast that helps you make meaningful and lasting connections with your kids through books.
- Sarah: [00:28](#) Hello, hello everybody, Sarah Mackenzie here. You've got episode 150 of the Read-Aloud Revival podcast, glad you're here. Today we're having a very important conversation about watering your bamboo.
- Sarah: [00:44](#) We're going to talk actually about the importance of focusing on the process and not the outcome, especially in our homeschools. Now, if you don't homeschool, I think you can replace any time you hear that word today with the word parenting, and I have a hunch you're going to find this just as relevant for you. This is a whole episode on what to focus on, how do we tell which measuring stick to use, and where to throw our energy when we're working with our kids. It's very easy to put our attention on the outcome, it's far more useful to put it on the process, we're going to dig into that in just a minute.
- Sarah: [01:20](#) Before we do, we're going to take a listener question, and this week's question comes from Lisa.
- Lisa: [01:26](#) Hi Sarah, this is Lisa from Rocklin, California, and I'm wondering if you have any advice for those of us who tend to cry while reading aloud to our families? It's fairly common for my kids to hear my voice crack during an emotional passage, however our latest read, *The One and Only Ivan*, has me sobbing to the point I often have to hand the book off to my husband.
- Sarah: [01:48](#) Oh Lisa, I have a feeling a whole bunch of listeners can relate, and I know I can relate. So first, I just want to validate your experience, and I want to validate you in all your vulnerability in front of your kids. It is really good for our kids to see us respond honestly to stories. When our kids see us respond that way to a story, with our wide range of human emotions, whether that's sadness, or anger, or fear, or elation, or joy, they're watching us model a human response to people. And that is a gift, it's a gift, it's not a detriment.
- Sarah: [02:25](#) I know it's also kind of difficult especially when you said you started crying, sobbing, so hard you just couldn't

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continue. That actually happened to me recently as well, and that's kind of difficult, right? This last happened to me a couple of weeks ago, and I ended up just passing the book to my oldest daughter to keep reading aloud. So that works, you can do that, you can pass it to your husband, you can pass it to an older child if one of your kids is old enough for that.

Sarah: [02:49](#) You can also switch to the audio book, I will often choose an audio version when I know a book is going to make me cry. So for example, I love Sweep by Jonathan Auxier, I talk about it all the time on this show. It also makes me cry, and so I know it's going to be different, and so I may just choose to do that one on audio. And if you know a book is going to make you respond that way, it can be helpful to do it on audio. But a lot of times, they, the books actually surprise us, right. Or our reactions sometimes surprise us, and you don't expect it, can't predict it.

Sarah: [03:22](#) You can also switch to an audio just for a couple of tough chapters. If you can grab the audio book from your library or an Audible version or some other kind of audio version, you can just get through those difficult chapters by switching over to the audio. But I don't think you have it. If that makes you more comfortable, if it makes it feel more doable, then that's great.

Sarah: [03:45](#) But I just, I want you to know that one of the best reasons for reading aloud with our kids, is to give them the gift of walking a mile in another's shoes through the characters of the books we read. And you are modeling that empathy and compassion when you respond honestly, even if it's hard for your kids or they act annoyed or they seem frustrated, and they might actually sincerely be frustrated. I would bet that when they look back on their childhood, they're not going to say "It was so annoying when my mom would cry." They're going to have a different memory of watching you respond honestly with empathy and compassion to the characters they're learning to love. So good job momma, I think you're doing awesome.

Sarah: [04:23](#) Okay, so let's move into our episode. What I'm doing today is airing a Circle with Sarah that we did in RAR Premium this past January. Circle with Sarah is something new we're doing in Premium this year. It's a monthly, live

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coaching session with me, a class, that gives you ideas and encouragement to create the homeschooling life you crave.

