



S5E3: What About Technology?

Julie Bogart with Lindsay McCarthy

Julie: Hi, everyone. Today I have a special update.

If you'll recall, on November 5th, we released an interview I did with Tammy Kim. She and her family are residents of Paradise, California. That episode aired three days before the Camp Fire took off in Northern California near her home. Many of you have reached out to ask me, "How's Tammy? How's her family? Did her house burn down?" I, of course, had already sent her emails and voice messages and didn't hear anything back. Until a few days ago.

Tammy did call me; she and her family are safe. I asked her if she would be willing to give all of you an update, so what follows is a rambunctious and a very enjoyable conversation with Tammy, her husband, Scott, and their three daughters.

Please, listen along, and then at the end I want you to feel like you could make a meaningful difference in their lives, you'll discover that they need your help, need your support. You can go to the show notes where we have created a GoFundMe campaign just for them: [GoFundMe.com/TammyKimFund](https://www.gofundme.com/TammyKimFund). That's right, TammyKimFund. Your donations, no matter how large or small will help the Kim family rebuild the homeschool that they were just beginning to enjoy. I love this community. Thank you so much for caring about our own. Let's show the Kims that we really do care about them. So just a reminder: [GoFundMe.com/TammyKimFund](https://www.gofundme.com/TammyKimFund).

(NOTE: The fundraiser is now closed. We provided \$5,000 to the Kim family from the Brave Writer Community.)

And now, let's tune into my conversation with this rambunctious, lovely family.

Julie: Welcome, Kim family, to Brave Writer! Everybody has been asking about you. Literally we've gotten tons of emails, private messages, phone calls worried about you, because literally your episode of the podcast aired three days before the fires and your mom announced that you lived in Paradise, California. So, I don't know if you can feel it, but there is a huge volume of love and prayers that have been sent in your direction, so thanks for coming and sharing with us so that we can reach out and support and help you.

Tammy: Thank *you!* And yes, we have absolutely felt those prayers and all of the support that has been coming our direction and to Paradise. It has been astounding.

Julie: Of course! I mean, it's everyone. I'm looking—right now I'm on Skype with this gorgeous family, the Kim family. We have Tammy and Scott, who are the parents, and then can you just introduce your three lovely daughters.

Tammy: So, Julia is our 8-year-old, soon to be 9 in December. And Hailey—say “hi” Hailey—

Hailey: Hi!

Tammy: She is our 11-year-old. And Adalyn is our 13-year-old, almost 14 in December as well.

Julie: Fantastic. Thanks for being here, girls, and for everyone being here. So, let's just start with your mom. Tammy, can you give us a sense of what happened? What the experience was? And we'll let you share what the results of the fire were.

Tammy: Okay, well, we woke up that morning and noticed that there was a big cloud up in the sky, and my first thought was, “Ooh, are we getting rain?” But then I realized it was a little brown for rain, right? We just thought, “Oh, it's probably just another fire that's happening out there somewhere”—having no idea it was in our backyard, right? Interestingly, our 13-year-old 8th grader has expressed a desire in connecting with other kids her age and we absolutely honored that, so we were prepared to take her to her second day of public school.

Julie: Oh, my gosh [laughs].

Tammy: Hard for me, but, you know, honoring that need. We hopped in the car, leaving the other two children at home. And yes, Dad's in Asia on a business trip for work for two weeks. I drove Adalyn over to the school and it was different out there, and got her to the school, dropped her off, she walked away for all of 100 yards, and a woman pulls me over to the side of the road and says, "School has been canceled." And I said, "What? Oh, my gosh! I just dropped my daughter off." And she says, "What's her name?" And so, she promptly hollered down Adalyn, who got back in the car and we headed back home. It was really concerning, though, because at that moment there were about three busloads of children that were arriving to start their school day.

Julie: Wow.

Tammy: So, we were driving home and there was just the additional commotion that just was not normal, and I did start to have a real strong feeling I needed to hurry home. So, upon getting to our street that urgency just increased and I hightailed it into our neighborhood, flew into the yard, and got into the house and grabbed the children, grabbed the cat without a box, and thought to grab the computer because we do have family portraits and things like that. Got out of there and didn't turn back—didn't *look* back, I should say. It was a parking lot for a good hour and a half trying to get just onto the main road to be able to head out of town.

Scott: What happened was—I'm supposed—I was supposed to be in China this week, because I was in Asia for two weeks. I was in Korea and Singapore. And I got all this text at 2 AM in Singapore saying, "Is your family okay? The town is on fire." I'm like, the town is on fire? What? So, I face-timed her and they're out the door, and they're showing me the raging fires just consuming our town on face-time while they're trying to get out. And I was like, it just like—

Tammy: Yeah, surreal.

Scott: It wasn't even like, processing in my head. But I was thankful that they got out and obviously I got the first flight out of Singapore back to California just to, you know, take care of everything.

Julie: Wow. And so, tell us: how's your house?

[Entire Kim family laughs]

Tammy: Who wants to tell Julie what the house looks like?

Adalyn: I think this one should do the honors.

Tammy: Daddy, you want to tell?

Scott: It's in complete rubble. I would text you the picture of the house. We already have picture confirmation that the house has been destroyed. We have a friend that works for the local utility, he was able to go along premises. Because right now, they're not letting anyone into Paradise yet. The fire is still raging, as you could tell, and I think it's 35% contained so far.

Julie: Wow.

Scott: Just—just to let you know, based on my understanding and speaking with the first responders, Paradise is a town of 27,000-30,000 people, so it's a fairly big town but it's a very country town. The reason why my wife got out fairly early, she got out around 9 AM and as she said it was a parking lot just to get out, and there are only two main roads—two main veins leading out of the city, so as you could tell it was very difficult to get out. And there was a fire—fires were engulfing all around the roads, so like, my wife got out with fire going on the roads. So, in that regard, the fire was so fast and furious that one of the reasons why there were kids going to school was the evacuation alert didn't happen until later in the day, because it was just so fast and furious and chaotic. I mean, no fault to the infrastructure, whatever. This is just crazy—the fire just went so fast that no one could get any rhyme or reason around it.

Julie: Well, I'm a Californian by birth and that's the problem with fire. It's not like a hurricane, where it's this slow-moving and you can predict it and make projections. The winds can change the course of a fire in a moment, in a heartbeat. And if it really takes off, if it's a very dry condition it just takes over. They said down in the Woolsey Fire it actually leapt over the 101, that's eight lanes of traffic. You would think that wouldn't even be possible. So, I can only imagine in a wooded area how quickly that fire really grabbed hold. So, your house is down to cinders—it was incinerated, is that what you're saying? It's not like you go back and pick through the rubble?

Scott: Yeah, that is correct, and I'll text you the pictures of our house if you want to put them in the podcast.

