

Nicki: It's time to make your health an act of rebellion. We're tackling personalized nutrition, metabolic flexibility, resilient aging, and answering your diet and lifestyle questions. This is the only show with a bold aim to help one million people liberate themselves from the sick care system. You're listening to The Healthy Rebellion Radio. The contents of this show are for entertainment and educational purposes only.

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Robb: Welcome back, friends, neighbors, loved ones.

Nicki: Hello, everybody. This is episode 176 of The Healthy Rebellion Radio. What happened this week, hubs?

Robb: What didn't happen this week?

Nicki: You went around the sun one more time.

Robb: Well, I finished my lap.

Nicki: You finished a lap?

Robb: Yeah.

Nicki: Yep. So?

Robb: I didn't do the whole thing last week.

Nicki: This is true. You finished your lap. And now, you have begun a new one.

Robb: We'll see if I finish it, see if we all finish it.

Nicki: Let's see what else happened last week. Well, I went to a six-hour intensive beekeeping one-on-one class. So, super excited. Ordered my first two packages. For those of you that don't know, when you order bees, they come in what's called a package of about, I think, it's three pounds of bees with a queen. And that's what you use to shake into your hive. So, now, I'm in a hive research mode, trying to figure out what type of hive I want to have.

And I had historically have been really keen to do what's called a top-bar hive, which is a horizontal hive. And now, I am rethinking that after this class. The gentleman that presented it, he's been keeping bees here in Montana for over 20 years. And he said, when he started, that people told him, "Don't start with a top-bar hive." So, of course, he went out and started with a top-bar hive because he's stubborn that way.

And he still keeps some top-bar hives, but since his operation is much more commercial now, he has moved mainly to the standard, what you guys envision of seeing the hives out in a field somewhere, a Langstroth hive. And so, during the seminar, I was waffling and feeling like, "Oh, maybe I should listen to this guy and do the standard hive." And then I started doing some more research.

And I think I might have found what might be a happy medium, which is something called a Layens hive, which is also horizontal but it's deeper, which is good for the bees to be able to overwinter. The depth actually helps in an overwintering situation.

And then also this hive happens to be really, really insulated, which also helps in our climate for an overwintering situation. So, anyway, long story short, I'm full into researching all of that because I have to make this decision here shortly so that we can either-

Robb: Start building or purchasing or...

Nicki: ... build or acquire them. And because the bees should arrive sometime between mid-April and early May, so I got to have a home for them by then.

Robb: Maybe it will be my underwear drawer.

Nicki: No.

Robb: Because I will have moved out.

Nicki: Anyway, we'll keep you apprised of how that all goes for us this year, but pretty exciting. What else, hubs? Anything else at the top?

Robb: Just lots of interesting stuff in the world.

Nicki: In the world?

Robb: Standoff between states and federal government and things like that. And we're not technically a political podcast, but it's interesting. I just posted the other day. And did I mention this on this podcast or something else? But there's a guy, Jim Cochran, who is an economist at Stanford, and really a smart guy. He calls himself the grumpy economist, but he is, in fact, in my opinion, seldom grumpy.

But each morning, I get up and do various things, but eventually, I have to come to terms with clearing out all of the shit that has entered into my inbox overnight. And usually, it's just swipe left, just deleting this stuff, but this one thing from him caught my eye, which was, "Don't go out of your way to be a dick." And so, I was like, "Oh, I almost certainly need to read this."

Nicki: This message was tailored to you.

Robb: This message was tailored to me. But what he pointed out, there was this another economist who wrote a really beautiful piece that he felt like right-leaning conservatives could really benefit from reading.

But the thing is the way that this guy started the whole thing, it was three or four different topics in secession that would all but guarantee that any type of right-leaning conservative individual would just absolutely and completely check out and not listen to anything beyond the spot that they were at.

And he was like, "And it's really unfortunate because this guy actually had some really great insights and things that, if these folks thought about, would be really, really beneficial." And so, I've been trying to be better about that because if you're going to put anything out there, it's like hopefully, you have some impact. And if you're just shooting yourself in the foot by wantonly, knowingly pissing people off, then that's really not good.

And so, I posted a piece the other day just basically doing a little bit more the Socratic question method, which is I've noticed you can even be a little bit spicy and ask pointed questions, but people just seem to respond to it better, but just basically asking, "What do you all think about this?"

There was a piece that was basically saying there's an invasion in the United States, and there's this burgeoning standoff between the Texas National Guard and then elements of the federal government, both of whom are armed, both of whom have the right of law to enact violence on other individuals to further what they deem to be their goals. And I asked the question, I think, pretty well, which is, "What type of God-awful fucking brinkmanship do you all think this is?"

I worded it better than that. And probably 95% of people who commented on this thing, they're like, "Yeah, it's really scary, and we need a better handle on this stuff." And as this is typical one or two people focus on somebody else's... the person that I posted, they used the term invasion and stuff like that, and they focus on that.

I'm like, "Well, this is really heartening that you managed to ignore all the rest of this stuff and focus on this potentially inflammatory verbiage." But then the day after that, Governor Greg Abbott, governor of Texas, signed a declaration basically saying that Texas is indeed being invaded. Now, you can debate whether that's true or false, but we have a developing standoff between a good number of, what we'll call, red states versus the federal government. And...

Nicki: And we're recording this Friday morning on January 26th. So, I think-

Robb: In theory, sometime today.

Nicki: ... sometime today, there's some sort of a deadline for Abbott, too.

Robb: So, this may be super dated.

Nicki: Right.

Robb: We may be in a-

Nicki: By the time that this is...

Robb: ... shooting war, but this is just the...

Nicki: I hope not.

Robb: Hopefully not. I am at the point where an amicable divorce would maybe not be the worst thing in the world, although I think...

