



S6E1: Getting Wild and Free

Julie Bogart with Greta Eskridge

Julie: [Theme music plays] Hello friends! [Season five Ask Julie](#) of The Brave Writer Podcast came to a close last week with the launch of my brand new book, [The Brave Learner](#). You put it at number one in all of its categories. We broke 150 on the Amazon book list. Like we were in the 140s [laughs]. That's insane! Thank you for your enthusiasm and support.

My goal going forward with the podcast is to simply talk about the principles and practices that you all will be applying to your homeschools. If you have questions or things you wish I'd expand on, please send an email to help@bravewriter.com. Put in the subject line "The Brave Learner" and then we will sort through those and pick some of those questions or experiences to share on the podcast. When you do send that email, just know you're giving us permission to use your question or your experience on the air. We will eliminate names, but we will share your stories.

Today's episode, though, is of a different vein. I'm getting ready to travel to Frisco, Texas to be at the Wild + Free conference. For those of you who don't know [Wild + Free](#), it is an absolute gem of a conference. The founder, Ainsley Arment, started coordinating with a whole bunch of women on Instagram. She found her people. People who valued nature and play. Really driven to create a home environment that is nurturing and cozy. These conferences bring all of that together in an electrifying space. Over a thousand women—I think this one will have nearly 1,600 women attending. We all spend energy together, sharing our stories, having a playful fun time, and deepening our connection to what it means to be educators. I will be attending this marvelous experience in Texas and one of the team members of the Wild + Free organization is with me today. Her name is [Greta Eskridge](#).

Greta and I bonded very quickly when we met. She lives in Southern California, where I was raised. She's a huge fan of literature. And she is best known for her passion for taking her

children outdoors. Greta literally takes them on hikes all over California. Now here's what you need to know: it takes hours to do anything in a car in LA [laughs]. That does not stop Greta. She simply tosses them in the car, hands them a bottle of water and little bag of snacks and off they go. Whether it's to tide-pools or the mountains or Griffith Observatory.

Greta's passion for bringing her children to nature and helping them grow to love it has landed her a book deal—we just found out. She will be published with Thomas Nelson and will be helping everyone understand how to make nature a source of joy in your children's lives. Today we're going to talk about some of those experiences that she shared with her children. I invite you to sit back, relax, and imagine what it would be like to bring your children into the world of nature and have them love it [theme music plays].

Julie: Today's episode of the podcast features someone who've I've grown to admire and appreciate. Her name is Greta Eskridge and she is a go-getter, creative entrepreneur with enough projects to keep a huge team of people busy, let alone just her little old self. Greta runs a website, a blog, a podcast, is an avid Instagrammer and has written for and spoken at nearly every Wild + Free homeschool conference. Greta actually is one of those women that when you get around her, you just want in. She has so much going on and she shares it so freely.

On top of all that, Greta is a second generation homeschooler to four adorable kids. Wife to her husband who's an artist. And a fur mama to the family's rescue dog named Shadow. Apparently he is loved to death despite making the home a giant fur ball. Nature is Greta's self-proclaimed happy place and she and her family live in my home town area, Southern California and they recharge by hiking, exploring tide-pools—sigh—and camping. I am landlocked in Ohio, Greta. To support her late night, hard at work sessions, Greta drinks copious amounts of coffee and stays hydrated with sparkling water. I am so excited to chat with Greta Eskridge on today's episode of the podcast. Welcome Greta!

Greta: Thanks Julie! I am so excited to talk to you today.

Julie: Before we even get into it, can you just give me a thumbnail sketch of what Wild + Free is for people listening who've never heard that language used to describe a homeschool community?