Tammy: And you had mentioned the wind conditions, that was exactly what we were up against. Very dry, because we had not had any rain—or haven't yet—but very, very windy. So, we've got plains that are glowing. And then embers that were kind of falling out of the sky, it was like snowing. And so, that was starting smaller fires throughout the whole community and then there were not firefighters to put those out because they were working on the big one.

Julie: Absolutely. So, tell me a little bit about your relationship to Paradise. How long had you lived in this town?

Hailey: 10 months.

Tammy: Well, not even that, love. First of all, I was born and raised in Paradise and then, of course, took off for college, and we started our family elsewhere, and then had a desire to get closer to Grandma and Grandpa, who are still in Paradise—or, *were*. Their home has also burned to the ground. So, that said, we moved back in March to Paradise. So, we'd only been in Paradise for not even 8 months.

Julie: Wow. And so, are these your parents or your grandparents?

Tammy: My parents.

Julie: Your parents. So, was this the house you grew up in?

Tammy: It is.

Julie: So, you've lost two hugely significant homes in your life at the same time.

Tammy: Well, interestingly my grandmother, who is the mother of my mom, her home went down in smoke as well. And my sister happened to be living in *that* home, so yeah.

Julie: Wow. Is it literally just everyone you know is in your situation, is that how it feels?

Tammy: Pretty much. There are a few families in the town whose homes did not go down, so that also presents a whole different scenario where they need to figure out what they're going to do. And you know, there's the option for all of us of trying to rebuild. Of course, we have to pay off mortgages, and then what would be left for rebuilding? There's a lot of different things we need to be deciding. So, since speaking with you last, we have secured an apartment that we are going to temporarily live in for—it could be six months, it could be two years—so, until we're able to determine what we're going to do and where we're going to go next.

Julie: That makes sense. But you're really starting from scratch. I mean, you guys left with the clothes on your backs. Would any of you girls want to share what it feels like to lose everything? How have you dealt with it? Are you still in the adrenaline of escape or is it starting to settle in that, "Oh, wait, I wish I had X and now I don't have it"?

Hailey: I wasn't really sad because we didn't actually really like that house [group laughs].

Tammy: We were going to remodel it, so we were anticipating that. Thank goodness that never happened.

Julie: What about personal possessions? Do you have anything that was important to you that you lost?

Hailey: The piano.

Adalyn: Well, there's Mom's piano.

Julie: Oh, wow.

Tammy: Don't be shy! Talk!

Adalyn: I don't know, I'm trying to think.

Hailey: I lost my iPad!

[Group laughs]

Julie: These are big! I mean, those are the big things. I remember when I was about 5 years old, we were about to be evacuated for a fire, I lived in Canoga Park, which is in the San Fernando Valley, in southern California. And my parents pulled the car out and pointed it towards the road and it was filled with whatever they thought was important to take with them. And I got up out of my bed, very worried, at about 11 PM, and I came to my mom and I said, "Can I bring my pillow?" Like, to me that was like, the one sacred possession I did not want to be without. And then, the wind shifted and it went the other way, so we didn't have to evacuate, but my goodness. It's a lot to lose.

Scott: So, Hailey you lost your iPad. You, you miss the piano.

Tammy: Yeah. And we're missing some new friends that we started to make.

Hailey: Yeah, I mean, if the computer burned in the fire, I would probably be at a loss because [indistinct] would be gone.

Tammy: [Laughs] Edit that.

Scott: It's interesting because we actually had a conversation, gosh, a month ago, where if there's some major disaster what's the first thing we'd take, and I told my wife the first thing we need to take is the computer because that's where all of our photos and all that memory, you know, memories of the family is there, and she did exactly what she needed to do, [which] is take the computer.

Julie: So, Scott, tell us how quickly did you hop on a plane to come home? I mean, what happened over in Singapore?

Scott: First off all, I work for a great company. I'm not plugging them, but their name is Gartner. They're based out of Stanford, Connecticut. It's a technology advisory firm. You know, the first thing I told them was—originally it was a two-week Asia trip—and I said, "Hey, I'm still going to honor—" I still hadn't processed it. And maybe this is dumb of me to think, but I told my boss, "I'm still going to finish out the work here," because, you know, they flew me out there. It's thousands of dollars from the company to be out there and my boss was so great, he just said, "No, you need to go back to your family. Just jump on the plane." So, literally, again,

the company did such a great job of six hours later, they got me a flight. It was a little bit planes, trains, and automobiles. I had to go to Singapore to Hong Kong to San Francisco to Sacramento and back, but they got me back and I think I got back on midnight on Friday. My days were so screwed up that I got back—I immediately tried to get back as soon as I could. And I'm just grateful that my family's safe. I didn't care. I didn't care about the house, about the stuff, whatever. I'm just grateful that my family was safe, you know?

Julie: Absolutely. I mean, that was our primary concern, too. Too many people, who got trapped in the fire, and I was immediately relieved to think that you guys were all together, so that is fantastic. What we want to do for you is raise some money, so we're going to invite our audience to go to a GoFundMe page, it will be on the show notes and hopefully we can help you replace whatever. Maybe the piano—I don't know what they will contribute. But obviously, a homeschooling family starting from scratch, there are a lot of needs and we are so grateful that you would take the time to share with us about your story. I know it's a scary one and I thank you for opening your story to us. Is there anything else you would like us to know about homeschooling in Paradise, or other families, or anything you would like us to know?

Tammy: You know, in talking to you, Julie, I did reach out to our homeschool charter and talked with our support teacher and she was very grateful and said she will definitely bring up the things that you and I discussed. But she said at this point, truly everyone is just in major crisis mode and not even thinking about homeschool. Though we've been able to kind of move forward and try and establish some kind of normalcy, we're really excited we've established an apartment to rent, so that means somethings ahead that we're getting established, I think that we'll probably need to transfer our charter to the area where we're now living, because it's a good hour and forty minutes to where our home is, so yeah. It's a major transition. We just move forward and just count the blessings that we have.

The hotel that we were sent to by our insurance, they opened up to the community. There were a lot of people that were wanting to bring donations, clothes, toiletries, those kinds of things. And so, the hotel that we're staying at said go ahead, bring them here. What they didn't realize was the overwhelming response that would happen, and the lobby is completely—or was—completely inundated with just tons of clothes and everything you could imagine—food! So, we kind of picked through it and thought we don't really need this, but there are a lot of people in Chico that could really use this, so Scott actually called our religious pastor, our bishop, and said, "Hey do you have any ideas on what we could do to get that stuff up there?" Well, long story short, it turned into lots of people loading up trucks, we had two U-Hauls to get all of that stuff up to Chico. And so, we also benefited because we got to kind of go through and get some of the clothing. And, I mean, everything we're wearing right now is through donations. See, look! I'm looking really stylish, actually.