Nicki: It just seems...

Robb: Let me just finish this thought really quick. Although an amicable divorce is exactly what everybody outside the United States who hates the United States, everybody internal to the United States that hates the United States would love to see because it would be a fucking show even if we managed to pull this off without a bullet being fired, without a person being killed, but it would still be a disaster and would dramatically weaken the United States.

And I think that there's lots and lots and lots of people that would love to see that, but it is reaching this kind of fever pitch where it's like, maybe we do that. It's like a couple that they fell in love, and they were together and then they start growing apart, and at some point, if you start the... What's the term that defines a divorce? That...

Nicki: Irreconcilable differences?

Robb: No, the emotion, the...

Nicki: Contempt.

Robb: Contempt. Once you reach a level of contempt, when people step through the door of contempt, you have the ability to kill each other. Contempt fosters degrees of emotion that people will start killing each other. And I don't think we're far off of that. And, fuck, I don't know. And again, not a political show, although we dip our toes into things, but I feel like...

Nicki: I don't feel like as people face-to-face were there, it's just online, it really feels that way.

Robb: Absolutely. We won't even get into it. It's just I feel like things were at a fever pitch, and regardless of where you are on this immigration topic. Part of what I posted the other day was a link to the Costa Rican immigration page. And

they have clearly defined what immigration constitutes there.

And if you go there, you go to Costa Rica, and you can get a temporary visa, there's a whole variety of things that you get, but you are recommended to buy not inexpensive health insurance while you're there, if you're going to be there for an extended period of time, because if you get hurt or injured or sick, they will not just stick you into their healthcare system.

Nicki: Won't care for you.

Robb: You'll die. And they make it very clear. And then I posted a picture just of the basic operations of a cell. A cell is defined by a semi-permeable membrane that lets certain things in, some things out, at a certain cadence. If you don't have that, the cell dies. And we're streaking up to a spot where the integrity of the cell, the integrity of the unit, is dramatically being compromised in the response. So, what kills you when you get COVID or the flu? It's not the flu. It's not covid.

Nicki: The inflammatory response.

Robb: It's the inflammatory response. And we are fucking agitating for the inflammatory response. And this is the thing that I've been saying for ages that this...

Nicki: It's so fascinating to me that this is such a contentious issue. I've seen people have been circulating videos of President Obama speaking about the border and how important it is to have a secure border for the health of a nation and the security of a nation. These aren't controversial-

Robb: It's because Trump-

Nicki: ... topics.

Robb: ... made some inflammatory statements and then-

Nicki: About the wall. And then...

Robb: ... everybody lost their fucking mind.

Nicki: Exactly. I don't know how we can get folks to self-reflect on that and really just look at the situation. There have been more people that have come into this country during the Biden administration than are the population of 33 of our states.

Robb: Right.

Nicki: Montana's population is a million. 33 states combined worth of people have crossed our border. And we don't know who they are. And a lot of them appear to be-

Robb: Young-

Nicki: ... young-

Robb: ... able-bodied men.

Nicki: ... able-bodied men. And we don't know who they are, what their background is. I think immigration is amazing, it's what built this country, but everybody who came here had to come through and follow a legal process.

Robb: There was a time when it was come one, come all. And honestly, that was before there was any type of infrastructure that the government provided anything for you. You came here and-

Nicki: You made your way.

Robb: ... you didn't make it, you either made your way or you died. And any country, anywhere now, they have some standards and rules and regulations about how you interface there. And so, again, all I'm throwing out here is that we need some sort of a reasonable response to this, or it has the potential to just spiral out of control.

And the one thing that I'll say, and I'll shut up, and we really will be down to six listeners, is just that, like I said before, the response to this is what could get us. And I know Trump is a really difficult person. And he just has inflamed so many people. I'm not a fan of the guy. I'm really not.

I didn't demonize him the way that the rest of the world did because I read Sharyl Attkisson's book and actually looked at it objectively. And I don't like the guy. I don't think he's a good human being. If I had dinner with him, I wouldn't. It would be easy to imagine-

Nicki: It'd be painful.

Robb: ... getting... well, being painful and getting into a fistfight with the guy because I don't like narcissists, but people have just taken their brain out and stuck it on a shelf in lieu of just looking at the reality of things. And it's so interesting to me that the federal government, at this point, is willing to inspire brinkmanship with half the states in the country at present, which we played that game once. And people will say, "Well, you know how it went for the South last time."

And it's like, well, it may not go that way this time. There's this film coming out sometime this year talking about civil war. The North doesn't win that one because everybody understands that the bulk of the military personnel, gun-carrying people, are in these red states. You just don't want to fuck around with this. You just don't.

And I assume that our listenership has probably been whittled down. Unfortunately, it's probably an echo chamber. People probably largely agree with the stuff that we spew. Otherwise, they self-selected out. But if you're one of those folks that's middle ground on this, talk to some friends, ask some questions, why is this thing being handled the way it is, and why has it been brought to this brinkmanship? Are you going to read the Stephen King book?

Nicki: I am, just because I figured it's a good transition. You mentioned that people have their brains... So, this has been...

Robb: This is amazing.

Nicki: So, Stephen King, as you all know, the author of many, many books, tweeted, "The economy is stronger than ever. Under Trump, it was a disaster." And I don't follow Stephen King, but I follow this guy named Alexandros Marinos. And he retweeted that with the caption, which I think is just brilliant, he says, "Truly great authors can take you to a different dimension with just 12 words," because...

Robb: And I replied to Stephen King about that. And I said, "Listen, even if this was dumb luck, what you said is a lie." Let's say Trump had nothing to do with it, but just temporarily relatively good economy versus relatively bad economy. And it's shit like that that just for whatever team sports people are playing, you're going to lie to yourself and others to that degree, really? Anyway.