Greta: Sure. Wild + Free started just a few years ago and it started as an Instagram account, really. And it grew quickly into an entire online community. It's supported by monthly bundles that are sent out, they're subscription and they're sent out monthly to people who subscribe to the bundles. The bundles are full of just a wide variety of articles written by all different kinds of homeschool moms and they cover everything from actual book reviews to craft projects to being an entrepreneur as a homeschooling. I mean, just the full gamut. Everything you can imagine. They also are available in print now as well as being given to you online. And then

there's the twice yearly conferences where thousands of women gather to hear from a wide variety of speakers who all are talking about the various aspects of homeschooling, mothering, and just being the creative women who are driving this new style of educating kids. It's not confined to one particular type of homeschooling and that's one of my favorite things about it. There are women who are unschoolers. There are women who pursue Waldorf or Montessori, Charlotte Mason, classical. I mean, just the full gamut and that's what's so great is that it's such an incredibly diverse and creative group of people and I just see the kids that are going to come out of this community are going to be some pretty wonderfully unique and creative and just inspired children.

Julie: That is a beautiful description. I had my first taste of a Wild + Free conference in Portland in 2018 and I am looking forward to participating in the upcoming conference in Frisco, Texas on February 15th. What I noticed about the women who run Wild + Free, the women who show up and attend the conferences: this is an impressive set of young adult women. I'm sure some of you would dispute the word young but of course I'm in my mid-fifties so anyone under 50 seems like a kid to me. And what I love about what you're doing is that you're flipping the script on the conventional homeschool convention. You're saying that we don't have to be about shopping, we can be about thinking. And we can be about thinking deeply. We can share our experiences. We can share the evolving insight that we get as home-educators and we can be better for it. Would you say that sums it up pretty well?

Greta: Yeah it's fantastic. It's a really wonderful group of people to be a part of.

Julie: Well thank you for explaining that so for people who don't know about Wild + Free, we will absolutely include that in the show notes and you can go check them out. But let's talk about you, Greta [laughs].

Greta: Okay!

Julie: Tell me a little bit about this adorable family of yours that I love to watch on Instagram.

Greta: Well I have four kids like you mentioned. I have three sons and one daughter. We're just entering the teen years, I have a 14 year old son and a 12 year old son and my daughter is 10. And then a 7 year old. So I'm out of the baby and toddler years and entering a new phase but I feel like I'm in a really sweet spot right now because we're all—everybody's mobile, we don't have naptimes, they're wonderfully self-sufficient and we all just love to be together and so it's been that—the time that people say “oh it goes so fast and enjoy it” and I do but I don't feel like I'm at a stage of they're teenagers, they're growing up I don't want to be around them

anymore. I just like to be around them more and more. And so it is making me hold on to our time together and to cherish it not but because I think “Oh soon they’ll be out of my grasp and I won’t want to be with them anymore” but just because I like them more and more. I’ve them home with me the whole time. I’ve been homeschooling since the very beginning and I have no plans on stopping until they’re in college [laughs].

Julie: Got it. Yes! Absolutely. Well you were homeschooled yourself. How did that experience shape your decision to homeschool your own kids?

Greta: I loved being homeschooled and so I knew when I was probably 13 or 14 that when I had my own kids, I would homeschool them. It was just a given for me. And when I actually—this is one of my favorite stories to tell—when I met my husband, I was 18, he was 19 and we had just barely started dating and I said to him at some point, “Oh by the way, when I have kids, I’m going to be homeschooling them so if you are not excited about homeschooling, then we probably shouldn’t date.” [Laughs]

Julie: [Laughs] that’s a great gauntlet to throw down.

Greta: So clearly it was on my mind and I was passionate about it even as an 18 year old college student. It was what I wanted to do.

Julie: He was not homeschooled, I take it?

Greta: No, he was not homeschooled and to be honest, he knew—we grew up—both of us grew up in the same small town and there was just small homeschool community and he knew quite a few of the families that I grew up with and he secretly thought some of them were a little odd [laughs].

Julie: [Laughs]

Greta: And so he had some reservations but he kept them to himself because he wanted to keep dating me [laughs].

Julie: That’s adorable. Have those reservations been overcome by the fruit of experience?