- Sarah: [04:46](#) Now not all of our RAR Premium members are homeschoolers, but the majority are, and in Circle with Sarah we want to help you get the confidence you need to be the expert on your own homeschool. I think you're going to see when you listen to this one today that the principles are really applicable in more areas than just homeschooling. They're applicable in parenting. But particularly, we talk about watering your bamboo and focusing on process over outcome in a relation to your homeschool.
- Sarah: [05:13](#) So we do these every first Friday in Premium, and we do them live with all of our Premium members, anyone who can make it. And just like everything else in Premium, the video replays are always posted so that all of our members can watch it when it's convenient for them, especially if they can't be there live.
- Sarah: [05:28](#) Today I wanted to share with you our very first Circle with Sarah, that I'm putting the audio of the first Circle with Sarah here in this podcast episode. And if it helps you, if it turns on some lights for you or you come away with even a single takeaway, I would encourage you to join us in RAR Premium where you'll be able to access February and March's Circle's as well. And then of course you'll get to take part in all of our upcoming sessions.
- Sarah: [05:53](#) Our next one is happening the first Friday in April, and we'll be talking about how to teach the child in front of you. Because we're teaching children, not curriculum. And we're also going to be digging into any benefit syndrome in our homeschools, which I think is the main culprit for why a lot of us feel overwhelmed and like there's too much to do and not enough time to do it in. What our goal is, you'll hear me say this in the Circle, is to knock over one small domino at a time so that you can slowly, methodically, and over the course of the next year and over time, you can become the expert on your own homeschool and create a homeschooling life you love.

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- Sarah: [06:29](#) Without further ado, let's listen in, on the Circle with Sarah, Water Your Bamboo, how to focus on the process, not the outcome, in your homeschool.
- Sarah: [06:57](#) Today is our first Circle with Sarah. These are going to take place every month on the first Friday. And the goal here is for us to take a small doable action, that's going to get us closer to living out the homeschooling life we really wanted when we started out, right. I don't know about you but when I started homeschooling, I sort of had an unrealistic vision of what homeschooling was going to be. I like to say that I always imagined I'd be sitting there reading Robinson Crusoe with my children scattered around me listening, whittling sticks or knitting or something. I don't know exactly what was happening in my head. But even aside from the idealistic vision of homeschooling, a lot of times we can look up in the middle of a homeschooling year and realize that it doesn't look quite like we had imagined or we'd hoped. Or that we even, on a good day, we really want for homeschool.
- Sarah: [07:50](#) So we also know that the best way to change our habits, and the best way to make a positive change in our life, is to take a small action. To take one small, make one small change. The master classes we've done here in Read Aloud Revival Premium so far, they've had a similar goal, but a lot of those can kind of feel like a big overhaul or a big paradigm shift. And so what we're going to try to do with Circle with Sarah is break those kinds of things down into a very small step so that tonight all of us leave from here with knowing which one single domino we're going to tip over. Because if you get the right domino tipped over, you can knock over a whole bunch of them. You can start a chain reaction.
- Sarah: [08:33](#) I haven't had a lot of good results in my own homeschool when I've made some big huge overhaul or some big curriculum change. I'm going to redo all the schedules and color code everything. I've tried, I've done that all before. But I really feel like the most effective way to build the homeschooling life that we want is to take really smart, small actions that get us a little bit closer to where we want to go. It helps if you have a group like our group of ladies in the forum to be accountable to each other and encouraging to help you brainstorm when you get stuck or

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you feel like ... I know that for me, when I get stuck in a problem I can only see one way out. I need someone else to go, "Well, what about this way or that way?" We can do all that together.

- Sarah: [09:16](#) So that's what we're hoping to do here with Circle with Sarah. The first Friday of each month we're going to do this right here, and then we're going to be following it up in the forum with ... I'll be asking you some questions that you'll take over to the forum, and then we'll be just troubleshooting and meeting up and doing the accountability and all that in the forum, throughout the rest of the month.
- Sarah: [09:34](#) So really hoping that we'll be knocking over a whole bunch of really good dominoes this year in our homeschools and that will make a big difference.
- Sarah: [09:43](#) In our homeschools, making them look more like we wanted them to, helping us teach from rest, helping us lead with confidence. So the chat's going to stay open so feel free to use it with our time together.
- Sarah: [09:53](#) Tonight we're going to talk about the important of knowing how we measure success in our homeschool. Knowing what we're measuring. What measuring stick are we using. If we're not intentional about which measuring stick we're using in our homeschool, the likelihood that we're using one that means something to us that matters is not good. If we kind of go, we're going to talk about that. We're going to talk about why we sort of tend to go into this default mode of using the wrong measuring stick, and then also as we're thinking about how we're measuring our success, placing our focus on the process and not on the outcome. And why that's so important and what that will look like this winter, over the next couple of months in our homeschools.
- Sarah: [10:38](#) So the first thing that I wanted to pull up, and I'm just going to show this to you, can you all see that? So this is bamboo, right, I called my husband today and said, "On your way home, can you please go to the store and get me some bamboo so I have some to hold up?" We've all seen bamboo, I'm sure. You may know this already because this is sort of a popular thing going around the

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internet, but the thing about bamboo is that when you first plant it, you don't get any results. You plant your bamboo seeds ... They're not like radishes. Radishes are awesome to plant with small kids, because they sprout almost right away. Within a day or two you'll see a little something coming up through the dirt. Few days, I guess. Pretty fast.