Nicki: Okay. This is going to be our homeschooling episode, folks. And we just-

Robb: Fuck, man. I guess it's...

Nicki: ... threw it off a cliff.

Robb: Well, it's right in line with that because homeschoolers are nutcases and all that.

Nicki: All right. You have a news topic for us before we go there.

Robb: In the news topic is Steven Koonin on the limitations of climate change models. Man, we're just-

Nicki: Okay.

Robb: ... jumping-

Nicki: And this is a video.

Robb: ... that fuckin' shark. This is a video. Steven Koonin was an Obama-era Secretary of Energy. And he was tasked with writing a comprehensive report about what the impacts of climate change would be for the United States and

the world. He's a theoretical physicist.

And when he got in and really started looking at things, what he noticed, in his opinion, and as a scientist, I think it's pretty verifiable, is just that there were lots of problems with the models, the climate change models. They're all over the place. They average them.

When they plug data into them with historical information and then try to play it forward to model what the climate should have been, so we know what temperatures and fluctuation, it doesn't model. So, you can't take historically understood data, put it into these things, and then have it play forward and actually show what we had. And that's a piece.

A bigger, more concerning piece to this is that, by and large, the worst-case scenarios of these models are not really that bad when you really auger in. And none of the models, even as potentially compromised as they are, as difficult as they are to provide anything really deep and insightful around them, they are not predicting Armageddon, they are not suggesting existential threats.

And a lot of what he talks about in his book, *Unsettled*, which this talk is a great overview of that, is simply that the climate change models are not predicting the severity of what is being claimed within the media, within the government. And that's a thing that I would like you all to just dig in and be a little bit familiar with.

I'm going to refer back to this in a substack piece that I'm working on, but there's another thing looking at some new climate science information that's really fascinating. And I don't really want to let the cat out of the bag on that, but it's super interesting.

But I think that this is just another one of these pieces that the conventional wisdom, the mainstream narrative, maybe isn't on point. And Nicki and I have talked about this. There are these surveys that suggest that the youth of the world feel like they don't have a future and they're in this existential crisis of what's-

Nicki: A lot of anxiety-

Robb: ... the point of even going on.

Nicki: ... that the youth have apparently is due to the fact that they feel like the earth is going to-

Robb: End.

Nicki: ... end.

Robb: And so, I think it's super important that we critically reasonably assess all



of this stuff and also ask the question. Part of what goes into this, even if we were to face a worst-case scenario climate change, story of sea levels rising, and different things like that, at what cost do we attempt to modify that versus operate with good information and then adapt to that situation?

The Netherlands has been adapting to climate change for 600 years. Two-thirds of the country is below sea level because they've built dikes and levees. And they're incredibly productive. And they've been adapting to it. Humanity can adapt to it if we have energy if we have accurate information. When we don't have good information, when we don't have energy, which is the capacity to do things, then we are lost.

Nicki: All right.

Robb: This is going to be a barn burner [inaudible 00:21:24] talk.

Nicki: All right. The Healthy Rebellion Radio is sponsored by our Salty AF electrolyte company, LMNT. Everyone needs electrolytes. And if you're an active person and/or on a low-carb diet, you really need electrolytes to feel and perform your best. Unfortunately, most electrolyte products on the market are filled with sugar, making them counterproductive for health.

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Robb: Folks in Texas had to wear a sweatshirt.

Nicki: They did. It's the season for hot and cozy beverages. The limited-time chocolate medley is still available. This 30-count box contains 10 each of chocolate chai, my personal favorite, chocolate mint, and chocolate raspberry. Again, this is a limited time offering and will be available as long as supplies last.

You can grab your chocolate medley along with any of our other flavors, including grapefruit, salt, citrus salt, watermelon salt, orange salt, and other salts at [drinklmnt.com/robb](https://drinklmnt.com/robb). That's [drinklmnt.com/robb](https://drinklmnt.com/robb). Remember, the LMNT insider bundle is your best value. You can buy three boxes and get the fourth box free. Again, that's [drinklmnt.com/robb](https://drinklmnt.com/robb).

Okay. As we mentioned up front, this episode, we plan to talk a little bit about homeschooling. We had a couple questions come in over the past few weeks specific to homeschooling. And we thought we would just give a little bit of an idea of what we do, some of the trials and tribulations.

Robb: What are we, four years in now?

Nicki: 2019 was our... Yeah, four years.

Robb: Four years.

Nicki: Okay. So, this first question is from Jessica. I'm going to actually read both questions. We have two questions, a question from Jessica, a question from Jack. We'll read both questions. And then we'll dive in. So, she writes, "Hi, Robb and Nicki. I've been a fan for over 10 years. You, along with a couple others, helped me to find the Paleo diet when I was in the midst of several health issues.

Long story short, I changed not just my diet but my lifestyle years ago and have never looked back. I'm actually writing to you on something unrelated to diet, something I never thought I would do. My husband and I live near a big city. And over the last few years, we have become increasingly unhappy with our environment.

I've always loved cities for their walkability, culture, and convenience, but our city leaders keep developing to the point where my five-year-old daughter doesn't even know what the woods are. Also, while my daughter seems to love school, we have concerns for her staying in the public education system with all its current issues. We are seriously contemplating a move to the middle of nowhere.

Unfortunately, my husband would have a long commute to work, but this would enable us to possibly do some things we have dreamed about, such as homeschooling or finding a micro-school for our daughter, have chickens and/or goats and bees, and create our own environment instead of worrying about the city building something in our backyard. I'm writing to you all for advice.

Do you have any tips for starting this journey? Any thoughts on starting homeschooling for a five-year-old, especially for a kid that is extremely social and extroverted? I currently work full-time, but will have to quit to either support her schooling or look for a remote position that will offer me some flexibility. Either way, I have some obvious anxiety over all these changes. And it would be great to hear your thoughts and any lessons learned. Thanks for all you do."