Hailey: This is from Target!

Tammy: Oh, this is from Target, okay!

[Indistinct]

Hailey: These are donations!

[Indistinct]

Julie: Very nice! So cute! So cute.

Scott: But, yeah, you'll see—I texted the pictures of the evacuation center in Chico.

Julie: Awesome.

Scott: Tremendous service by people. It shows the great humanity of people during these times. And, likewise, with the Brave Writer family who are so gracious. I mean, we're humbled for you guys to do something for us. We really appreciate it.

Julie: Wow. You are so welcome. People want a way to share in the suffering and to make a difference, and so you are the face of that for us and we really value you. So, thank very much. And good luck in the rebuild! Keep us in your newsreel. I don't necessarily need to be the first person you contact, you've got a lot of people in your life, but as you make progress, let us know and we'll give an update, okay? Losing an entire town is so much more dramatic than even just losing your home and I know there's a readjustment ahead, so any way we can help you we want to be a part of that.

Tammy: Thank you so much.

Scott: Thank you very much. What do you girls say to Julie?

[Girls in unison]: Thank you for giving us books to read.

Scott: Books to read!

Julie: Well, as soon as you have an address, let me know, okay! And very happy to have met each of your girls, too, and you, Scott. Thank you for sharing your family with us.

Tammy: Thanks, Julie!

Scott: Thank you very much!

[Theme music plays]

[Regular episode begins]

Julie: I wonder if you're like me: I can't go anywhere without my phone. In fact, I'll be flying down the road up to the stop sign near my house, and I'll suddenly have that feeling like my third arm is missing, and I start hunting around my purse. And if my phone isn't in my purse, I hightail it back to the house.

We are so connected today to our technological tools. Many of us use them in our jobs. We've got a laptop, we've got an iPad, we use the television, we have a phone. And our kids see us using all that technology, and then you know what they do? They want at it. They want to do the exact same things. Only the difference is, their work is play. They're going to open the laptop or the iPad and they're going to play Minecraft, or some other game that draws their fascination and challenges them.

Unfortunately for us, we tend to see that play as mere entertainment. We can't understand that same feeling where they wake up and their third arm is waiting for them to jump on and answer a question or beat the level or build another world.

Today's episode is going to look at this conundrum that Lindsay McCarthy shares with us. She and her husband work on computers and their kids see them on those computers and they want access, too. How do we create a family culture that values what technology offers without allowing it to take over? Stay tuned today for our discussion of technology and homeschooling. I'm Julie Bogart; you're listening to the Brave Writer podcast. [Theme music ends]

Julie: Welcome to another episode of Ask Julie. Today I get to chat with Lindsay McCarthy, a homeschooling mother to her 9-year-old son, Tyler, and her 5-year-old daughter, Ember.

Lindsay and husband, Mike, and their family split their time between West Chester, Pennsylvania and Silverthorne, Colorado. Her whole family loves to travel as often as possible and I'm totally jealous of all the places they go. Just last year, they visited the Grand Tetons in Yellowstone National Park, and they even trekked all the way to Jackson Hole, Wyoming to experience the total solar eclipse. Lindsay also runs a Facebook community called "The Miracle Morning for Parents and Families." When Lindsay applied to be on this podcast, she had a concern that *so* many of you share. She wrote the following: "One of my biggest struggles is how to help my kids love to read when they are bombarded with easier forms of entertainment and fact-finding due to technology." Technology, that beast that we're all trying to tame! That's the big kahuna. Welcome, Lindsay, to our podcast!

Lindsay: Hi, Julie! Thanks so much for having me.

Julie: So great to have you. So, tell me a little bit about that. What is the vexing problem you have in your homeschool today?

Lindsay: Yeah, I mean, it's just what you said, "the technology beast." My husband and I both work from home, we work on our computers, so our kids see us on technology a lot and they also want to be on their tech and can't really distinguish the difference between them looking up information on YouTube for entertainment purposes and what Mom and Dad do, you know, creating content on their computers.

Julie: So, tell me a little bit more about that. What are the kinds of YouTube videos that attract them?

Lindsay: They do watch a lot of educational ones. Tyler loves science, so he's gotten really into these mystery dog videos, which I'm all for technology, like it's a great tool. But I'm just trying to find that happy balance of we still enjoy reading and being outside and all these other things, so where do we draw the line?

Julie: Yes, the line, that very important line that we're all trying to find [laughs]. I know in my family that I went through iterations of trying to understand how to manage technology. Of course, my kids grew up before the internet when they were little, and about the time that my son Noah turned 8 or 9, the internet was born and suddenly video gaming and online gaming and, eventually, Myspace and LiveJournal, and all of these options for becoming active socially—and through YouTube—were staring us in the face. And we tried many methods to

understand the role of technology in our lives, whether it was limiting it or not limiting it. What are some of the strategies that you've tried to sort of create a relationship with technology in your family?

Lindsay: Yeah, well, something we've been pretty intentional about is defining our family's values. And in our family, we value creativity, we value words, we value reading, meditation, mindfulness, and serving other people. And we actually created a morning ritual, with the help of our friend Hal Elrod, that's called the Miracle Morning. As part of that, nobody in our household is allowed any tech until they're finished with their Miracle Morning. So, that's kind of been our main strategy, but once that's done it's kind of a free for all [laughs].

Julie: Well, give me an example of what the elements are of your Miracle Morning, so we can just get a sense of what it is and why it's valuable to your family.

Lindsay: Yeah, so, it follows an acronym called CHARMS, which stands for Creativity, Health, Affirmations, Reading, Meditation, and Service. So, those are the things we do first thing in the morning. So, literally when I wake up, I meditate. I read something, I write in my journal, I say my affirmations; I have a vision board that I look at. And then, when I get up, we eat a healthy breakfast, and then the kids and I will exercise together, and then I kind of help them go through their CHARMS.

Julie: How do they like it? Is this something they enjoy?

Lindsay: It is! It's something they enjoy, and a lot of mornings they'll kind of get lost in that creative process, and they kind of forget about technology for a while. And it's as soon as they're done, though, they start to get bored with that, then they're like, "Oh, now I need tech."

Julie: So, tell me a little about the habit that is technology in your life. Have you ever measured how many hours a day you're online?

Lindsay: No, that's a great question, Julie, and I don't know that I've ever intentionally measured that [laughs].

Julie: [Laughs] Well, I'm ahead of myself but we're going to talk more about that later in this podcast. So, if you just were to make a guestimate, would you say that you go online only after your Miracle Morning, do you ever look at your phone before you get out of bed? Do you ever look at your phone when you're talking to somebody else on the phone? Like, maybe you're talking to someone on your phone and you've got your laptop open at the same time. Do you ever use technology in ways that you might naturally frown on?