Sarah: [11:18](#) Bamboo is not like radishes. They're not like flowers, they're not like tomatoes. With a bamboo seed, you plant it, and you water it, and you have to kind of faithfully protect the area that you planted it in, and nothing happens for day over day, week over week, month over month, year over year, really it takes five years from the time you plant a bamboo seed ... Whoops, I'm spilling water on myself. It takes five years from the time you plant a bamboo seed until you see a shoot come up through the soil. For five years, you see nothing.

Sarah: [11:57](#) But you have to stay faithful. You have to keep watering and keep protecting, because things are happening, you just can't see them. What's actually happening is the bamboo is creating a really complex root structure, and you can't really see it because they separate it from it's main root structure at the store or before they ship it, I don't know, you can kind of see. It has a very complex root structure that goes really, really far and deep ... I guess you can't really see that on camera. So that it actually, when it's comes up through the soil, it will grow ... get this, 80 feet in six weeks. 80 feet in six weeks, that's what it looks like. Actually what's happening is it grows 80 feet in five years. Because all that time that you've been watering and protecting it, it's been going down instead of up so you can't see what's happening. But you're still faithfully watering, faithfully protecting it, and so it feels like nothing's happening, and then all of a sudden it feels like this amazing growth.

Sarah: [12:55](#) It seems dormant. But I think that dormant life cycle or that seemingly dormant life cycle has a lot to teach us about homeschooling, especially through the winter. We are launching into what I think is easily the hardest time of year to homeschool, at least in the northern hemisphere where it's winter. Everybody wants to quit in February. Tell me in the chat if you have ever wanted to quit in February. To be completely 100% transparent, I think I've wanted to

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quit ... there's not a month, that over the how ever many years we've been homeschooling now, our oldest is a senior. There's have been months where I've wanted to quit every month, but more often in February. Every single year, yeah.

Sarah: [13:39](#) Yes. Everybody wants to quit in February, it's the burned out, tired slug feeling you have in February. It can actually lose its power if you make ... if you don't make it mean something, it doesn't mean. So this is something I've really been working on in my own life, is not making things mean something they don't mean. So just because you feel like you want to quit in February doesn't mean you should quit in February. It doesn't mean you're not cut out for this, it doesn't mean you're ... it doesn't mean anything, really. It just means that you are very alive, your children are very alive, and it's the dead of winter. And it's just a very difficult time to keep going.

Sarah: [14:14](#) But winter is an important season too. Dormant seasons are important seasons too. Just like for our bamboo, those dormant years where we're watering and faithfully tending and not seeing anything for our efforts, same thing in winter it's very important, those seasons where we don't see a lot of fruit of our labor but we're tending and faithfully showing up. Those are important too. And we can't get that new life without going through that dormant season. Spring wouldn't feel like spring quite so much if we didn't go through a winter to get there. It's just like the bamboo has to do its underground work first.

Sarah: [14:49](#) I think it's really, really wise, at the beginning of the winter knowing that we're going into a challenging season, knowing that it's always really hard for me to start back in homeschooling after the holidays. It's like before the holidays it's fall, it's a new school year, we're go ... and then it's holidays and everything's exciting and fun and then after the holidays, everything just feels like it all got real. This is going to be a lot. It's cold and we're inside all the time, the kids are climbing the walls and I'm climbing the walls and it can be really difficult.

Sarah: [15:21](#) So I think it's super smart to help us think, the beginning of winter, right now after the holidays but before we dive really deep back into school, how are we going to

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navigate these upcoming months knowing that they're difficult. Knowing that this is the time of year we are already going to feel like we're going to want to quit. And I think the reason I want to talk about our measuring stick tonight is because whatever metric we use to measure our success, it matters a lot. However you're measuring success. And if we're not doing it on purpose we're probably doing it on accident. We're measuring our success using an accidental measuring stick.