Okay. And then we have a question from Jack. "Hi, Robb and Nicki. We're struggling a bit with our daughter just now. She's not loving school, not wanting to go, not engaged by it particularly, all this against a backdrop of some sensory processing disorder that makes the whole environment a little much for her. The occupational therapist thinks autism, but if it's there, it's fairly mild.

So, we were discussing all options, pushing the school a bit harder, moving her elsewhere, et cetera, and the possibility of homeschooling. I was wondering what that actually looks like for you, guys. How much of their academic learning do you provide personally? Are any of the online teaching resources really good? What is a realistic time commitment?

Would you do this if you just had one child or do you feel they'd be too isolated? Do you take steps to ensure that they spend time away from home or from you, for example? Are there other aspects of this that we may easily miss as we try to anticipate what it might look like?" Okay. And I think we have mentioned this before, but when we were in Reno, the girls were in a Montessori program. And then when we moved, long story short, we realized that Zoe was in first grade, and...

Robb: The preschool and kindergarten was fantastic. And I think Montessori, historically, has been a great...

Nicki: Wonderful things-

Robb: I don't if it...

Nicki: ... about the program. It's just this particular school, a friend of ours, who had her daughter in the same class as Zoe, she was a third grader, pulled her kids out. And after talking to her at length, we realized, okay, we're not going to continue this path. And this was right when we decided...

Robb: Because they were not following through-

Nicki: They weren't following-

Robb: ... with the Montessori methodology.

Nicki: ... Maria Montessori's methods.

Robb: So, we went backwards that year. Her reading and her math went backwards. The interesting thing about Montessori is that it has a lot of structure. It has a lot of thought in it. Intuitively, they arrived at a lot of educational processes that end up mapping well with cognitive development and neuroscience and stuff like that, but you still have to hold the kid's feet to the fire to some degree.

Kids would always prefer to just play games and go bang on a musical instrument and stuff like that. And what we discovered is that, for whatever reason, this school, and it may be other schools, too, but they just were not following through on the methodology.

And we had heard that there were seventh and eighth grade kids that had gone through the whole curriculum. And they needed to listen to books on tape to do book reports because their reading was at such a poor level that they couldn't keep up with the volume necessary to do that.

Nicki: So, needless to say...

Robb: I just think that context is important because there are laudable

characteristics about dropping your kid off and being gone. You're giving up a lot. There was also this thing of, okay, in this situation, you're paying a non-trivial amount of money for the kids to go there and they're really not getting what they need.

Nicki: Right. And then this was right when we decided to move to Texas. And the Texas public school systems are great, at least-

Robb: By and large.

Nicki: ... by and large, compared to where we were in Nevada. And so, we intended on putting them in public school, but I wanted to take the first half of that semester... This was the fall of 2019. The plan was just to homeschool for those four months and get Zoe's math up to par before putting her in an environment where she potentially would feel like she wasn't doing well and whatnot.

And then, of course, as we all know, COVID happened. And everybody moved to remote learning and homeschooling anyway. So, we had already begun that when that happened. And then we've just stuck with it going forward. So, let's see. Where do we want to start with this?

Robb: So, maybe-

Nicki: So, I think...

Robb: ... let's go to the other one and just address a few-

Nicki: Okay.

Robb: ... things there.

Nicki: So, Jessica. So, as far as starting for a five-year-old... So, actually, what I want to do is there are a ton of resources online, and there's a ton of ways to homeschool. What we're going to share is part of how we arrived at what we're doing now, but it's, by no means-

Robb: The way.

Nicki: ... the answer or the way. And we're still figuring it out. And we still have things that we're questioning and not sure on. So, take what we say with a grain of salt. Okay. Thinking a million things here. So, when we started in that fall of 2019, the focus was really for Zoe, math and spelling and handwriting.

Montessori believes in writing in cursive. I really wanted that to be a foundation for the girls, too. It's supposed to be really great for hand, eye, brain development, all of that stuff. So, we really just focused that first year on math and spelling.

Robb: And it's almost like a second language now because there are shitload of kids that can't even read cursive.

Nicki: Right.

Robb: If kids want to do a secret code, they can write in cursive. And maybe 80% of kids can't read it now.

Nicki: And then we tried a program called Build Your Library, which I thought was really great. It's a reading-based curriculum on... And it has books about science, and literature, history. So, we delved into that. It was pretty intense. And I don't think that the girls loved it. So, again, I'm sharing how there's not a set way.

And I think most homeschooling parents would say that they've modified their curriculum and they change as they try things. They run with it. If it works great, you keep it, and if it doesn't, then you let it go, just like learning anything in life. So, we tried that. What was the other thing I was going to mention here?

Robb: The spell to write to read.

Nicki: Yep, spell to write to read was our spelling curriculum. We loved that.

Robb: Well, it was great. Looking at it, it was the aha moment I had when I studied Spanish and German, like, "Oh, this is what an inflexive adjective..." whatever. This stuff makes sense. But it was pretty intense for the kids. The girls...

Nicki: Well, no, the spell to write to read is more you're learning phonograms. And-

Robb: Okay.

Nicki: ... it's a spelling program. And the idea is you learn to spell first and you write the words and then reading comes. I had something else I wanted to say-

Robb: Sorry.

Nicki: ... but it totally escaped me. Where we are now. So, we've tried a handful of things. And the girls were saying they wanted more structure. The community piece, to Jessica's point, I have an extremely social kid. That part was missing for us. The girls did jujitsu. They've done gymnastics. So, they've done some extracurricular activities, but nothing like... And they've done different outdoor school-type programs.