Greta: I hope so. I think they have. We might still be a little odd to other people but we're okay with that. He's definitely been so supportive but as time has gone on and he's seen just the different things that our kids have the freedom to be able to do because they're homeschooled that gives him a lot of pleasure with the decision he's made. And it's not to say there haven't been times that he's worried because definitely part of our journey has been doing things on our own timing which means our kids are not always aligned with their particular age group in a traditional school setting and I think that's hard for any parent but again, he's able to see the benefits and to way them and we talked through it and he's supporting me and supportive of our educational path. And I can't ask for anything more than that.

Julie: That's fantastic. I know that it is challenging sometimes when you have that lop-sided experience. So your memories are of what it would be to be home educated. You wound up becoming a trained English teacher so clearly home education didn't hold you back. What would you say to parents who are homeschooling their kids who are worried about that future development and how they might fit into a traditional classroom setting as a teacher or as a student in college? How was that transition for you?

Greta: You know, that's part of why I love that I was homeschooled because I have the—there's a sense of peace that comes because I can look back and say hey, I did it. I survived. I thrived! And I believe that will be my children's story as well. But I also have to have the understanding that my husband didn't have that experience so he might have different worries and concerns than I do. But what I can do is I can come at his concerns but sharing my personal story and then even the story of the students that I taught when I was in high school which was that I had 150 students in—not in one class but overall, those were all the students I taught—and it was very difficult, if not impossible, for me to meet their needs because even in one single classroom I had 40 students with a range of abilities that would go from 2nd grade to college age ability. I couldn't meet all their needs.

And so I can say to my own husband or to any other person who's concerned about their kids, that you mom or dad who's working with your kids one-on-one, you have certainly not 35 students in your class. You have two or four and you have the ability to meet them in a way that a teacher in a traditional classroom simply can't by sheer numbers, let alone you have an intimate connection that exists because you are their parent. You have the freedom to know them and their interests in a way that their teacher cannot. You have the freedom and the ability to slow down if they need to slow down. To speed up. To tailor fit their education in a way that could never happen in any traditional school setting. And that is the—that is a recipe for success. The timeframe might look different, but the ability to tailor make your child's education is an incredible gift that we want to not lose sight of because we're worried that they're doing things at a different rate.

Julie: Oh that's such a key insight. I hope everyone rewinds the tape and just re-listens to that last paragraph because it's—what I firmly believe about homeschooling—it's why I am such a staunch supporter now and have always been—one of the things that you brought up that I think stood out to me is this idea of tailor making the education and not being bound by the strictures of a traditional school setting. One of the things that we have going for us is a 24 hour day. Teachers do not have that with our children. And you maximize those 24 hours, don't you! I know you spend a lot of time outside. You aren't just in a classroom setting or converting the den into desktops and blackboards. Am I right about that?

Greta: Yes. I—I love making the world our classroom. I think that makes learning come alive in an incredible way. So the more we can get outside of our house and away from the dining room table and take our learning into the world, I'm on board. It makes me and my kids happy and we learn better when it's joyful so I can't get enough of it [laughs].

Julie: Well give us an example of a place that you've gone and what kind of learning took place because you were not home and you were out in nature.

Greta: Well you mentioned the tide pools earlier and I know that sometimes that example can be difficult because not everybody lives where there are tide pools so I'm going to use it anyways because I have a really fun way for how it has made learning come alive. Not just for my kids, but actually for people who follow me on Instagram. Because when we go to the tide pools, we are looking and observing all of these creatures. And of course, I'm super excited, I'm like a child out there jumping around thrilled to death because we found a giant sea hare, which looks like this big giant black squishy rock. And you—a lot of times you might not even notice that they're there because they're camouflaged. They blend in to the water and the rocks that are in the tide pools. But one of my sons especially is just the expert at finding sea creatures. So we'll find a giant sea hare but then we'll notice there's actually a whole bunch. And then we'll see: there are these things that look like strands of spaghetti clustered around some of the sea hares and we surmise that they're actually eggs. So then we realize, oh that big clump of sea hares, they're mating and some of them are laying eggs. And we all of the sudden, this squishy thing that's actually kind of gross looking and weird, there's all kinds of life happening. And we get excited and it's made—it makes the learning come to life so much more than if we were just looking at pictures of sea hares in a science book.

