

Bonus. Homeschool Help with Laura Garn



Full Episode Transcript

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Jody Moore

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Jody Moore: I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy* bonus episode: Homeschool Help with Laura Garn.

Welcome to *Better Than Happy*. I'm your host, Jody Moore. I'm a mother to four children, I'm a huge Taylor Swift fan, and I'm a master certified life coach. I'm here to teach you how to manage your brain and manage your emotions so that you can create a life that's even better than happy. Are you ready? Let's go.

Hey everyone, I have a bonus podcast for you. That means an extra edition. We still have a regular podcast coming out today, but I had the opportunity to talk to Laura Garn who is a homeschool mom, a Life Coach School certified coach and a coach who helps overwhelmed homeschool mothers which is all of us right now.

So, I know that it's overwhelming. I know we suddenly feel that now we have to do this job that teachers go to school, by the way, for many years and learn how to be teachers and then they student teach and they have a lot of practice. So, I don't think you need to expect yourself to be a teacher overnight. I don't think it's that simple.

So, Laura has some really helpful tips about schedules, about amazing resources to make your job easier and make your life easier. So, I hope that this helps everybody out in this time of crazy change and overwhelm and chaos. We can do this. Thanks to Laura Garn. Here you go.

Thanks for coming on today.

Laura Garn: You're welcome. Thanks for having me.

Jody Moore: Yeah, I'm excited. It's going to be so helpful for people. So, tell people first, a little bit about you.

Laura Garn: Yeah, so I'm Laura Garn and I help homeschool moms who are overwhelmed.

Jody Moore: Okay. So, are you a homeschool mom?

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Laura Garn: I am. Yeah.

Jody Moore: Okay, how long have you been a homeschool mom?

Laura Garn: My mother was like, so now you coach everybody.

Jody Moore: I was going to say, that's everybody now suddenly, overnight.

Laura Garn: But yes, so I have four kids and two of them are school age, so I have a 10-year-old, an 8-year-old, and then I have a 4, and a 2-year-old and I've been homeschooling the whole time. So, since my oldest was a kindergartner.

Jody Moore: Okay. So, four kids you've been homeschooling for a while now and you're also a coach, yes?

Laura Garn: I am.

Jody Moore: Certified at the best life coaching school on the planet?

Laura Garn: That's right.

Jody Moore: Not that I'm biased or anything, but The Life Coach School.

Laura Garn: That's true.

Jody Moore: Awesome. Well, I'm so grateful to you for being here. When you reached out to help, I was like, "Yes, please. We could use some help right now." So, let's dive in. People are pretty overwhelmed right now, right? So, what do you say, first of all, excuse me, to someone who is feeling overwhelmed with suddenly trying to homeschool their kids?

Laura Garn: First, let's just check in with what we think, I want to ask you what thoughts do you think are creating the overwhelm?

Jody Moore: Well, they're thoughts like, "I don't know what to do. There's so much. I don't even understand their school work. I don't have time for this because I have all the other things I normally need to be doing during

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my day. My kids won't listen to me. They're not willing to do it." That's what I'm thinking are a lot of the thoughts.

Laura Garn: Yeah. So, Jody, I was actually coached when I first joined Be Bold, I was coached by Allison and I was overwhelmed as a homeschool mom and that's what I brought to the call. My thought, I remember, in that session was, "I can't do it all." Of course, we know that my thought it going to end up in my result line, right? That's exactly what was happening.

So, as she worked with me, she was like, "Well, what if you just decided I'll for sure make time for what matters most?" That was life-changing for me. Like truly life-changing. Ever since that moment – of course my brain still goes back to, "I can't do it all sometimes." It practices that thought, but then I'm just like, "But wait, I'll for sure make time for what matters most."

Jody Moore: It's sort of like switching to I don't have to do it all because our brains tend to want to go to self-pity, right? Overwhelm and self-pity they often go together. But what you're talking about is shifting to a more empowered, confident – it's sort of like, "I got this. I will make time for what matters most."

Laura Garn: Yeah.

Jody Moore: Can I just tell you first of all what my favorite version of homeschool is? Because I don't feel this kind of overwhelm because I don't have those thoughts that I have to do it all. I'm just like, you know what, we're going to do what we can and mostly my kids aren't going to learn as much over the next six weeks as they would if they were in school. I heard Glennon Doyle on her Instagram say, "Listen, all you need to do is put the kids in front of the TV, turn on the closed captioning and turn down the volume and now they're reading." I was like, "Exactly, people!" We don't need to make this so complicated.