Robb: And could I just throw in really quick. Moving to rural areas is great in a lot of ways, but we had some challenges around that, that, sometimes, there just aren't any kids around. We now-

Nicki: Right.

Robb: ... are in a spot where our kids have met other kids on the street that we live.

Nicki: And when we were living in Kalispell, we were in a pretty remote spot.

Robb: There weren't kids there.

Nicki: I know there were kids, but nobody was ever outside. And the houses were nestled in trees. And so, it wasn't like when we were kids and you'd ride your bike down the street and you see kids playing in their front yard. So, it was a big challenge-

Robb: When we moved-

Nicki: ... the social piece in Kalispell.

Robb: ... here, we saw other kids. And we told our kids, "Go introduce yourselves and say hi." And they were like, "How do I do that?" And we're like, "You knock on the door, and, 'Hi, my name is...'" And so, something that Nicki and I just took for granted because we grew up with going in-

Nicki: Neighbors.

Robb: ... and seeing friends, neighbors. So, that's a thing. And the rural living is really cool in a lot of ways, but it can be isolating. It can be problematic that way. Also, where we are now, on a one-mile dirt road that we live on, there might be 20 kids within two to three years age of our kids. And so, it can be great. It can also be a little bit weird in that regard.

Nicki: So, where we are now, because we were remote, and then we moved to Bozeman, and the girls were like, "We want a little more structure." So, I have a cousin. We have some friends from Texas that had their kids in a program called Classical Conversations. It's a Christian-based homeschooling community program. And they are all over the world, I believe.

And we'd heard about it in Texas. We know people that do it. Their kids seem to be thriving in it. We drag our feet there. But then moving to Bozeman, the girls were like, "We want to do something a little different." I looked into it. And we're like, "Okay. Let's give this a shot." So, that's what we're actually doing this year.

Robb: And I'll just say the girls are doing twice as much work as what they did with us individually. I think it's all good work. And although some days are still a struggle, it's way less of a battle because they have the accountability.

Nicki: I'll explain all that.

Robb: Okay.

Nicki: So, the way it works is there's a one in-person community day. And so, Jessica, I think, obviously, depending on the faith piece, which that was one of the reasons why we were unsure about it in the beginning because we aren't regular churchgoers. We do want our children to grow up with-

Robb: Values.

Nicki: ... Christian values, and right from wrong, golden rule, all of those things are important, but we don't go to church. So, I wasn't sure if it would be a good fit, but we went and checked it out. And then we decided to give it a shot. So, it meets one day a week. Parents, or a parent is there with the children. There are parent tutors. So, some moms that have been in the program for a while are tutoring the program. They've been trained in the program.

And so, you go one day a week. It's separated into depending on the age of the child. So, we have a nine-year-old and 11-year-old. So, there's the morning program, which is foundations, and then the afternoon program, which is Essentials if your child is nine or older. So, I'm just going to give a highlight of it because we actually really, really like this program.

And we're only a little over a semester in, but just to give folks an idea of what this could look like. So, foundations in the morning. They learn some Latin, some history, science, math, timeline, and art. So, it's a three-hour chunk. And there's a section for each of these things.

So, the Latin history is pretty brief. The timeline piece is pretty brief. Timeline being history of the world from creation to they go all the way to 2001 here in the states. Latin being important because they want you to be able to, again, being faith-based, read the scripture eventually and know the word of God. For us, I was like, well, this is a great skill-

Robb: Great-

Nicki: ... skill because...

Robb: ... speaking for Spanish and Italian and French.

Nicki: And medical terms. And there are so many vocabulary words that have Latin roots, so this is a win. And another thing I love about the foundations program in the morning. So, it's a lot of song-based, and so it's easy, especially for littles, if you have a five-year-old. The five-year olds love this program. Even Sagan, at nine, loves it. Zoe, at 11, I think she could take-

Robb: Getting a bit much.

Nicki: ... it or leave it. But there are songs for all the little chunks that they're

learning about history. Tell me about the Manifest Destiny. Tell me about George Washington, or the Declaration of Independence. And this cycle is U.S. history. There's three cycles. So, each year, they're learning a different theme of stuff.

One thing I love about it is each week, each child has to get up and do a presentation. They have three minutes to speak. And this can be show and telly-esque or talking about their weekend or something that they're interested in or something they built, something they drew, but I love how it's getting them comfortable standing in front of a room full of their peers and the adults that are in the room.

Robb: And Zoe has commented that where before, if she was faced with a situation of public speaking, she would have been really anxious about it. And she is quite poised and competent now. And she said that it's really not a problem for her. I just thought that that was remarkable. It was really impressive.

Nicki: So, that's the morning. And then there's an art project and some sort of science experiment about volume or whatnot. And so, as a five-year-old, you only go for the morning, from 9:00 to noon. And then each of the rest of the days of the week, as the mom, you are going over the material. So, you're reviewing that Latin, you're reviewing that history song, the science topic, the math facts that were taught that week, the timeline, all that stuff.

So, it gives you structure. You know what you need to review for the next week. It's very fun song based. And when they're little, I think it's wonderful. Obviously, you can add anything else you want because you are still your child's teacher. This isn't a teacher-student situation. You are there for the community piece. And then you carry on that learning throughout the week.

Once they're nine and older, nine to 11, they can stay for the afternoon program, which is my favorite thing of all, which is the Essentials. And it's English grammar, math games, and writing. And the writing program they use is called Institute for Excellence in Writing. You can access it online even if you have an older child or a child that struggles with writing and you don't want to do Classical Conversations. It's an independent program. IEW is the abbreviation. It's fabulous.

Absolutely love it. They are learning to read a source text. They go through and learn how to do a keyword outline, basically pick out the important facts from the source text. They then write a rough draft based on their keyword outline. It gets edited with the help of a parent. They write a final draft. And then the following week, at the community day, they read it in front of the class.