What I love to do is to take videos and share them on Instagram. And I have moms message me that they show the videos to their kids and they, like you, live somewhere where it's landlocked and they'll say "We've never seen these kinds of animals before and my kids can't wait to watch your videos." And so I'm able to say "here's a great book that we love that's actually a story, it's called *Pagoo* and it's written by this author called Holling Clancy Holling"—his name is Holling Clancy Holling and he writes this beautifully illustrated book about this little crab that lives in the tide pools. And we read the book and then we went out and we did the learning and it made the book come to life. Well these moms who can't go to the tide pools, I

say read the book and then watch the videos and it's one step removed but it's still making the learning come to life because they're getting outside of the walls of their house, even though it's through video. Does that make sense?

Julie: Absolutely. And really, it made me think again of all the ways that we've explored nature remotely when we've needed to. So there was a time when we were really fascinated with tsunamis and the impact of that destruction and you know, YouTube gives you the opportunity or even live broadcasting where you can actually see someone who lives in the city filming what's happening to their neighborhood. We became fascinated with this one family who had one of those livestream cameras on their barn owl inside of a barn that was nourishing their little babies. So it was over time and we could check in any day, night or day to see what was going on with this barn owl. We became fascinated with birds when we moved to Ohio because that's what Ohio offers. In fact, when you said tide pools the reason it stood out to me is that when we lived in California, we lived in Orange County and it was a bit of a drive, in traffic, with five kids to get to the beach. You know?

Greta: Right.

Julie: And I remember at one point turning to my kids' dad at the time and I said "we are going to regret not going to the ocean at least once a week because there might be a day when we don't live here anymore." So we started making time to go and we would even just stay for an hour, which if you understand Orange County traffic, that's a three hour trip. It's an hour there, an hour you stay, and an hour back. But we did that because I had this—I don't know, inkling that we might not always be there and tide pools became our passion. Interestingly enough, that year ended and we moved to Ohio. And there was nothing at the beginning of that year that would tell me that we wouldn't always live in California, that's my home state. So taking advantage of where you live and actually falling in love with the nature that you have around you. So we just shifted our focus from sea to sky and became bird lovers when we moved to Ohio. Yeah.

Greta: Right. And now we have access to things that—like you said, through videos and through YouTube and we can see things in a fuller picture than we do with just books. But when I was a kid, I loved reading books and that's really how I fell in love with nature was simply through books because my family, we didn't travel very much. We didn't have a lot of money. We were stay at home—my mom stayed at home and homeschooled us and my dad worked an awful lot and so we didn't get to experience far beyond where we lived.

Julie: Interesting.

Greta: But I could read like the *Yearling* and I could learn all about the flora and fauna of the Florida Everglades and fall in love with it and feel like I experienced it through the book and now our kids can do that. But they can do it even to a full extent because of technology. So—

Julie: True.

Greta: I just love the idea of learning about nature—loving the nature where you are but then also learning about it, experiencing it as much as you can—the nature that’s in other places by making it available to your kids through books and through technology. Because nature just—it makes—for me and for my kids it has made our learning come to life.

Julie: Yeah let’s talk about that. So before we started recording the podcast, you were talking about adventure in learning. One of the things that I talk about in *The Brave Learner*, my book, is the power of risk and adventure to really enchant a child’s education. It helps them be catalyzed into curiosity and a lot of times that we sort of midwife that experience is collaborating with them and participating with them in that risk and adventure. Can you talk a little bit about the adventure of nature and what you mean when you use that language?