Lindsay: Yes, I definitely do that.

Julie: [Laughs] Now, you mentioned that one of the things you would love your kids to be is readers, and you're worried that they're reading mostly online and not so much books. Tell me how much reading you do in books compared to how much you do online?

Lindsay: Yeah, well, every—see, that's the thing. Like, I do my Miracle Morning when they're still asleep, so they don't actually *see* me reading physical books.

Julie: Oh, they don't? Okay. So, there isn't a time during the day where you'll pull out a novel that you're reading and sit in a chair and read?

Lindsay: We listen to audiobooks in the car a lot and that's how we—our family kind of gets the same story at the same time. And we read at bedtime every night.

Julie: Oh, that's beautiful. Love that. That's beautiful. In fact, my mom had a rule for me growing up that worked really well. She said we were allowed to stay up as late as we wanted in our bedrooms, as long as we were reading [laughs]. And so, I really became a bedtime reader. I would often wake up at like, 3 in the morning with the lights still on and the book across my chest, you know? Because I was reading until that last possible moment. But all three of the kids in our family really loved reading because we had so much permission to do it. So, I love reading at bedtime. I think reading to children at bedtime is absolutely vital and valuable.

So, let's get back, then, to this notion that you brought up. You want them to be readers, you don't want them only reading online. And yet they don't see you reading, and I'm guessing that what you're saying is you don't pull out a book during the day to read? Is that true? Like, a physical printed book, that doesn't happen very often?

Lindsay: Well, we have started practicing Poetry Teatimes, we do that once a month.

Julie: Nice.

Lindsay: So, that is kind of the one time a month that they see me pull out a physical book and read to them and with them, other than bedtime reading. But now Tyler is independent with his bedtime readings, so...

Julie: Which is wonderful! So, here's what I'm hearing. I'm hearing—tell me if I have this right—I'm hearing you have a value that I don't know yet where it comes from, but you have a value around a physical, printed book as being superior to reading online, or even listening to audiobooks even though you value that. But it isn't even actually your personal practice, would that be accurate?

Lindsay: It is my personal practice, but not in front of my children, if that makes sense.

Julie: Okay, so—that does make sense. So, what are you reading during your Miracle Morning? Are you reading a novel? What are you reading?

Lindsay: It's actually a magazine. It's called *Science of Mind*, and they have these little daily snippets that are really quick and easy to read, and then I journal off of those.

Julie: Okay, so, you're reading some kind of spiritual inspirational literature in the mornings, on a daily basis, which is wonderful! So many people benefit from that. I think it's a wonderful start to the day practice. I even wrote the *Gracious Space* books with that in mind. Something to digest that's simple and short and helps you set your mindset, or your frame of mind, for the day, so that's beautiful.

So, now let's circle back to this notion that you want your children to have not only technology as the source of their reading life. What I'm hoping that you're gathering from our exploration initially is that you are conducting, as an adult, a rich, vibrant life that includes attention to these amazing travel experiences, nature experiences, that has a spiritual component to it. That is intentional about affirmations, about creativity, about getting outside, exercise and health, good healthy food. And yet, you are feeling anxious still about the role of technology in your

children's lives and the cure for it, which might be reading, isn't even a natural practice for you in your daily life. Is that a fair description?

Lindsay: Yeah, that's totally fair.

Julie: Alright, so let's now demystify the romantic notion around a physical book [laughs], because this is just nostalgia for the past. I'm not saying that we shouldn't read books. We can read them on Kindles, we can read them on Gutenberg Press online, we can listen to them as audiobooks, or we can hold a physical book. There is a benefit to holding a physical book—there's something about being able to page ahead, page back; the brain holds onto content based on where it shows up, two-thirds of the way through the book, on the left-hand side, second paragraph down. It encodes the book in a way that Kindle sometimes... It's challenging. You can't remember where you saw that phrase, you don't know how to get back to it. So, there is value to it, but it isn't the kind of value that we sometimes are assigning, which is that somehow the technology piece is the danger, and if we were off technology, we would be learning something more valuable.

So, first, let's just strip away the delivery system. Reading matters. But reading today comes in so many more formats and opportunities than when you and I were growing up, before the internet. And so, first, I would love it if you could start quantifying how much reading your kids are doing during the day. Reading that has nothing to do with books or reading that has to do with books. So, you've got a son who's reading on his own at bedtime. You've got two kids that you are reading to every night, so those are coming through books. Poetry Teatime once a month. But what other reading are they doing?

Let's start to make a list, start observing and noticing. You know, take a month to just jot down, "Oh. He had to read a search engine to find that YouTube video that he wanted. He read all the comments. He read the discussion over on this one page that led him to watching this other movie." Start paying attention to where reading is showing up. Reading instructions for how to use something. Reading the shopping list back to you while you're in the grocery store. Where else is reading showing up in your child's life? You might be surprised that there is more going on than you had currently valued. So, that would be one of my first suggestions. How does that feel to think about?

Lindsay: I like that. I'm a big believer of what you track is what shows up in your life.

Julie: Yes! And I think one of the dangers with homeschooling is that we are conditioned to romanticize the past. There is something very one-room-schoolhouse about home education. And this feeling of nostalgia for a simpler time—of course, the times in the past were not

simpler. They didn't even have dryers [laughs], you know? They didn't have washing machines. They were like, handwashing clothes. I'm promising you, it was not simpler.

What we have today is this onslaught of options and opportunities, and sometimes we devalue them because they don't match this sort of idyllic, natural lifestyle that we associate with the past. But it's also the terror of children being exposed to things that we aren't sure we want them to know about yet. So, that combination sort of seizes us up. So, if we can start by actually valuing what is showing up in the space, in their current lives, we can lower our anxiety around the unknowing. We can start to see, oh, my child *is* learning to read, my child values reading, they use it as a tool in all these ways that I hadn't fully accounted for.

The second thing that I want to ask you is: when your child or children find something on YouTube they want to watch, what usually happens? Are you a part of that experience? Do they do it alone in a bedroom? Is it a shared experience? Or they watch it and then they invite you in? What's that like in the family dynamic?

Lindsay: Yeah, so, they're not allowed to go in a separate room to watch it. So, we're all usually in the living room, but everybody's kind of on their own device. So, tech-time, they get two hours a day, and that's really so I can get some of my work done. So, it's basically a tech babysitter so that I can get something done.

Julie: Well, that is so honest and not necessarily inappropriate, either. I understand the need for time and space. When I was working as a freelance writer and ghost writer and editor, I used to hire sort of a mother's helper. I had a 13-year-old come to my house and play with the kids for two hours or three hours while I worked on my computer. There is a need, if you have a hustle on the side, to make sure that your kids are happy and safe and entertained. And playing Minecraft or watching YouTube videos is not an unreasonable way to make that happen. That is certainly valuable.