Sarah: [15:56](#) We hear a lot of people complaining about schools teaching to the test. And I was thinking about this the other day because I thought, "Interestingly, if the test is the metric that a school uses to decide if it's been successful or not, then teaching to the test is actually a very smart strategy." Because that's the measuring stick you're choosing to use. They're choosing to use. So if that's the measuring stick, if that's where you say, "Okay, if the kids do well on this test, that means that we did a good job teaching." That's a smart strategy to teach that test.

Sarah: [16:29](#) In our homes we get to pick the measuring stick though. We get to choose what a successful homeschool looks like for each of us. And I don't know how many of, almost 200 of us are here tonight, we are going to have almost 200 different ideas in our mind of what our homeschool should look like. Because God made us all unique. Gave us unique husbands and unique children and unique homes and unique living situations and neighborhoods, communities, co-ops, churches, all of our lives are just a little bit different from each other. So while they very likely, as we're here at Read Aloud Revival look similar, we have similar values. All of our ideal homeschool, the way we think, "This is the way I want my homeschool to look," it's going to look a little bit different and we get to be intentional about what we're shooting for. That way we can make sure that these actions we take on a daily basis, especially during long winter months, they're moving us in the right direction.

Sarah: [17:20](#) So we need to intentionally choose our measuring stick. What will we measure our success by? Because only when we know what we're measuring our success by will we be able to decide what steps we should take to get to. If I was to say, "Just do your best homeschooling for the

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next couple months. Good job, go do it, you can do it." And I showed up on your door step in eight weeks and handed each of your kids a test on the history of the Spanish influenza or something, it's meaningless. How would you do? How would your kids do, how would you do if you tried to take it? It wouldn't really matter, because you would probably say, "We weren't learning about Spanish influenza, so that's not going to be an indicator of how well we did in our homeschool."

Sarah: [18:03](#) Very similarly, if we're using, for example. Let me give you an example. For years I said I didn't want to put ... I never put my kids in school. So for years I said one of the reasons I didn't put my kids in school is because I didn't want them to be taught to those standardized tests. And yet, I would feel very intimidated when neighbor kids or my friend's children would talk about the things that they were learning in school, because I knew my kids couldn't do that. We weren't learning those same things. But I was doing it on purpose. It was kind of funny. I was using their measuring stick, like whenever my local public school thought kids should be able to read fluently, I was using that as a measuring stick even though I was purposefully not teaching to that system.

Sarah: [18:48](#) So we have to decide, unless you want to be sprung up with a test on the Spanish influenza when you haven't been studying for it, it doesn't make sense to use a measuring stick that doesn't jive with your own homeschool vision. But it's very easy to default into what everybody else around you is using for their own measuring stick.

Sarah: [19:07](#) So here's the question we're going to use to guide us. We're going to answer this later, so you can just start thinking about it now and I'm going to have you think about ... we're going to share answers in a little bit. But think for now, what do you want to say about this winter when it's over? What do you want to say about this winter when it's over? So come spring, the air is warming, the earth is greening up, what will you be glad you focused on? Actually let's take just a second right now, if you have ... I should have asked you to get a piece of paper in the beginning, but it's okay if you don't have one. If you

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have a piece of paper, or jot down whatever comes to mind first for you. If you're willing, share it in the chat box.

Sarah: [19:51](#) What's the first thing that comes to mind? And I think it's actually really important by the way, to use your gut answer in a question like this. The first thing that pops into your head, I think a lot of times our best answers are right under the surface. They're the things that are bothering us. The things that we don't have to dig very far to find. You don't have to really stop and think about, what's the right answer? Just, what's my gut answer? What's the thing that's bugging me, is probably going to come out right away. So what do you want to say about this winter when it's over?

Sarah: [20:22](#) Let's see. I'm going to read some of these. Of these are so good. We enjoyed each other and connected. Joy. We had fun. Bonding. Snuggling, reading aloud, lots of giggling. We have a better relationship. Yeah. Well that was fun. I like that. Yes, grown in character. Gathered strength. Oh, I like that. Love of learning. Having fun. We grew, we learned, we connected. Strengthening family connections. Less stress. More anxiety. Mm-hmm (affirmative). We connected well. Coziness, connection, mastery. We read so many books. Family closeness. It was productive. My kids explored their talents and had fun. I want us to have more meaningful memories, doing things, learning together. That's from Erica.