Greta: Well I agree with you that when we do something that’s a little outside of our comfort zone or a little outside of our day to day norm, that’s an adventure and so that might be driving into the city. If you’re not a city dweller and for you that is your grand adventure because you’re dealing with traffic and you’re dealing with crowds and things that are outside of your norm and so that becomes your adventure. Suddenly you’re going to a downtown museum and experiencing art and you’re experiencing the hustle and bustle of a life that’s different from your life at home, if you’re not a city dweller. Or adventure could be you’re going out into the woods and you’re not used to hiking with your kids and you’re afraid that there might be snakes or they’re going to get bitten by a bug or there could be a mountain lion. So the adventure—adventure doesn’t just have to take place outdoors but it just—it’s something that is different than your day-to-day norm and that heightens all of our senses. It makes us curious and excited and it creates a lasting memory and so all of those things work together to make learning happen in a way that just stays with us. And that’s why I love learning through adventure.

Julie: I love that. I read a Finnish study or a study of a Finnish school, just six or eight months ago where they were showing that just one hour a week outside in nature created sustained attention in the classroom that they couldn’t achieve without that hour. An hour a week, that’s not very much. And yet, I wonder if sometimes we get housebound. You know, it’s too hot or it’s too cold or it’s too muddy or it’s too snowy. I love the injunction of the Brits, you know, you just bundle up, wear the right clothes and you go outside everyday [laughs].

Greta: That's right. Yeah. Because here we don't have a lot of—well, I'm sure to many people they would laugh if I even said it gets cold at all because to us in Southern California 60 degrees is a cold day but we do have heat and so we have mistakenly hiked in very hot temperatures and the forecast didn't say it would be so hot or we—we're not anticipating the hike taking as long as we thought so we're out later into the heat of the day but most of the time, we don't hike in the heat of summer but we still want to be outside because we need to be out of doors so then we transition and we spend the day at the beach because being outside is the critical component.

And I think that there's this great quote I love by—oh I'm going to blank on his name. He wrote *Last Child in the Woods*, Richard Louv—and he wrote “love the land you're in.” If you can't—basically the idea is wherever you are, there are going to be things that aren't perfect. So like I live close to Los Angeles, there's tons of traffic. I have to drive to nature and it would be easy to say “I can't do it, it's too difficult.” Like you said, the traffic. I mean we've driven two hours for a good hike, one way. And it's worth it and we have to love the land we're in. So if you live where there's snow, you have to figure out how to make it work for you. If you live where there's tons of mud because it rains all the time, you have to make it work for you. If you live where there's traffic, you drive through the traffic because you love where you are and you're going to make the most of where you are. It's not perfect but you can make it still be fantastic.

Julie: I completely agree with that. In fact, one of the discoveries I made living in a condo in Orange County without my own yard where the only plants that were growing were basically drought resistant ugly things, you know [laughs] I remember really longing for an experience like I saw people having in the Midwest or in these more natural places and I remember leaving my house with my kids to go walk to the local play equipment in this condo unit area, thinking oh no, everybody is going to hate this walk and I'm going to have to drag them to the play equipment and they became mesmerized by a little burst of ladybugs that sort of alighted on Liam's arm that were on the local bush. Five feet from my front door. And we stood there for a good 10 minutes conversing about ladybugs and I suddenly recognized that my skepticism around pill bugs, snails and the American crow and the sparrow, the only natural insects and birds I ever saw in southern California that my kids were still amazed. That the world is new to them.

Charlotte Mason likes to say the flowers are the same but children are new. The children are new. So what they're seeing, whether it is a shrub, a weed, or a pill bug is still an element of nature. We don't get to romanticize nature as only being the woods in the middle of Ohio. It's okay to imagine that they are this other thing as well.