So, again, another opportunity to read and be speaking in front of your class. The piece I love about this is because there's that present-in-class component. It's not me making them accountable to do the work. They know that if they don't do it, they don't have something to stand up and present to their class.



Robb: Pretty embarrassing.

Nicki: It can be embarrassing. So, there's that extra motivation, I guess, too.

Robb: And external. One of the challenges with homeschooling becomes this thing where you really do want to try to find spots where you can offload teacher responsibility, the accountability, just so it's someone else.

Nicki: Just so you're not the only one nagging on them-

Robb: So, you are not the only nagging... Yeah.

Nicki: ... whereas they know that this is what all their other classmates are going to be doing. And so, they have that-

Robb: Motivation.

Nicki: ... expectation. So, Institute for Excellence in Writing is a component of Classical Conversations in their Essentials program. But again, if you're just considering homeschooling, and you have a kid, and they have it for all age ranges, and there's online video components and source materials, and just check out their website. There's videos. The founder, Andrew Pudewa, is great. I've watched several of his videos. I think he's actually a listener of our podcast.

And anyway, I can't recommend that program enough for all things writing. So, I'm excited that that's just a built-in piece of the program that we're doing here with Classical Conversations. The English grammar part is great because not only are they learning all the parts of speech, but they're doing a lot of sentence diagramming. And I remember doing this in Catholic school and hating it. And so, I was a little intimidated at first. How is this going to go?

But it's taught so well. And I guess I'll preface this, that all C.C. communities are different, and again, as they are parent moms that are... And I guess dads, too. There aren't any dads teaching at our campus, but I know that they do some in some places. So, it's parents. And you're going to get a variety of teaching styles and whatnot. I feel very fortunate that the woman that's leading our Essentials program, I love her. She's fabulous at what she does.

Robb: She has an education background, too.

Nicki: And so, she's great. And so, they're doing sentence diagramming, which the reason for that, apparently, is for learning Latin. So, as they get older and they move beyond... Zoe, next year, will be in something called Challenge A. And so, the program goes all the way through the end of high school. And as they get into these challenge years, there's a lot more Latin, and the ability to know what a direct object and indirect object is and how you diagram it.

I don't know this yet because we're not there, but from what I hear, it

really, really helps with learning Latin and the different noun declensions and all the things that happen in Latin. There's a math game section in the middle, which I also love. They do a lot of mental math.

They do this thing called number knockout where dice are rolled and you have... Let's say, three dice are rolled, and it's a three, a six, and a five, and you have a grid of numbers from one to 36, and you need to use that three, six, and five that were rolled on the dice to create problems and find a solution to knock out a number on your grid.

So, three, six, and five, you could add them all together. Three plus six is nine. Nine plus five is 14. You could cross out the 14. But you can also use division multiplication. You can use powers if you're familiar with three to the power of zero is one. And so, they're given a timeframe to try to... And it's not really competition-based, but some kids really get into it.

In the beginning, this was really frustrating for Zoe, she struggled with it, but just even in the last four months, her confidence with that type of math skill has grown tremendously, which is great to see versus just always looking at a worksheet of math on your paper and, okay, today, we're doing long division, but to be thrown numbers quickly...

Robb: It's a really open-ended way to apply to math.

Nicki: And there's a lot of different games that they use like that. And again, I'm not a math teacher. I went through Catholic school through eighth grade, and a public high school, and then I have my bachelor's degree. So, these are things that I wouldn't have known about had I not been joined this community.

And again, I know there's probably homeschooling moms out there that have tons of math, but you come across these things in different ways. And so, anyway, I've been very impressed with the Essentials program at our campus. What else do I want to say? So, we go on Mondays. That's our community day.

And then after that, we work on those things throughout the rest of the week. So, for their writing, they're doing their keyword outline, their rough draft, all of that. We do sentences. So, there's example sentences that they then have to diagram. So, we're practicing that, whichever sentence structure we're learning, whether it's a simple sentence or it's got indirect objects and direct objects.

So, all of that just keeps getting reinforced and worked on throughout the week. There's not a true math curriculum with C.C. They're working on one, and I think one might be coming out in beta next year, but currently, most people have their own math curriculum. So, some people will use Singapore. We've used Math-U-See since the very beginning, and like it.

Robb: Have liked it.

Nicki: So, we're sticking with that. So, again, this math program is completely independent from anything. So, you could-

Robb: Plug in, just-

Nicki: ... plug in-

Robb: ... that thing that you want.

Nicki: ... wherever. It goes from basic arithmetic all the way through Calculus.

Robb: First semester Calculus.

Nicki: So, we use that. And there's a video that you watch where the instructor is walking through whatever it is that you're learning for that day. And then there's a week's worth of lessons, and then a review, and then a test, a lesson test. And then after that unit, you do a unit test. And so, it's a very straightforward standard math curriculum. There's...

Robb: And their philosophy is you see it, you do it, and then you teach it back. And I will say that we've been poor on the teach it back part. And I really do think that it's as important as the other two pieces because when you can teach something, you really understand it. And we were lazy on that. And we've been circling back in and doing more of that.

Nicki: And a lot of it depends on your kid. We have two kids. One math seems to come quite easy to her. And the other one, it's a challenge. And so, the time commitment will be greater. I believe it was Jack who asked about time commitment.

I think broadly, with schooling, it's really going to be kid-dependent because some kids take to things really quickly or they have an interest in the thing and it just boom, boom, boom. And my cousin's children, she has four, and her daughter gets through all of her school in two hours and is completely done. And I would say...

Robb: And is almost 100% self-contained.