One of the dangers that I would submit to you is if they only associate it with time when you are not with them. Then, I think, the technology becomes a forbidden fruit. It's only used as a babysitter. What would happen if, after that two-hour time period was up, you rejoined them and said, "I want to see your favorite video that you looked up. I want to watch it with you." Have you done that with them? Have you valued what they did in your absence by joining it afterwards?

Lindsay: I have not.

Julie: Do you think that's something you could try?

Lindsay: Yeah, I love that idea actually.

Julie: One of the things that makes something scary in families is when it seems invisible to us. So, if our children are on technology, the conversations they're having with the screen are happening inside their heads and we don't know what those conversations are. So, we're more likely to value a board game that we see happening out in front of us because we can hear them discussing the rules, rolling the dice, having a conversation with a sibling, getting in a fight. You know, we can sort of be a part of that experience and monitor it and support it and help it. But when they're facing a screen, it's like they exit the world of community and they go into this private place that can be both wonderful for them or scary for us. So, one way to eliminate the scary side of technology is to be a joiner. You know, show me what you just watched. Teach me how to build a world in Minecraft. I want to play you in Wii Bowling. You know? Joining, becoming a participant, putting your child in what I call the driver's seat: letting them teach you, show you, invite you into their superior experience. The thing they're an expert at that you don't know.

Lindsay: I love that.

Julie: Wonderful. Good! So, so far, we've got: make a little list, pay attention, observe all the places that they're reading. Start to value those. Be alert to what they are. The second thing is let's join them in their technology and not leave them isolated. Not assume that it's a privilege, or a prize to be won, or a distraction when Mom's busy, but it is actually [a] constitutive part of their development as learners.

You know, a lot of times, we ask our kids to love learning, but we aren't a fan of the thing they love to learn. So, here we have an opportunity to join them. To recognize that they are being intrinsically motivated to seek out learning opportunities for themselves online, and then we get to join them and allow them to show us, to show *off*, what they're learning, which is a powerful experience for kids.

You know, sometimes children will stumble across a YouTube website for origami, or slime, or how to bake muffins, and here they are actually curious and interested, but they don't have a parent who's available to shop for the resources, to sit down with them and help them do the origami, so what they become is spectators of somebody else's active life. And what we want to do is allow them not just to be a spectator, but then to turn it around and have that exciting experience become their own.

Here's how I know you're the right kind of parent for this, you literally took your family to see the total solar eclipse in Jackson Hole. You did not want to watch it on television. You wanted to be there in person living under the sky with this community of people. So, now let's treat the YouTube technology that they're using the same way. Find out what it is they're doing, what they're interested in. You know, if they're building Minecraft worlds, become interested in Minecraft. And then even do diagrams, talk about it. Record what they're learning, write it down, put it in a notebook.

One of the most exciting experiences I had with Liam, when he was struggling with dysgraphia between the ages of 9 and 12, is we decided to make a notebook that was a map of imaginary islands. He was so good at maps because he loved online gaming. And it occurred to me that if he couldn't handwrite the alphabet, maybe he could practice using a pencil by drawing maps. And weirdly, it worked because there was no pressure to be accurate. So, what we would do is we would sit, look at a sheet of paper, and I'd say, "Draw an imaginary island." I taught him how to symbolize mountains, the ocean, high elevation, low elevation. We created little map keys. He included military, weapons, super powers, flags, a motto for each island. It took us about a year to do eight or nine islands, and some of it he handwrote, some of it I jotted down for him. But it was building off of his online gaming life rather than ignoring it, denying it, and treating it like it was just entertainment. Does that make sense?

Lindsay: Yeah, totally. And Tyler is really into Minecraft, and I've kind of let him run with that, but I would put it in a box for him and say that's *your* thing, Ty. And I've taken him to Minecraft conferences and I tried to learn and he's like, "Mom, you're hopeless [laughs]; you don't get it." So, I've tried to step into his world a little bit and I feel like I let him run with it to a degree, but I don't—I'm not a full participant in it with him. And actually, that's how he learned to read is he was so interested in Minecraft that I bought him all these Minecraft books and I said, "Buddy, I don't have the time to learn it and teach you. So, here are all these resources for you. Go ahead." And he did! He taught himself how to play Minecraft, and to read, because he was so interested in it.

Julie: So, that's a fabulous example of you partnering with your child, though. I would say that you *were* a meaningful partner by purchasing those books, taking him to conferences. You don't have to become a skilled Minecraft player to value the way that Minecraft shows up in his life. You are doing that.

What I invite you to consider now is not seeing it as a treat but seeing it as a constitutive part of his life. His work in Minecraft is every bit as real as your work for whatever your online business is. It's the same thing! He's a child, so it's going to be Minecraft. He's not going to be developing a blog where he invites fellow kids at his age. However, it certainly may become that! You just never know. I know children who actually record themselves building and playing

games and they have their own YouTube channels, and they share that with the world at whatever age that becomes meaningful to them.

So, one of the things we want to just stay interested in is how the passion a child has shows up in their lives and leads them into all kinds of learning. And I think you're on a great track. What you want to do now is let go and embrace it. Be interested.

The other way that we support our kids in interests that maybe aren't ours, so for instance, I had a daughter who was very motivated to get interested in fashion. So, I did what you did, I ordered her all the subscriptions to *Elle*, *W*, *Vogue*, you know, the different sort of high fashion magazines that I knew she would love to read. We went to Chicago's Miracle Mile, and we looked at all the stores, and then she started a blog. And she taught herself how to use HTML, this is back before we had pushbutton publishing. She was doing just a fantastic job of this. But one of the things that I wasn't good at really was shopping with her for clothes. So, she found an older student, a student of ours from college who was a friend of the family, to go with her. And they shopped at thrift stores every week. She learned all about fashion blogging online. I didn't have to become an expert in fashion. I just was able to supply her with resources to come alongside. We built spelling lists from fashion magazines. That was the way that we were able to train her into the expertise she needed.

So, one of the ways is supplying resources, research, transportation, money. These are the ways parents support interests. But what you can do for *yourself*, on the back-end that your kids don't know about, is writing down what they're getting out of it. Translating all that activity, interest, and energy into the educational language that reassures you the kind of learning you want your kids to have is actually happening. So, as you're looking at this Minecraft lifestyle of your child, seeing it as a friend of learning rather than as entertainment for after they're done learning. It's the same thing.