Greta: Right. Yeah I think about like living in southern California there's all through summer and fall it's very brown because we don't get a lot of rain anyway and we certainly get it through the summer so many people who live in southern California we long for green. I was just in Tennessee and I was marveling at how green it was and it feels so refreshing and

beautiful but there also is something incredibly beautiful about the golden hills of California in the fall and there's these tall live oak trees that dot these golden hills and I think about we call it the golden state not just because of the sun shines a lot but because we have these incredibly golden hills. And it's easy to take it for granted if you see it all the time, and even to romanticize, like you just said, these other places as having something better than what we have. When instead, if we can shift our perspective and really look at the beauty that surrounds us, we can find that there is wonder where we are. As well as in other places and then it just gives us the opportunity to really love the land we're in. And that's one of the gifts of taking my kids out in nature and on adventures is we can learn to love where we are and then build a thirst to adventure elsewhere in addition.

Julie: Oh I love that. That's—that's so perfect. So do you have—you know, just off the cuff—a list of activities of experiences people might seek out in nature? I know when I lived in Ohio—moved to Ohio, the snow was completely new to me having grown up in Los Angeles so there were things I didn't know.

For instance, I'll give you a great example, we had a snowfall. We thought it was beautiful. We started sledding down our little hill onto our driveway which was super fun. We did not know that you should shovel your driveway like the instant the snow stops because if you sled and compress it, it will turn into ice overnight and then you cannot drive away from your home to even go buy salt, you know? So there were like things we didn't know. We didn't know about how to stay warm. So we had jackets and stuff but we didn't know about layers. We didn't know which kind of gloves were good. So we first had to like find out the gear and then I also discovered that like taking the kids skiing was a way they enjoyed being in the snow more than taking walks for instance.

So do you have in your mind—I don't know how much you've explored other regions or thought about it, but what are some ways to enjoy nature that might be an incentive to parents to consider it?

Greta: I think it's really helpful to enjoy nature—to start as soon as you can. So when your kids are little, just start getting them out there because they will acclimate so quickly. Don't worry about letting them get dirty, they want to get dirty. They don't care if they're dirty. In fact, the dirtier they are, probably they're having more fun. So if you encourage them from the time they're just learning how to walk to let them walk trails, they're going to become hikers at a pretty young age and you'll be surprised at their ability to go much farther than you think they can.

One of my favorite stories was when my daughter—she was 2 and a half—I was hugely pregnant with my fourth and we were hiking and I couldn't carry her because I was already carrying a baby [laughs]. And we were walking back up the end of our hike, it was four miles and she had done the whole thing not yet three and it was one of those awful hikes that ends with a hill—uphill at the end.

Julie: Oh no.

Greta: That's the worst kind of hike. So we're walking up this hill and it's so steep and she says to me "Mommy can you carry me?" And I said "Lily I can't carry you, I have this big belly. I have to get up the hill and I can't carry you. You're going to have to do it by yourself." And she said "But Mommy I'm just a little girl!" [laughs].

Julie: [Laughs]

Greta: And I said "I know that you can do it!" and so slowly but surely, we made it up and that gives—I think that just gives them a sense of accomplishment but also one tip I would say when you're hiking with your kids, whatever age they are, always make sure you have great snacks. And we discount that but that's a huge part of the enjoyment. Sometimes even the motivation is hey, here's a lollipop or if you can get up the hill, here's an apple to munch on. Just that's part of the experience is make sure you pack good snacks. So start young, don't be afraid to let them get dirty, make sure you have great snacks and two more things. Probably more than you really wanted but I can't stop [laughs].

Julie: No I want all of these, I want every one of them, keep going.

Greta: I say it's wonderful to visit new places so get outside of your comfort zone, don't be afraid to take that long drive. Like we'll drive two hours for a great hike. We live about two hours from the desert and so we'll make trips. So we can go out into the dessert and visit these monumental rocks in Joshua Tree Natural Park and experience a landscape that's wildly different than what we have at home and it's worth the effort to go someplace new. But at the same time, it's also fantastic to revisit the same places. So when you can't make that big trip, it's okay to go to the same place over and over because you'll see it change through the seasons. So it's valuable to experience the new but it's also wonderful to experience the same thing and stretch yourself by looking for the new in the place you visit again and again.