Nicki: And is performing at a high level at all of it. Her older son is more like our older child. And it's like pulling teeth to get it. And he can work until 5:00 PM at night and barely be done with the work that he has that similar work that was done by the daughter in two hours. So, it really is kid-dependent in-

Robb: How they tackle it.

Nicki: ... how they tackle it and how they approach it. What was I going to say? We also use, I think we've mentioned this before in the podcast, but supplemental for math. We use this series of books called Life of Fred. There's a

little bit of Christian faith steeped into it, but the predominance of this story is just is a super silly story. It's this five-year-old who is a math professor at a place called Kittens University. And it's just he's three feet tall, which is-

Robb: And he never eats.

Nicki: ... one yard. And it's fabulous because it's story format. So, the kids that like stories and like to read but maybe don't like math, it's a great story. And all of the math that he encounters in his day is woven into the story along with life lessons about reading the fine print because you could get swindled, or not trusting strangers, and why you wouldn't just jump right into a business without giving it any thought. And so-

Robb: There's great stuff in it.

Nicki: ... there's all these amazing lessons woven into the story.

Robb: And it really is a legit integrated learning environment where they get some history, some reading, some-

Nicki: English.

Robb: ... epistemology, English, and it's all woven together. It's really masterfully done. It is not a standalone math curriculum. It would be probably not enough reps on that, but as a supplemental piece to all of your homeschool education stuff, I think it's phenomenal.

Nicki: And it's meant that the parent read it to the child and then work through it together when they're young. And then once they reach fractions, they read it on their own. Most of the learning, as adults, we do in life is we're reading something and then learning from the text. And so, that's what the goal is from fractions and on up.

But I have so many fun memories of reading Life of Fred to them. And still, with Sagan, she's not at fractions yet, so I'm still reading it to her, but it's just silly and funny. And then random comments will come up. And the girls will be like, "Oh, yeah, like C.C. Coleback," who's the villain in the story. So, I don't know. Love it. I really, really love that program. Let's see. Let's go up and read these questions.

Robb: You got a note there that changes are okay. We've iterated off this stuff a lot, but I will say that the C.C. has provided some structure that I think was really helpful for us, both social structure and offloading that motivation. You want kids to be intrinsically motivated, but there is something nice about supporting your team and not letting them down and not looking foolish when you show up and you're the only kid in the group that wasn't prepared for their presentation.

Nicki: Okay. So, I think for Jessica, I think that what we've just shared probably

helps, whether you do a program like C.C, which, depending on how remote of an area you're looking to move, there might not be a community there.

I know a lot of their materials are available online, but I do think there's so much power in having that community day, but if you were really remote, I would just try to find for sure some extracurricular activities like gymnastics or a martial art or pottery class or something that you could go and do and get some other social interaction.

Robb: And I'll mention this. It's like quote the social piece, but it's also one of the challenges of homeschooling is it's the same people, the same walls, the same stuff. It really begins to feel like groundhog stand. One thing that I've missed compared to my childhood, I would get home from school, and I had some sports or different things, but we'd sit down and my parents would be like, "So, what did you do today?"

"Well, Steve and I went and set this thing on fire. We did this, and we did that." But there was something new whereas you sit down with your kids, and you've seen them all day, and just that piece is a little weird, just the newness part and the thing that isn't just parent derived. And so, even on the gymnastics and jujitsu and stuff like that, I only stick around maybe half the time when they're doing some of those things.

I watch, and I'm interested, and I ask them questions about it, but because we spend so much time together, otherwise, I actually try to give them some space where it's just them doing it. And then if they have something special coming up, like a competition or they're going to test for the next level of something, then, for sure, you show up for that, but I think you have to be a little bit ironically crafty about creating some space because you don't have that much...

Nicki: Which was Jack's question, "Do you take steps to ensure that they spend time away from home-"

Robb: Absolutely.

Nicki: "... or from you?" And I think that's important. And we're still working on that. I don't think we're great at that yet, but definitely working on it. One of the nice things about being where we are now, and there's kids from their C.C. community that live not too far away from us, so we meet over the break. We went ice skating with the kids. There was a Jump Time trampoline park thing.

And so, they now have school friends that they can do things with, which I think is really, really cool. There's the hot springs here that we go to reasonably regularly. And there's another family with kids in the same program. And so, they're off swimming together. And so, that's good. Let's see. What else did we miss? Realistic time commitment. Jack-

Robb: Again, it just varies.

Nicki: ... again, it really, really depends. And it also depends on what you want to focus on. Again, as a homeschooling parent, you are the teacher. So, what is the most important thing for your daughter? You don't have to teach all nine, seven, eight, nine subjects. You can focus on weaknesses for a chunk of time.

Maybe it's just math and reading, or maybe you're making it fun, and you're doing art and weaving in some math. And you get to decide how that looks. "Would you do this if you just had one child, or do you feel they'd be too isolated?"

Robb: Again, I think that's going to depend on extracurriculars, the individual kid, their-

Nicki: There are only-

Robb: ... needs.

Nicki: ... children that we've met in the program and the parents are doing it because they really feel like the public school where they live is not -

Robb: Providing.

Nicki: ... providing and it's just not an option for them as a family. And so, again, I think it really depends on the kid, how social they are, and then what other things can you throw into the mix to get them that other social interaction. I will say our kids are pretty good at talking to grownups and kids.

Zoe made a comment, though, the other day. She's doing this skiing program, and it's age-based, and so she's with 10 and 11-year-olds. And one tricky thing for her, she's very, very tall for her age. I'm five seven and a half and she's almost got me. And she's 11. And a lot of other 10 and 11-year-olds are five feet, or 4'8, or 5'1. So, she towers over a lot of them. And it's something that's-

Robb: She's self-conscious about.

Nicki: ... she's very self-conscious about. And so, she instantly sees shorter people as being younger. And so, she's in the skiing program, and there's nobody at her height. And so, I was just curious because it just started. And I'm like, "Are there any kids in there that you feel like you connect with?"