Sarah: [21:21](#) We are consistent with the basics, good. It was full of join connection, to love learning, connecting, reading. Laughter. Math. Very good. We tried new recipes. Spelling is nice too. Yes. There is something so satisfying about getting to those basics regularly. I will say our fall was kind of spare, as far as a rich education. It was sort of, like with my youngest ones, we really just did a lot of basics every day, and then a lot of read aloud's. And it felt very solid to me. It felt really good. We got to the holidays and I felt like we had really done a good job with our school. And it wasn't fancy. We didn't do very much. We just did some phonics and writing and math, and read aloud's. But it felt like getting to those over and over again, that does feel good. Especially if you can kind of do it over a sequence of time, a short period of time. That's good.

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- Sarah: [22:24](#) We cleaned the clutter, got ready for next semester. Very good. Good read aloud's, cozy time together. We re-discovered our joy of learning. Good. Okay. So thinking about that, that's what you want to be able to say at the end of winter, is whatever measuring stick that you're using to measure whether or not you're doing a good job in your homeschool. Does it jive with that?
- Sarah: [22:46](#) Because you're setting yourself up to be constantly frustrated if your measuring stick doesn't jive with what you really want, your kids, you to be able to say at the end of winter. So a couple things that are helpful to remember when we're thinking about a question like this. First, is that a year is a really long time. So I think we do a bit better if you think seasonally, which is why I didn't say, "What do you want your kids to say at the end of this year, but what do you want your kids to say at the end of this winter."
- Sarah: [23:12](#) There is some research that I read, and I need to figure out where I got it from. I need to go dig it up. The research said that when we think about ourselves a year from now, psychologically, we actually think, we're actually visualizing a different person. We're not visualizing ourself, we're visualizing somebody else. Probably somebody who looks like us but is perfectly at peace and 10 pounds thinner or something, right? So we're not visualizing ourselves because it's almost like we can't picture ourselves out that far. If you were to say, "What do you want your life to look like 10 years from now," that's really hard for me to ... I can kind of imagine, but it doesn't feel like me today. It doesn't feel like the thing that I'm doing today is making a difference that far out.
- Sarah: [23:55](#) And the same thing really goes with our kids. If I'm thinking about my daughter, 12 months from now, I might be picturing her as a different person. Somebody who can read easily, who never complains about her math, who doesn't antagonize her brother. Right? So it can help to scale things back and just go, "Okay, what do I want to say at the end of the next very short chunk?" And we're right here at the top of January, it's really helpful to say at the end of winter. When we're looking at March, what are we going to wish we had done January, February? Because a few small actions can make a big difference in

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how we feel in March if we've been intentional about January February.

Sarah: [24:34](#) So I think the first thing to think about today is simply that we, what we want most for our kids ... Well, if you're having a hard time thinking about what you want to say, what you want to say about your winter in March, if you're thinking, "I don't really know," kind of zoom ahead. Imagine yourself getting ready for Easter, it's March and you're maybe digging out the gardening stuff from the shed or packing away all the snow gear or whatever. And I realize as half of you are from Texas and Hawaii so you're like, "Snow gear?" It's spring and you're thinking, "Man, I'm so glad we spent our winter ... blank." What? I'm so glad we made time for ... blank. What can you imagine yourself saying?" The first thing is just realizing it needs to be a small amount of time so we can make a difference in our daily life now.

Sarah: [25:33](#) And the second thing is, we want to think about process, not outcome. This has been a huge learning challenge for me. Going back to our bamboo. If we were focused on the outcome, then those five years that we were watering the seeds and protecting the space and trying to protect this plant, we would feel like we were failing even though we were doing all the right things. Even though we were actually doing exactly what our bamboo needed to grow well. To grow at all. So similarly with our kids, we don't want to look at the outcome and decide whether or not it's working. Whether or not whatever we're doing is working. Our parenting, our homeschooling, whether any of it's working, because checking for instant outcomes just doesn't work when it comes to human beings. We're more like bamboo than we are like a radish. There's not an instant outcome.

Sarah: [26:30](#) You can put your child on a time out for hitting her brother, and that doesn't mean she's never going to hit her brother again. It probably will happen again, maybe in five minutes even. Because there's no instant outcomes. We're the same way. That's why we make these New Year's resolutions, and then we break them by January third. Because there's no instant outcomes, because we're human. And that's how God made us. That's part of the beauty of humanity and being an image of God, but it

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means that we have to make sure that we are laser focused on the process, the watering, and not on the outcome, the way it looks or what looks like success. Because otherwise we will get really distracted by feeling like our small actions aren't making a difference.