Julie: I love that. That's such a good—such a good set of principles to consider as we are embarking on the adventure of nature as families. That's fantastic! So does your husband get involved in these hikes or is this more of a weekday experience?

Greta: Well it's a little of both. We're kind of spoiled by being able to hike during the week. We actually—our homeschool group, we meet every Tuesday and we hike together or tide pool or

we do some experience out in nature. And so, since we can hike during the week when the trails are not crowded, we're a little bit spoiled because we do hikes during the weekend with my husband. Sometimes the hikes will feel a little more crowded with people because you know, there are a lot more people out there on the weekend, we're like "oh man it's a Saturday. Do we really want to face the crowds?" [Laughs] but we want to enjoy it with him.

So what we've tried to do is to do hikes that are a little farther afield with him during the weekend. So they're not going to be as crowded. And we also are trying to do things where we really can use—I can use the extra set of you know another adult. So we just did our first family backpacking trip. An overnight where we carried our tents and our food and the backpack stove—all of it. And we—the whole family—and it was phenomenal. And that has incited a whole new kind of adventure—want for a whole new kind of adventure in us.

Julie: Boy. That is impressive. I admire you for accomplishing that that is fantastic!

Greta: I'm not brave enough to do it yet on my own with just me and the kids. Even though my two older boys are pretty avid backpackers already and I think we would really be okay but I want a couple more under my belt with my husband along before I try it with just me and the kids.

Julie: Totally makes sense. You know while you were talking, I was also thinking about non-traditional ways to get outside. For instance, here in Cincinnati there's a young man. He's like in his 20s who does what he calls urban hikes. So he has this little meet up group, I've been on one that he led. And he took us through all the old neighborhoods of Cincinnati. We were going on all these old stairwells that used to be the computer path from downtown Cincinnati back to the housing for people who were in manufacturing, you know, before cars! And so we're winding through what is a ton of nature but it's this concrete set of hundreds and hundreds of steps. And we're seeing different views and seeing the old architecture. We were led down an alley that's been reclaimed as an art gallery for local street artists. So that's another way, if you live in a city, especially one that has historic value.

There are so many pathways that you can take that even have—you know, a Starbucks as part of the path, if you need a place to stop. And then the second thing that I thought of that was really fun for us is night-time nature. Going to an observatory. In LA you have Griffith park. Here we have one of the most historic observatories in the country. And looking through a telescope with expert astronomers and getting to know what it feels like to be outside and to see the night sky as part of your nature experience.

Greta: Right and zoos and aquariums. Those are all just incredible opportunities at our fingertips to explore nature and even nature and art. Like to be able to go to an art museum.

And you—I love to take my kids to art museums but I always do some footwork ahead of time. So let's say you wanted to study nature in art, you can go into museums' collections online and you can find specific pieces and then those are the pieces you look for when you get to the museum. And have you kids interact with nature through art. That's just one more way to build their connection to nature in an unexpected way.

Julie: I love that. Gosh Greta, this has been phenomenal. Thank you so much for sharing about your experiences in nature and how to make this meaningful and practical. So what is your favorite nature snack? Your nature-hike snack? I have to know [laughs].

Greta: Well I'm actually a little bit lazy when it comes to packing lunches because whenever we're getting ready to get out the door in the morning it's always like you know a flurry of activity and I'm also—so—I don't want to make like a whole line-up of sandwiches before heading out the door. My kids actually prepare a lot of their own food because I think that's a great skill for them to have. But to have four people making their own sandwiches in the morning, that could also be pretty time consuming because they're not necessarily quick yet. So I'm like how can we make this work for all the different needs? Also not end up with soggy sandwiches because nobody wants a soggy sandwich. So we got to solve this problem.