Or I know it's all skiing, so it's maybe not an ideal opportunity for chatting and making friends, but I was just asking her. And she's like, "Mom, they're all toddlers," because just the height thing. And then she said, "Also, mom, kids that go to public school, they're not as approachable like the kids at C.C." And that was really interesting to me.

And I don't know. I didn't dig into it, but she feels like the kids at the C.C. community that we're part of are far more approachable, easy to interact with. The first day, before we even signed up, we went to it, they invited us to a potluck barbecue thing, and the kids ran off and were playing instantly with these other kids. So, that was like, we're like, "Oh, yay, this is positive."

Robb: Well, the kids were welcoming and everybody operated at pretty high level. Some drama pops up here and there, but I think that these kids, because they're homeschooled and because of the C.C. curriculum, they're talked to and talked with at a level that's probably consistently higher than what a lot of other kids get.

Nicki: I don't know. It was just an interesting comment that she felt like the other kids weren't as approachable. And who knows? That's just an...-

Robb: Her perception.

Nicki: ... we got an 11-year-old comment. Let's see here. I'm trying to think if there's anything else that we-

Robb: I think-

Nicki: ... want to share.

Robb: ... an important thing to point out, too, is you could do this for a semester, you could do it for a year. I think potentially-

Nicki: You can always try it and change gears.

Robb: ... you can always try it and change gears. I think that the homeschool deal can be really valuable for bringing a kid up who's maybe had some lagging areas, at least potentially because, again, if they're a good reader but they're struggling in math or something like that, you can really put some focus on it.

And the cool thing in theory of something like Math-U-See and/or just doing homeschooling is you can teach to competency to mastery, not just like, "Oh, well, this is the grade you're supposed to be in, and so we're going to blast through this stuff," and you never really got it buttoned up.

Nicki: I think we got all of it. If we didn't, feel free to write back in and ask questions.

Robb: Is there anything that you wish that you knew sooner that you... We started off I was helping on the math...

Nicki: I wish I hadn't dismissed the C.C. program-

Robb: Sure enough.

Nicki: ... because of the faith-based aspect. Well, it wasn't even the faith-based piece that we didn't like in the beginning. The way that it was originally explained was how there's a lot of memorization with the timeline and the history and with these songs.

Robb: I recoiled from that because I was like, oh, we're in this information age where you look things up and you need to be able to critically think. And so, I dismissed that in not really understanding it. It is valuable. And it's just a way for them to create anchors that then get fleshed out later.

Nicki: So, they're learning about things and just by the name of the thing, but not knowing more context about it yet in the younger years. And then when they come across Confucius later on, they're like, "Oh, I've heard that word before. I've heard that name." And then it can get fleshed out later. The history piece is great. They're learning all the topics of U.S. history from Boston Tea Party, Louisiana Purchase, all of it.

And they sing the song, that's the three sentences about the thing, and then that's stuck in their memory. So, I guess to answer your question, I wish that we would have actually gone and looked at a program and just seen it and made our decision from that versus just dismissing it from what we had heard out of the gate. And I'm excited to learn.

We're going to go to a meeting here in a couple of weeks to learn more about the next challenge phase of C.C., which is where Zoe will be next year, because that critical thinking piece that we really feel is quite important is a big component. Once they get into these next years, it's huge. The Latin, they do things called mock trials where they're debating each other. It's a lot of discussion. So, I'm excited to see what that looks like.

Robb: It ends up being very much not rote memorization-

Nicki: No.

Robb: ... when it's all said in the...

Nicki: It's a lot of you've read your text, you come prepared to discuss and lead discussions, and then there's lots of structure with the way they do the trials and different things, which I know very little about at this point but excited to learn more. So, anyway, Jessica and Jack, I hope that was somewhat helpful.

If you have other questions, happy to answer those, but I guess I would just leave you with this. It seems incredibly daunting and, "Oh, gosh, I could never do that. It's going to be too much. I'm not good at math." As parents, people often don't want to do homeschooling because maybe they aren't strong in a certain subject and they feel like they can't do that. And I would just say if you have the interest or the desire, it's totally, totally doable.



There are tons of resources, like we've mentioned, the handful that we use, but I know there are so many more. And I would just talk to a lot of people that do it and pick their brain. "What did you like? What didn't you like?" And you're going to get all kinds of different answers, but again, it's all a journey, and you're going to try something and like it, and you're going to try another thing and not like it, and you're going to ditch that thing.

And it's just, I think, as long as there's the love and the attention and the time, you're going to do just fine because let's all remember that in the state of Oregon, they're no longer requiring algebra. In a lot of colleges, you don't have to have algebra to go to school. The standards have been so brought down, dumbed down, that you can absolutely do this. I don't know.

Robb: No, and just as a quick aside on that, the graduate records exam has been largely dispensed with for folks going into graduate programs. And not surprisingly, more people are failing out of graduate programs than ever in history. It's just not doing anybody any service at all, trying to bring the standards down to a lowest common denominator. Finding the lowest common denominator in math can be helpful. Doing that at a social level, not helpful.

Nicki: Great ending.

Robb: Thank you.

Nicki: All right, folks. Thanks for listening. Be sure to check out our show sponsor for all of your electrolyte needs. You can grab those at [drinkmnt.com/robb](http://drinkmnt.com/robb). That's [drinkmnt.com/robb](http://drinkmnt.com/robb). Questions for the podcast, you can submit those at [robbwolf.com](http://robbwolf.com) on the contact page. There's a drop-down for submit a question for the podcast. And wishing you all a wonderful weekend. If there's sunshine, get some. And we'll see you next time.

Robb: Bye, everybody.

Nicki: Bye.