- Sarah: [27:13](#) Let me give you some practical examples. Some of you said that what you wanted was reading, lots of reading, lots of good books. So let's say, you're thinking, "In winter, at the end of winter, I want to say we read some really good books together." So you pick a good book, Johnny Tremain. Let's say Johnny Tremain. Have any of you read that, you want to tell me in the chat? By Esther Forbes, revolutionary war, okay.
- Sarah: [27:40](#) By the way, here's a quick tip for you. If you're looking at a book and you're thinking, "I don't know how long this is going to take us to read," you can go look at the audiobook version online on Amazon or whatever, look at the audiobook version and see how long it takes the narrator to read it. You might cut it a little bit. So for example, I just happen to know, Johnny Tremain takes I think almost nine hours as an audiobook, so you could probably read it in about eight. You're going to read a little faster than an audiobook does, because audiobooks are purposefully slower so even if you're trying to read kind of slow, you're going to read it slower than an audiobook.
- Sarah: [28:14](#) So you can go okay, "If I want to read Johnny Tremain I know I'm looking at about eight hours of reading aloud." The point is not to get done with Johnny Tremain. The point is not to finish the book. The good things actually happen while you're reading it. Now if you're anything like me, I have to really remind myself of that. Because checking it off the list feels like the win, the win is actually reading the book. It's not being done reading the book. Does that make sense?
- Sarah: [28:39](#) We could do this memory work too. So let's say that you decide your kids are going to memorize Paul Revere's ride, or no, American presidents or something geographical, okay. Some kind of memory work. The point isn't to finish memorizing the American presidents or whatever it is, Paul Revere's ride. The actual good things

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happen when they're reciting it. That's when they're being nourished.

- Sarah: [29:04](#) In the case of our bamboo, the seed's being nourished when you water. The seed's being nourished even when you don't see anything sprouting. So same thing. In the moment, when you're reciting the memory work, that's actually when the good things are happening. Not when it's done. Not when it's already memorized.
- Sarah: [29:23](#) Math, let's say math. If I'm thinking, "I want to get back on track with math because we're behind so we're going to try and do math every day for 30 minutes," doing the math for 30 minutes, that's where the good things happen. Not finishing the math book or lesson. The good things are happening in the moment. It's really hard to remember that if we're razor focused on the outcome. So in all of these cases, we are focusing relentlessly on the actual process, on the actual work.
- Sarah: [29:53](#) so for example, we're focused on the reading aloud, not on the finishing the book. Or we're focused on reciting our memory work, so then my goal becomes to have my kids recite Paul Revere's ride every day, not to memorize Paul Revere's ride. Do you see the difference? My goal is then to read from Johnny Tremain most days, not to finish Johnny Tremain. Or my goal is to do math problems every day, not to finish the math book.
- Sarah: [30:25](#) Because then what happens is something triggers in our mind where we realize that the process matters more than the outcome. The outcome actually comes from that. So you get the outcome by focusing on the process. Actually, you get the outcome better by focusing on the process. The bamboo grows because you focused on watering, not because you were dead set on growing bamboo. So it's really hard to remember that the benefit comes from doing the work. When your eye is focused on doing it and you realize the benefits are in the work itself, not in getting it done. I also think this sends a different message to our kids. If we're focused on getting through the book, we're sending our kids the message that getting through the book is the goal, not reading the book.

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- Sarah: [31:08](#) In his book, *The Pleasure of Reading in the Age of Distraction*, by Allen Jacobs, he's coming up on the ... We have a special edition podcast coming next and then after that. I was just editing the podcast so I was listening to him say this again, and he says, for a lot of people who want to read a lot of books, unfortunately, our goal ends up being wanting to be people how have read a lot of books, not people who enjoy reading. I fall into this, so I wrote a big ouch in the margin when I read this, because I thought, "Yeah, that's so true." Because we somehow think the achievement comes from finishing it when the achievement actually comes from doing the work, right.
- Sarah: [31:47](#) So the goal is not to get through the school year, the goal is to learn. And learning is the work we're doing throughout the year. That's the process. So it's really important I think if we just go, "Okay, so what, when I know what I want my kids to do this winter, when I know what I want to say about this winter when it's over, how can I focus on the process and not the outcome?" So let's circle back to this question. That first question was come spring, what will you wish you had focused on over the winter? And then a next step question is, so how can you measure that with a focus on a process instead of outcome?
- Sarah: [32:31](#) So going back up to some of the answers you guys put in the chat for what will you wish you had focused on over the winter, reading great books, I know I saw that. So you would focus on maybe tracking, maybe doing a habit tracker ... do I have one right here? I know that we have one, but I don't know if I have it printed out. Maybe my process should be cleaning my desk, you guys. We have one of those year at a glance, you can find it in membership under them resource library. One of those year at a glance calendars where you can check off every day. So if one of your goals is at the winter I know we're going to want to say we read a lot together, then just say, "We're going to read at least 15 minutes on as many days as possible," and check off those days. That's a good way to focus on the process instead of focusing on finishing this book by this date. Does that make sense?
- Sarah: [33:23](#) Or if your goal is ... I'm trying to think of some other examples. So tell me another thing, tell me in the chat, what's another thing besides reading that you wish, you'll