Laura Garn: That's so good. My kids have worked with just with various needs, we've had like speech therapists, an occupational therapist and a child psychologist and I notice how they – the lens through which they look

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at my kids doing what they're doing and I'm like, "Oh my gosh, she's yelling at me." They're writing out and telling me, "She's advocating for herself."

It's kind of that same thing that you're talking about with Glennon Doyle like, let's give this a name that adds value to what is happening because chances are there's some truth behind that.

Jody Moore: Yes.

Laura Garn: If we can look at it through that lens, the specialists will say, "He's showing appropriate gross motor," and my brain is just like, "He's jumping on the tramp."

Jody Moore: That's right.

Laura Garn: When we look at it through that different lens of what else is happening here that's when we can go into what Glennon Doyle is talking about.

Jody Moore: Yeah, because we are in the middle of a pandemic and so some things might suffer and it's okay if our kids' learning suffers a little for the next 6 to 10 however long weeks, maybe the rest of the school year.

Laura Garn: Right, and we get to decide. So, back to when Allison coached me it was like, "Oh okay," and kind of what you're saying is, "I get to decide. I get to be the driver here. So, I'm actually going to decide what is important and I'm going to decide what goes by the wayside and isn't going to be my focus right now." That's what's going to be really powerful when people can just decide and get to an empowering decision where they feel like they are choosing it, whatever it is.

Jody Moore: I love that.

Laura Garn: Yeah, I'm going to decide.

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Jody Moore: It'll be like, "But the school is telling me this, and the teachers are saying that." It still comes down to what we choose to do with our kids, right?

Laura Garn: Yeah, a lot of us have a determined kid in our family and mine, she will ask and ask and ask and then at some point I just look at her and I say, "I love you, and we're all done talking about this." It's kind of the same thing with our brains where our brain is like, "But what about computer science, and foreign language, and theater, and financial literacy?" I mean, it's endless.

At some point I look my brain in the eye and I'm like, "I love you," because it's well-meaning, right? Like, our brain is trying to avoid pain. So, we can just say, "I love you and we're all done talking about this." Our recommended school is reading, writing – I'm speaking for just myself here, reading, writing, math, science, history, and PE. I'm not saying that's what anybody else's looks like. We can talk about specifics if you want to later on here, but that coaching was so powerful for me because that's when I just am like, "Oh, no, I make time for what matters most."

Jody Moore: Yeah, and one of the things I want to say, too is everybody talks about that now they're homeschooling their kids and they have to be homeschool moms I don't know that using term is even appropriate because if you feel overwhelmed when you think that and you put all this pressure on yourself – again, I think that's why I don't feel overwhelmed because I think my kids are on a pause from school and they're doing some distance learning and I want to help in that way, but we're not suddenly homeschooling.

Whatever curriculum you, Laura, do probably with your kids is going to be 10 times more than anything I'm going to do because I'm not trying to become a homeschool mom. I'm just temporarily trying to support my kids and their teachers, but I don't even call it homeschooling. It's like, they're on a break from school right now and we're going to do some distance learning. But I'm not a homeschool mom. That's not my intention.

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Laura Garn: Right.

Jody Moore: We don't even have to call it that. I just call it a break, that's what I'm calling it.

Laura Garn: Right, with some distance learning thrown in. Yeah.

Jody Moore: I do want you to help us though with some really concrete tools and resources because I know you have a lot of those. But let's talk about a typical homeschool schedule and, again, I think that your probably typical homeschool schedule is going to be different than what the majority of the population that's just in this temporary state is going through, but I still think it's helpful for us to hear a little bit about just to have a frame of reference. What does a homeschool day look like? I've always wondered this.

Laura Garn: There's this woman I follow on Instagram @onefitwidow and she is always asking, "What's the best exercise?" It's the one that you do. It's the same thing with us. Where this is just what I do and so that's what I'll share and so again, if this overwhelms you just go back to Jody's thought. We're on a break, we're doing some distance learning, and that there's going to be learning that we didn't anticipate and we can't plan for within all of the cracks there.

But our day usually looks like at 7:30 before my husband goes to work, we do *Come Follow Me*, and it's like less than 10 minutes. I just open it, we read a few verses of scripture, we discuss one of those paragraphs and we probably do that four, five days a week. I tell the kids to stop fighting in the middle of it and it's just what it should look like.