And as you're considering now how to incorporate technology into your family life, I invite you to consider a third thing: how you talk about it. And I know, because you're an affirmation person and a language person, that this will resonate with you. If technology is seen through the lens of something that needs to be controlled and managed, and as a reward and entertainment, it becomes ice cream. It becomes this thing that we only get if we've been good, or a special occasion occurs, or if Mom isn't home, you know? It becomes this thing that we have to manipulate people to get. Instead of it being the tool and resource that is a complement to the lifestyle you're already leading. So, when I asked you to think about how many ways you use technology, how frequently it shows up in your own life, we want to make space for that in our kids' lives while also offering them the buffet of other ideas and options so that it isn't the only satisfying treat in life.

Lindsay: Yeah, I like that idea, too. I mean, we've had conversations with them that technology *is* this wonderful tool and we need to treat it with respect, and that there's also this whole wide world out there. That's why we do so much travel and have all these wonderful

experiences planned for them, because we want them to see the world, not just see it through a screen.

Julie: Absolutely. And I think if you see the screen and the real world in dialogue with each other, you're going to be pleasantly surprised at how much you are making that life possible for your kids. It's clear to me just from reading your background and the intentionality with which you parent that that is their life. What may be uncomfortable, what may be challenging to sort of take in is that technology is not only here to stay, but adults rely on it 10-12 hours a day, every day. That *is* the world we live in. The phone is a second brain for most adults.

So, what we really want is for our kids, not only to have respect for technology, but to know that they're in this dialogical tension. That they are out in the world and they are also on their phones or on their devices. One of the great opportunities that you have, I think, is to be a part of their technological lives and build from that. So, if they're watching a YouTube video that's very silly about, let's say, a series of books that they're reading, challenging them, supporting them to make a similar video. Or, to do the activity in their family—in your family.

One of the things we do in Brave Writer with our Arrow and Boomerang literature guides is we include book club party ideas to go with enjoying those books, so that kids are invited to bring family and friends together, build activities, learn how to host a party, experience and explore the book using crafts, art, food, entertainment that is of the human community kind. You don't need to do that six hours a day. But if you do those kinds of experiences once a month, once a quarter, you start to build a craving for more of those experiences. Too often what we do with our kids is we say, "Please, don't get on technology." But they don't have a meaningful vision that is a stimulating alternative. So, part of what our job as parents is, is to create that for them! Even if it's just a once a month experience.

Lindsay: Yeah, Tyler and Ember actually had a Harry Potter-themed birthday party this year and it was really fun.

Julie: So fun!

Lindsay: They played Quidditch in the backyard and, yeah [laughs].

Julie: I think you know how to do this. I actually think you're probably doing a really good job of it, and there's anxiety, partly because of their ages, about what amount of screen-time is too much. So, maybe instead of quantifying number of hours, pay attention to the level of engagement with their own lives that you see manifesting in your children.

One of the tools of enchanting an education that works well for younger kids is surprise. So, you may consider surprising your kids once a week, once every two weeks, where you supply something they didn't expect. Send your kids to bed. Put out on the coffee table something to be discovered. Art supplies, a deck of cards, a brand-new tabletop game, dress-up clothes, binoculars, Chinese checkers, pick-up sticks, Jacks. Something that you, sort of in your nostalgia for a simpler time, would love to see your children do. Leave it available. Don't comment on it. Let them discover it by themselves in the morning. Tyler or Ember may say to you, "Mommy, what is this?" Say, "Hmm, I don't know, why don't you take a look and see?" And allow them to discover it and then involve yourself over time. Let them discover new practices, playthings, opportunities that will surprise them. Video is endlessly surprising. It's one of the reasons they're always drawn to the computer screen. So, if you want to complement that experience, think of ways to show up that are surprising for your kids.

Lindsay: That's a great idea. Ember loves to watch those videos where it's like someone opening a toy.

Julie: Yes!

Lindsay: And I'm always so intrigued. I'm like, why is that so fascinating to her? Like, wouldn't she rather open her own toy, but that's what you're saying. Surprise them, let them have that experience of opening something new. Just put a bag on the table and what's in the bag?

Julie: Absolutely! Absolutely. And you know, the things that can be in the bag can be so different than even some plastic toy. It could be a collection of nature items and a card with a big question mark, and you could even use technology to say let's go on a scavenger hunt online to see if we can find out the Latin name for each of these nature items. You could start to showcase the use of technology even around the things that are natural, that are real, that you want them to know.

So, think about the dialogue between technology and real life and help them have those experiences. Maybe you even film them unboxing something and share it with their dad that day. Start to see it not as this taboo that you're only allowing them to have after they've done their fitness work. See it in dialogue and start to expand their experience of the world.

You know, as we go into the summer months, and I know we'll be airing this podcast in the fall, but as I think of you going into your summer months, there are so many backyard games that are perfect for this kind of unboxing experience, whether it's badminton, or croquet, or lawn

bowling. You know? A Slip 'n Slide. One of those fun things you put on the end of the hose that makes the water squirt around. There are ways to invite them out of the house, away from the screen, that will feel like an adventure to them.

Lindsay: Mhm. Yeah, something they love to do is create obstacle courses. So, sometimes I'll just like put a bunch of stuff out in the living room and say, "What can you make with this?" And, "Create an obstacle course for your fitness today."

Julie: I love that idea! What a fun thing to do for kids. That's exactly right. Or treasure hunts, you know? They have to solve clues. For your 5-year-old, each of the clues could just be a hand drawn sketch for where the next clue is and at the end of there's something fun for them to do that's new. Those are preliteracy skills, actually, so that might be fun. You could put the first letter of the word. So, let's say you start in their bedroom and the first clue is, "The next clue will be behind the sofa." So, you put a great big 'S' and you draw a picture of the sofa. And then they get behind the sofa and they pick up the next clue and it's got a great big 'M' on it and a picture of the bathroom mirror. Like that. Help them discover the joy and mystery and surprise of early childhood, and you'll see them start to think of doing those things for each other as well.

Lindsay: Yeah, I love that. All these ideas are great.

Julie: Fantastic. Do you have any questions for me? Anything that didn't work, or that you are worried about as we come to the close of this conversation?

Lindsay: You know, I think what I'm realizing more and more is the way I talk about it. I'm always kind of negative around technology and I don't have to be. I remember Tyler was really into Pokémon GO for a while and it's literally how we would get him out of the house. We're like, "Hey Ty, do you want to go on a Poké-hunt?" And he's like, "Yeah!" And he was getting exercise using Pokémon GO because he couldn't wait to get to the next area. We took these long hikes playing Pokémon GO, and I don't know why I kind of steered away from that and became so negative around technology, so...