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wish you had focused on over the winter? Okay Jane says, "Exercise for you." Oh my goodness, yes. Me too. You put exercise daily, and I'm finding exercise to be really important for my mental health, for me just to, a stress relief. Again, instead of me focusing on achieving a certain weight or getting a, fitting into a certain pair of jeans which would be outcomes of exercise, just showing up for the exercise is where the good happens. So me measuring that, maybe taking off this many days, building that habit of exercise.

Sarah: [34:03](#) Nature walks. Tasha wrote nature walks. Awesome. So instead of focusing on finishing nature walks, just even having a place on your weekly schedule or however often you want to do it, where you say Friday mornings or wherever you do it, are set aside for being in nature and seeing how many Friday mornings in a row you can do that together or whatever. Playing more board games, I love that. I'm homeschooling harvest throughout playing more board games. I can't remember who it was in the forum who said that she tied a board game, this was last winter, it might have been Sara, I don't know. They did a board game after lunch every day, so it was like they always have lunch, so they just decided to play a board game after lunch every day and they were having a great time. And I thought, "That is really smart. Because everybody's eating every day." So it's like you're tying it to something that's already happening.

Sarah: [35:00](#) Jolene wrote quality time with each child weekly. So good. So again, focusing on ... and the thing is, the things that matter most to us, actually seem to pair up better anyway with focusing on process is that outcome. That's just kind of how it works, because the things that matter most to us in our group, they tend to be relationship based. Because we all have a very similar value of really learning to have good, warm connections with our kids. And so those kinds of relationship based goals are never outcome based anyway. They're never something you can cross off and be like, "I read 10 books." It doesn't work like that. It's more about showing up time after time.

Sarah: [35:47](#) I remember someone saying at the end of winter, they wanted to say they had showed up for their basics faithfully. I can't remember how they wrote it, but ... and

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similarly, if you wanted to try and focus that on process instead of on outcome, again, you might want to have some kind of a habit tracker where you're just focusing on whatever your basics are. If you say they're math, reading, spelling, whatever they are for you, math, reading, writing, whatever they are or however you organize it in your homeschool. Again, showing it up for each of those subjects for a certain amount of time every day.

Sarah: [36:26](#) The reason I think this works really well is because if we value a kid finishing a lesson, it's really hard for us not to communicate that to our kids, when we're in the middle of the lesson. I have this tendency and I think for some of us that tend to be a little bit driven, like a lot of homeschooling moms are, we see the thing, we want to check it off the list because we're going to get stuff done and I've got a lot of other stuff to do today. But we don't really want to send that message to our kids when it comes to their learning, and also we don't want to send them the message that they somehow learned more when we checked something off then when we were in it with them.

Sarah: [37:08](#) It's just a funny kind of thing that we do, because we love to check things off. I love to check things off my list. There's nothing wrong with checking things off your list, of course.

Sarah: [37:23](#) So there you have it. What'd you think? If you have a takeaway or you even had one little light bulb moment, I would encourage you to join us in RAR Premium. We're doing this every month, and it's superfantabulous. We are loving it. We're hearing really good feedback from everybody in RAR Premium that this is making a huge difference in their homeschool, even though what we're concentrating on each month is one small shift. Those little tiny shifts can make a huge difference in how much you're enjoying your homeschool, and how smoothly things are going for you.

Sarah: [37:55](#) So definitely join us. Go to rarpremium.com, you can sign up there. We have a 30 day money back guarantee, which means you can sign up, you can join us for the month or for the quarter, or for the year, whatever amount of time you want to sign up for. And in 30 days if you think, "You

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know what, this isn't the kind of fit I thought it was going to be, can I please get my money back," and of course, no problem, no questions asked. So there's no risk to try it, we would love to have you in Premium, and we think it's going to make a difference in your homeschool.