Then, they kind of play and hang out and do whatever until 9 o'clock. Usually that's in the kitchen and the family room. Then, I give my kids a list. So, sometimes I'll guide them and I'll say, "I need you to do these things first, these two things first," for a specific reason, but usually they just have their list and their list always has reading, writing, and math on there.

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Then, just getting ready stuff like get dressed and brush teeth and brush hair, whatever. Then, twice a week we do history together and we'll do science together. So, that is not done every day. It's just twice a week and it's with my 2nd grader and 5th grader together. Sometimes my 4-year-old is listening in and kind of hanging out and coloring, but usually she and my 2-year-old are just doing their own thing.

Of course, there's distractions in there, but it's gotten to where we have a routine down just because we've practiced it a lot.

Jody Moore: Okay, so reading, writing, and math and then little a bit of history, science you sprinkle in throughout the week?

Laura Garn: Yeah.

Jody Moore: I have a kindergartner and then I have two middle school kids and that has been my thought is like, "We need to do some practice on your math. We need to be reading." I think writing is an easy enough thing, too. I actually bought them each a journal. I'm just like this is a really good time to just do some journaling about what's going on right now. This is a historical time that we're living through right now. Write about what you're feeling. Write about what you're thinking.

I tell them each day they need to read a little and then there's all kinds of resources online for math. So, that's kind of been our primary focus as well. I don't know about you, Laura, but I found that different kids respond differently when it comes to scheduling, right? Like, I have one child who likes a lot of structure and order, and he – actually two of my kids like to go, "Oh, it's 10 o'clock, it's time to do some math. It's 11:30 or 12, time to eat lunch."

One of the things that's really helped – sorry, I'll just throw in here, that's helped for me anyway is we're going to have meals like breakfast, lunch, and of course we always have dinner, but otherwise in the summer and when they're at home they like to sort of snack and I'll ask, "Does anybody want lunch?" Half of them say, "No, I'm not hungry." Just saying, "No,

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listen, we're not just going to snack on junk all day we're going to eat at meal times" has really created a routing in the day that then allows us to put a little bit of schoolwork around it and of course, there's free time and outside time and all of that. But just starting with the basic structure as lunch occurs sometime between 11:30 and 12:30 has helped us structure other things around it.

Laura Garn: Yeah, that's so funny because we've just started that recently, too, actually. It's just with lunch where I tell my one daughter in particular who like some of your kids she really likes that predictability and so I will say, "We're going to eat lunch when the clock says 11," because that usually means somewhere, but that really helps her and I can tell her, "No, it's not snack time. We're not just eating out of the pantry all day." I do think that's helpful.

Jody Moore: Yeah, and then my other middle schooler, he doesn't like the structure of like 10 o'clock is math and at 1 o'clock you read a book, so he just knows that each day you need to read a little. You need to do a little bit of your math and you need to write a little or whatever the things are. He has a list of things that we discussed as a family in a family council what needs to happen and then I leave it up to him when he's going to do them.

Sometimes he plays, honestly, X-box most of his day and then at the very end of the day he does some homework and I'm okay with that. I'm like, "You need to get it done, these are the things we need to do." So, I like what you're saying that whatever works for you – I don't think it's helpful for us to think that there's a right way or a better way or that we need to do it the way our neighbor is doing it or the way the teacher even has recommended.

You've got to figure out what works for you and for your kids which might different with different kids, yeah?

Laura Garn: Yeah, that's so true. I do like to plan for some exercise, so it's kind of dependent on the weather. That is going to dictate what we're going to do. So, we have – I really like cosmic yoga, you can find it on

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YouTube for my younger kids, and then that's something you can do inside or we have a treadmill or they have their Tae Kwon Do instructor who gives them online workouts now.

But I just try to get outside when I can. So, I plan for that and sometimes it's okay, we're stopping right now because right now is a great time for when the baby is going to nap and all of that for us to just all go outside.

Jody Moore: Yes, good. I love it. Yeah, fresh air, exercise, sleep, eating well, these things are all so important right now. Not only for us physically and our kids, but also mentally and emotionally taking care of yourself physically helps your emotional state so much.

Laura Garn: Right. Yeah, it's so true.

Jody Moore: Okay, so, Laura, a lot of us are feeling lost. Maybe the schools are sending some things home, maybe they're not. What kinds of resources do you know of that are available to people to help?