Julie: Well, it's a worthwhile thought experiment for you. Maybe freewrite about it. You know, sometimes what I notice happens for me is I will be comfortable for a while in choices I make for my family, and then a subtle change will occur. A best friend says something that makes me feel ashamed of a choice I made, or I read an article online that suddenly casts doubts over a

practice that I've felt good about, and I will notice that, because I want to be a conscientious person, I will suddenly render judgement on a practice that was going just fine in my family. It takes a lot of courage to pay more attention to the health of your own kids than to the prevailing belief system that is being batted around, around you. And in terms of Pokémon GO, one of the great tools that a lot of families have used to help their families go on hikes is Geocaching, which predates even the internet. And none of—

Lindsay: Ty loves Geocaching.

Julie: Yes, exactly! Because here's the thing: it is capitalizing on the properties of surprise, mystery, risk, and adventure. *That's* why the internet and gaming is so popular with children. It taps into the four elements of enchantment: surprise, mystery, risk, and adventure. If you want non-technology to show up as attractive to children, add surprise, mystery, risk, and adventure to their regular lives. Borrow what you're learning from their attachment to technology and you will see them blossom.

Lindsay: Awesome. Thank you so much, Julie.

Julie: Thank you so much. Oh, thank *you!* No, it's—this is such a perfect question and I appreciate you sharing about Miracle Morning. If somebody were interested in that community, where would they go?

Lindsay: Yeah, Facebook is the best place. I run a group by the same name, the Miracle Morning for Parents and Families. I'm literally in their everyday, so [laughs].

Julie: Fantastic. Well, that is wonderful, and we will include that in the show notes. We will contact you again in the fall and see if any of these changes are valuable and helpful and hear how Tyler and Ember are doing.

Lindsay: Yeah, I have pages of notes, so this is great!

Julie: Oh, that's wonderful. Well, thank you for sharing your story with us, Lindsay.

Lindsay: Thank you so much, Julie. [Theme music plays].

Julie: Let's give Lindsay a few moments to apply those strategies. We'll return to her in just a minute.

I promised you that I would read you a quote from my new book, [THE BRAVE LEARNER: Finding Everyday Magic in Homeschool, Learning and Life](#), each episode of this season of the podcast. So, let's hear a little bit about technology, shall we?

Why are adults more interested in taking the stairs at work because a watch keeps track of the steps than simply because it helps us avoid heart attacks? The "right" reason is too abstract for the daily commitment. Death seems far away, but a bright completed circle on my wrist is immediately satisfying.

This quote comes from the chapter called "Applying the Superpowers." And, you know, if you as an adult find the motivation to exercise, for instance, just because of a Fitbit, imagine how you might be able to adopt that same strategy when you are working with your kids on their schoolwork. I help you know how to do that in the book.

If you're interested in pre-ordering, go to thebravelearner.com, and you'll see all the booksellers linked directly from that page. We also offer you a free downloadable excerpt.

Thank you me for joining for this episode of the podcast. I'm ready to find out what happened when Lindsay took some of our ideas and applied them to her family. Let's get back to it. [Theme music ends]

Julie: Hey, Lindsay! Welcome back to the broadcast!

Lindsay: Thanks for having me today, Julie!

Julie: Well, thank you. Thanks for your amazing questions and the issues that you faced, because I know things related to tech and how we help our kids have meaningful experiences at home is central to so many parents' questions about raising children and homeschooling, so I feel like you raised just such a valuable question that many of our parents are relating to right now. So, I am excited to hear what happened since we last spoke. For instance, tell me a little bit about your relationship now to technology and how you see it for yourself and for your kids?

Lindsay: Yeah, I mean, I think this is going to be an ongoing struggle, honestly, but I've changed my mindset around it a lot and I know last time we talked about—it doesn't matter the

delivery system, so I was a little nostalgic for a real book and I actually did incorporate that more into our lives. Instead of listening to an audiobook together, especially in the summer time, on those lazy afternoons we would curl up all together and read an actual, real book, which was fun.

Julie: How nice. So nice.

Lindsay: And we also—we planned a trip to Japan, so in order to kind of prepare for Japan, we watched a couple of documentaries together, and we read some physical books together, and I think that was really helpful for the kids to kind of see what it was going to be like *before* we went there.

Julie: Oh, my goodness, so true. One of the things that research has shown is that it's the second encounter with almost anything that creates the strongest lasting bond. When we are hearing or seeing or doing something for the very first time, our whole sensory system is overloaded. We are processing and simultaneously responding because we don't know what's coming. So, a little bit of that fight or flight kicks in, but also the adrenalin rush of the new. But by establishing a connection and then having a second encounter, that second encounter is filled with anticipation because there's a certain part of the experience that's already familiar to you and you can look forward to it. You can be prepared for an emotion that you'll have.

It's sort of like when you hear a brand-new song on the radio, you can't sing along yet. You might really like it, but it's once you've learned the hook that you feel like this is a really great song, and that's a little bit what happens when you show a documentary and then visit a place. You're giving first an experience, a taste of what it might be. You're reading about it, deepening that awareness that this other thing exists. But then when you go there, well, now you're in the encounter experience where your systems are overloaded on every level, but because you've prepared for it, you aren't just in shock. You're able to sort of parse it and appreciate it. Tell me a little bit about that Japan trip! How did it go?

Lindsay: It was amazing and, because we have a little bit of the history beforehand, when we were there we got to really dive in deep when we visited the castles and the gardens and the temples and the shrines, and the kids had a little context for—and then they got to have an experience, too, where our guide showed us, "This is how the Shinto do the blessing on their hand with the water before they pray at the temple." And I think it made it even more memorable for them because they had a little bit beforehand to really grasp onto when they were there.

Julie: Perfect, yes, that's exactly what I'm talking about. I love hearing that. And then that way you also create the greatest opportunity for them to make that connection when they have context. You know, context is everything. It's what we need for good relationships. It's why television shows that are, quote-unquote, "reality TV" go to such lengths to make the environment that those conversations happen in look cozy or inviting because context helps us bond. So, I really love that you did that. That's wonderful. Tell me a little bit more, then, about how some of our discussion has impacted you. For instance, how is Minecraft [laughs] in your family at this time?

Lindsay: You know what, Tyler's actually kind of stepped away from Minecraft. He, over the summer, he got really into skateboarding, and so he started watching a lot of skate videos to learn new tricks, and we would take him to the skate park all the time. So, I started videoing him doing the skate tricks and then when he got home, instead of watching somebody else do the tricks, he wanted to watch his own videos, which was really fun.

Julie: That's really fun. I think I don't want to skip over the fact that his interest moved on. Sometimes when I hear parents talk about video games, they talk with the language of addiction, or they talk about it like if I don't regulate it now, that's all he'll ever do for the next ten years. It's interesting to see that a child's interest in something, like Minecraft, could fluctuate. Did you think about that or notice that a bit?