- Sarah: [38:23](#) Alright. Let's hear from the kids.
- Sarah: [38:29](#) Now it's time for, let the kids speak. I love this part of the podcast, because kids share the books that they're been loving lately.
- Riff: [38:41](#) Hi, my name [Riff 00:38:42] and I am seven years old. I live in Firestone Colorado. It's hard to pick out a favorite book, but I would say my favorite book is Fish in a Tree, because I like dramatic things and problems. I also like to hear about disabilities, to think about how it could help. I think this book for people of a variety of ages, young and old. This is how much I like this book. On a scale of one to 10, I give it 15.
- Eli: [39:09](#) Hi name's Eli, I live in Firestone Colorado, and I'm five.
- Mom: [39:15](#) What's your favorite book, Eli?
- Eli: [39:18](#) Little Robot by Ben Hatke.
- Mom: [39:22](#) What's your favorite part in the book?
- Eli: [39:24](#) The part when the bad robot that's turns mad to nice.
- Mom: [39:33](#) The big mean robot becomes a nice robot.
- Eli: [39:36](#) Yeah.
- Mom: [39:37](#) What is your name?
- Olivia: [39:39](#) Olivia.
- Mom: [39:40](#) And how old are you?
- Olivia: [39:42](#) Two.
- Mom: [39:43](#) And where do you live.
- Olivia: [39:45](#) I live Firestone Colorado.

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Mom: [39:48](#) Okay. And-

Mom: [39:52](#) Okay thank you. What is your favorite book?

Olivia: [39:54](#) Foxy Book and I get a little fox.

Mom: [39:59](#) Yes, it's called Are You There, Little Fox from Usborne. And what is your favorite thing about the book?

Olivia: [40:03](#) I like [inaudible 00:40:04]

Mom: [40:03](#) Thank you.

Olivia: [40:03](#) Zoom.

Mom: [40:03](#) very nice. Say goodbye.

Olivia: [40:03](#) Goodbye.

Elam: [40:19](#) Hello. My name Elam. I am 12 years old. I live in the suburbs of Chicago. My favorite read aloud is Where The Red Fern Grows, by Wilson Rawls. My favorite part is when Billy goes to the post office to pick up his dogs.

Hannah: [40:39](#) Hello, my name Hannah Mariah, I am 14 years old, I live in Illinois. My favorite read aloud is The Hiding Place by Corrie ten Boom. From this story, I learned to trust God and be faithful in hard circumstances.

Rawley: [40:55](#) Hello, my name is Rawley, I live in Kentucky, and I'm 11 years old. My favorite three series are [Intacatog 00:41:05], Boxcar Children, and the Penderwicks. I like them because they are really good audiobooks and they're funny.

Caden: [41:14](#) My name is Caden, I live in Kentucky. And my favorite three series is Intacatog, Penderwicks, and Mercy Watson. I like them because they're funny.

Sarah: [41:32](#) And how old are you?

Caden: [41:40](#) Five.

Minnie: [41:41](#) Hi, my name is Minnie. I'm four years old. I live in Yucaipa, California. My favorite book is Baby Bear, Baby Bear, What Do You See? I like it because [inaudible 00:41:49]

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- Speaker 11: [41:50](#) My name is [inaudible 00:41:51]. I live in Yucaipa California. I'm seven years old. My favorite book is The Secret Birthday Message by Eric Carle. I like it because the boy goes on adventure, to get his birthday present. It's a great book.
- Natalie: [42:11](#) Hi, my name is Natalie, and I'm 10 years old. And I live Yucaipa, California. My favorite book is Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets by JK Rowling. I like this book because it has magic in it, and the kids [inaudible 00:42:24]
- Renee: [42:27](#) Cheers. My name is Renee and I'm 12 years old. I live in Yucaipa, California. My favorite book is Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban by JK Rowling. I like it because it's a wonderful story full of fun, adventure, and loyal, lovable characters. I'm not going to say my favorite part for those that have not read it yet, but I love the magic of the story. I think people can continue to love this book for a long time.
- Sarah: [42:51](#) Thank you so much kids, and thank you for listening to this episode of the podcast. I'll be back in two weeks with another episode just for you. In the meantime, go make meaningful and lasting connections with your kids through books.