Laura Garn: Yeah. Before I answer that, I do kind of want to speak to this question that I get a lot which is, how do you teach all these kids when they're at different levels? There's just already some scarcity laced into that question that I get a lot and so I want to address it because I think a lot of us are thinking that right now.

Jody Moore: Okay.

Laura Garn: I like to just remember that a schoolteacher has 30 kids and I have 4 –

Jody Moore: Okay, but let me play devil's advocate for a minute.

Laura Garn: For sure.

Jody Moore: If I'm a schoolteacher and I have 30 kids but they're all 2nd graders or they're all in history and they're all at various learning levels, but they're still all supposed to be learning the same thing, yeah?

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Laura Garn: Yeah.

Jody Moore: Versus my kindergartner who's trying to learn the alphabet and my 8th grader who's learning algebra.

Laura Garn: Right. So, that is where I am like it makes sense that schools would be set up in a certain way because they have to organize hundreds of kids, but that's not what learning needs to look like. They're supposed to learn a certain thing. That is something that we've decided because of how schools are set up and it makes sense. They're doing the right thing by having classrooms and desks and a certified teacher and seven hours of schoolwork and the homework and everybody is the exact same age. All of that makes sense, but when we realize that we're looking at a very small group, like four kids, just like when we go to sacrament meeting everyone is going to have different takeaways and we might even giggle at that and think, my 3 year old for sure isn't getting anything.

But they're learning exactly what they need to there. That doesn't mean that it looks like our version of learning or it looks like a 10-year-old's version of learning or any other version other than we're just all here kind of learning together. I do like to teach at the highest level for my kids, but then what will kind of trickle down.

Jody Moore: Okay, so you teach the different age and different grade kids, together?

Laura Garn: Reading and math, those are leveled so they will do their own reading and their own math. We do writing time together, so that oftentimes, kind of like what you're talking about with a journal with your kids, I do a lot of freewriting exercises with my kids and so yeah, they are doing that together. I help them with what they need and help tweak that.

Jody Moore: Cool. I like that.

Laura Garn: The science and history that's always taught together.

Jody Moore: That's cool.

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Laura Garn: Yeah. I just think we can open our brains up a little bit to what else is possible in terms of –

Jody Moore: That reminds me, my 12-year-old daughter has really enjoyed and taken upon herself helping out my kindergartner and preschooler which gives her something to do right now and also helps her learn. Of course, the best way to learn something is to teach it. So, my 13-year-old son isn't really wanting to do that, but if you have kids you may have older kids that are interested in helping guide those younger kids.

Laura Garn: Yeah, and that's pretty cool to witness and just realize that right now that gets to be part of your season right now is to let your daughter help the younger ones. That's kind of cool.

Jody Moore: Yeah. Cool, I love it.

Laura Garn: So, in terms of specific resources, on my website it's www.lauragarn.com.

Jody Moore: Okay, and we'll link to it in the show notes. It's L-A-U-R-A G-A-R-N.

Laura Garn: Yeah, and there's so many – there's a lifetime worth of homeschool resources out there and that does not help with the overwhelm.

Jody Moore: No, it doesn't.

Laura Garn: So, what I wanted to do was give people a few short lists of my favorites and even though my oldest is 10, I've looked into a lot of high school resources. So, I've kind of done a lot of the sorting for you. It's free, I call it my Quick-Start Guide to Homeschooling and so you can go to that if you want to get that resource.

It's going to address podcasts that you can listen to with your kids that are engaging and will teach them. It addresses some games to play with your kids that will help with connecting and learning. Some really good books

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that you can read that also become great movies to watch, so whether you want to do one or the other or both together that's kind of a way to connect with your family at this time.

Then I have just some great learning sites. I give you a short recap of what all of those are so that you know what ages they're geared to or subject material or whatever. But that is a really good resource. It kind of helps bring the overwhelm down when you don't have to do the filtering and sorting and researching.

Jody Moore: Yeah, I just want to say a plug for that because you emailed it to me this morning and I took a look at it and was like, "This is gold." Everyone needs to go get it. It's a free just PDF download that has so many resources you just click on. I loved, especially, the podcast section. All different podcast topics that just have your kids listen to something.

Like I said, this is a temporary thing, but there's so much information available at our fingertips now that there's no reason that our kids can't have amazing insights. It'll be a little bit different and unusual, but that guide, that Quick-Start Guide everyone needs to go get right now, lauragarn.com.