Lindsay: Yeah, and actually, our conversation was a little offline last time about Fortnite. I was having this anxiety about him trying Fortnite, because I've heard so many things about how it's so addicting. So, we went ahead and let him try it because he had a good friend that played it and he wanted to play with him, and I was like okay, let's try it. And after spending a weekend with the child who really likes Fortnite, Tyler decided it wasn't for him. So, I was kind of holding onto all this anxiety that didn't even exist in real life, and once I let him try it and he was like, "Yeah, I don't even like that game." You know, he played it for a weekend when he was with his friend and then he moved on again, so...

Julie: Isn't that something?

Lindsay: [Laughs]

Julie: Isn't that something, though? It also shows that the values in your family and the things that matter to you are actually being internalized. He's having the kinds of reactions that are

interesting, you know? They're actually the kind you might hope you would have. I love that. There is something about giving them that opportunity to sort of peak behind the curtain that helps dispel the fascination. It gives them a chance to have a genuine reaction, instead of just having to like something to defy you to protect the space to be curious, which is what happens a lot.

Lindsay: Yeah. Yep, exactly.

Julie: Well, that's fantastic, and I know we talked about that filming of your kids doing things, so I don't want to skip over that too quickly either. I absolutely love that you filmed him doing that skateboarding. A lot of kids have found it very empowering to feel like they get to participate in this global community of sharing that's going on through YouTube, so that's fantastic. That's fantastic. What else? Have you added any elements of surprise to your everyday life?

Lindsay: Yeah, I tried to do that, especially over the summer. You know, I would put things out. I remember one morning in particular I put out these big dominoes and I just wrote a little note, "What can you do with these?" Question mark. And when I came upstairs, they were building a house out of them using them as blocks, and I was like, "Cool!" I didn't give them any directions, just what can you do with these? And they came up with something.

Julie: Wow. That's fantastic. Oh, that's fantastic. So, give me an overall. How are things in your world today compared to when we spoke a few months ago?

Lindsay: They're going really well, and we've started back at school again, and we found this program called Out School, and Tyler is a huge Harry Potter fan and he's also really into experiments, and I found a class on there that—it's a chemistry class, but it is through the lens of Harry Potter, so it's called Potions Class.

Julie: Yes.

Lindsay: And he is loving it. And I love that he's getting to use technology as a tool for learning versus just an entertainment source, which has pretty much been most of his contact

with tech up until now. So, he's learning how to use Zoom and he's interacting with other people online in a safe environment. So, that's been really exciting to add.

Julie: How brilliant. That is awesome, that's exactly right. I mean, that mirrors more your own use of tech, doesn't it?

Lindsay: Yep, exactly.

Julie: Wow. Well, this is all good news. Are there any lingering questions that you have?

Lindsay: Not really. I think when we started more awareness of like how often we read, our little one kind of—she got upset a little bit because she doesn't read yet. [Laughs] I think that—so we kind of veered away from bringing more awareness around how often we're reading, because she was starting to be like, "But I don't know how to read yet." But I think at the same time it got her excited for when she will learn to read eventually and, you know, when she's ready to dive into that.

Julie: Absolutely. And, I mean, you can take advantage of that interest already. Just naming the letters and sounds and helping her sight read a few words on signs, or on the refrigerator, or things you write to her that you read back to her. You'll be amazed at how quickly some of those pieces of the reading life can be adopted by some kids just because their curiosity is piqued.

So, it sounds to me like what you've done is: some of the things that were making you a little uncomfortable, especially around technology, have been dispelled by incorporating your vision. You know, your desire to use traditional, old fashioned books, have the cuddles on the couch, everybody together in a room. You've been able to integrate that while also valuing the role of technology in learning, in filming your child skateboarding, in letting your child explore a game and discover whether or not he likes it. I mean, to me, I'm just hearing this amazing balance that seems to be happening in your life. Does that sound right?

Lindsay: Yeah, and you know going back to the Japan trip, too, I think it was really fun for our littlest one to see all of us kind of struggle a little bit, because none of us read Japanese, so we were all learning together when we were there, and our guide would—she taught us how to count in Japanese and she taught us a few of the characters, and Emmy would recognize them on signs and she was like, "Oh, it says 'big!'" And she got so excited.

Julie: Isn't that amazing? And, you know, I love that your youngest had the experience of all these big people in her life not knowing how to read. That's very powerful. Not knowing the language, not knowing how to communicate. We sometimes forget that that is not an innate understanding of the world around us. We can explain it, but until you live in it, experience it directly, it isn't always believable, especially to young children. So, wow, I love that you shared that, that's wonderful.

Lindsay: Yeah, and there they have a lot of Japanese words and then English right under it, and she could recognize the difference. She was like, "Oh, that's in English," and I'm like, "You're right, Emmy, that's an English word."

Julie: Yes.

Lindsay: So, she's at least getting that recognition of, oh, I know that that's an English letter and that's a Japanese letter.

Julie: Yes, right, perfect. Global citizens, way to go! Well, Lindsay, I really appreciate you joining us on the podcast and sharing your family's story. Thank you for doing that!

Lindsay: Yeah, thank you for having me on and for all the guidance you gave me because I feel like it's helped us so much as a family [theme music plays].

Julie: Wow, what a great story. I love hearing how you are taking these ideas and making meaning in your own lives. I asked you on the first episode to send us your stories and I want to remind you to do that again. You can either direct message me in Instagram, my Instagram account is [@JulieBraveWriter](#), or you can send it to our helpline, help@bravewriter.com. Here's our very first message and it gave us such a thrill to receive. It comes from Jennifer and here's what she wrote:

Hi, Julie and co.,

I just felt that I needed to say a massive thank you to you for the most amazing episode, episode one. I cried, I laughed, I changed my ideas. I have shared similar feelings of insecurity as Tammy and it felt like the enchantment I'm wishing for is just not happening in my school. I now feel energized to make small changes that I am sure

will have a big impact on our day. Not just the efficiency of our day, but most importantly the coziness and connection of our family throughout our day. This is going to be a listen-once-a-season episode for me. So, thank you, Julie, Tammy, and all who have worked to make this episode.

Jenny

Julie: We *love* hearing from you. And it encourages us so much when we find out that you're able to make meaningful use of the ideas we share. So, I hope you'll take encouragement from Jenny's risk of letting us know how the podcast's season is working for her family and you'll share with us, too.

In the meantime, I would like to thank the production company, Podcast Masters, for the sound engineering of this episode. And the Brave Writer team, Jeannette, Amy, and Beth, for their work to make this episode possible. I'm also grateful to Lindsay McCarthy and her family for opening their home and life to us. In the meantime, keep loving and learning. This is Julie Bogart, from Brave Writer. [Theme music ends].

How do we help our kids experience the same level of passion/excitement for school subjects that they bring naturally to their personal interests?

[THE BRAVE LEARNER](#) answers that question!