Laura Garn: Thanks, Jody.

Jody Moore: Just go get it. It is good.

Laura Garn: Thanks.

Jody Moore: Let's see, a couple of the questions on here I feel like are already answered. A couple of the questions we were going to talk about, but if there's anything you want to speak to interrupt me, but I did want to just get your opinion about not everybody has the ability to be at home with their kids.

We have some parents that were stay-at-home parents already, but we have many that have jobs that they go to or jobs at home. I know I'm in a

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situation right now where I work from home but I still need to be working and I don't have my childcare anymore because of everything going on.

Do you have any just tips or suggestions for what to do if you don't have your daytime free to homeschool your kids?

Laura Garn: Yeah. So, a few years ago I read this book it's called *How To Raise An Adult* it's by Julie Lythcott-Haims and she's a former dean at Stanford and she talks about how kids come to Stanford or 18 year olds, these freshmen come to Stanford and just in the last few years, maybe 10 or 12 years they really haven't learned how to have a lot of emotional maturity. They haven't had a lot of practice with a lot of uncomfortable emotions like disappointment and boredom and uncertainty. They've kind of had their parents to help them buffer some of that away with constant support and activities and involvement.

While a lot of that is well-intended, they come to Stanford and colleges across the country with very little experience of things not going well because they're just really well protected. So, one thing that I got from that, Jody, was just if our children – just because of our lack of availability feel the disappointment and the boredom and the uncertainty, none of that is a problem. It's like perfect practice.

Jody Moore: Yes, that's so true.

Laura Garn: Putting independence in their way is not neglect. It is powerful to do that and allowing them to fail. Not to set it up where they have to get these amazing grades and then we beat ourselves up if the don't because we weren't there to support and show up and whatever. It goes back to having your own back. Being like, yeah, right now we're learning how to feel the feelings. They can thank me for that when they're an adult.

Jody Moore: They won't but that's okay. We know it's a gift.

Laura Garn: They won't. They totally won't.

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Jody Moore: Yeah, and I've just kind of been – I don't know what the right way is to do it, but just to share with people, like I said, I've given my kids – we have created a schedule for the ones that want it and the ones that don't they just have a list of things and they're teachers are now starting to post in Google Classrooms for the older kids where to go and then my husband and I spend a little time with them in the evenings on the things that they don't understand or that they're stuck on. It's just like what we would do during the year like when they bring homework home and they need help.

So, in my mind it's not all that different. For me, I don't have the hours to be spending with them because I work and like you said, it is in some ways these types of tough experiences are what give them opportunity to develop confidence and problem-solving and all of those things.

Laura Garn: Yeah, something I've been hearing from my clients just in the last couple weeks is when they feel like their kids aren't going to have the experience that they were supposed to have, but we all made that up. We all thought it was going to go a certain way and we made plans according to that with graduation and prom and school trips and family trips and all of that, but it was always supposed to go this way.

Jody Moore: Yes.

Laura Garn: You've taught me that and I love that. I feel like there's so much power into dropping into that and then being like okay, sometimes it sucks, but what else is there that is kind of cool about this?

Jody Moore: Awesome, I love it. Okay. Well, so everybody make sure you go grab Laura's Quick-Start Guide and then if somebody wants some extra coaching from you, Laura, if they want some help navigating whether they're just temporarily in this situation or especially if you're a homeschooling mom or dad full-time and you want help, should we send them to your website as well?

Laura Garn: Yeah. They can learn all about me there at lauragarn.com.

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Jody Moore: Because that's what Laura does, you guys. She uses the model that I've taught you here on the podcast, the same tools that you hear me talk about all specifically related to homeschooling your kids. Pretty powerful stuff, so I highly recommend if you want some help with that go check Laura out. Thank you so much for being here today, Laura.

Laura Garn: You're so welcome, Jody. Thank you.

Jody Moore: I really appreciate your time.

Laura Garn: Thank you.

Jody Moore: All right. Be safe, take care.

Laura Garn: Thank you so much. Take care.

Jody Moore: Who is your life coach? If you don't have one, I would be so honored to be your coach. I created a virtual coaching program called Be Bold that I want to invite you to join me in. We can address challenges, we can work on goals, and we can do it in so many different ways. We have group coaching, individual private coaching, and online chats along with hundreds of hours of courses and content that I've created just for you. When you're ready to really take what you're learning on the podcast to the 10X level then come check out Be Bold at jodymoore.com/membership.