So here's my—what I do and it's worked great: I get a baguette, usually the day before we're going to go on a hike or if I'm running late we might run by the store on our way. But I have a baguette and I just pack some salami and some cheese in a small cooler bag in my backpack so I don't have to carry this big old bag of stuff to try to carry a heavy cooler or something. And when we get out on the trail—I have the backpack—I have a backpack that allows for me to have the baguette sticking out so you can imagine it sticking out over my shoulders.

Julie: [Laughs] you look like a movie! Like a rom-com.

Greta: [Laughs] I love to imagine that I'm hiking in the Swiss Alps with my baguette and a good bar of chocolate and some salami and cheese. And we get to the point where the kids say they're hungry and I just rip off a hunk of baguette. They tear it open, stuff some salami and cheese in there, it's like a gourmet sandwich that I didn't have to prepare. Done. They can eat it while they're hiking or exploring with their friends in the trees and we're good to go.

Julie: This is hilarious that you just said you imagined yourself as a Swiss Alps person because on the day that we are doing this recording, right before you and I hopped on, I was talking to my son Jacob who lives in Switzerland and I'm going to visit him next week and we are going to see the Matterhorn and of course as a LA native, I said "You don't understand. My little 6 year old Julie inside who went to Disneyland every year of her childhood, all I've ever wanted is to

see the Matterhorn in person.” And I said the only thing I want is really good bread, cheese, and salami for the hike. Can you even believe this? I mean the serendipity. We’re like sisters [laughs].

Greta: We are. Because I love Switzerland and my dream is to take all of my children hiking through Switzerland.

Julie: Oh you definitely need to do that. You will definitely do that.

Greta: It’s amazing and so until then, we’re practicing by doing it here with our baguette and cheese and I’m so excited for you!

Julie: Thank you! And I’m just so excited that I asked you that question because literally I did not know that that’s where it would go. And I am such a fan. And also having lived in France, they love to take chocolate and stick that between two pieces of baguette and just eat it as a sandwich. So if you haven’t done that yet, you need to do that.

Greta: You’re right! I forgot about that actually because like that’s like a chocolate croissant. I forgot. I’m going to delight my children.

Julie: Yes you can completely surprise them. They call it *gôûtee* in France. It’s the little snack period. And so parents just send a hunk of baguette and a slab of chocolate and then the kids just rip it open, stick it in the middle, and eat it like a sandwich [laughs].

Greta: That’s phenomenal. I didn’t even—I never even thought of it and that is going to be our special surprise treat next hike.

Julie: I’m excited about that [laughs]. Well Greta this has just been an incredible conversation. I can picture everybody scanning the insides of their houses for the gear and supplies that they need for their next hike. Whether it’s an urban setting or it’s way out in the wilds of nature. Thank you for sharing with us!

Greta: Oh it was my pleasure. I love it. I’m glad—I’m glad to be here.

Julie: Well we will be in touch with you again and we're excited about all the ways that you are helping homeschoolers become Wild + Free [laughs].

Greta: Aw thank you.

Julie: Thanks Greta!

Julie: [Theme music plays] So are you digging out your hiking boots and getting bottles of water ready for your kids? I hope so. Let's use the next few weeks to go explore the great outdoors. I think I want to head to a gorge. That's what we have here in Ohio. But wherever you live, you can find nature. Whether it's right outside your front door or it requires a two hour drive. No matter what you choose, give yourself the gift of a great relationship with nature.

Thanks for tuning in today. In the coming weeks, as I said at the start of this podcast, I will be addressing the things you are learning in [The Brave Learner](#), the book that I just wrote. Available at thebravelearner.com if you have not already picked up a copy. We will talk about practices and principles. I'll help you troubleshoot. Here's something you can do write away though that I think is going to help you. You can download the [free companion guide](#) that goes with *The Brave Learner*. Yes, it is 100% free. Yes, you can duplicate it and give it to every person you know. Yes, you can even share it from your blog.

Our goal is to have you actually try the practices and I know from experience that when you write things down, you take notes, you record what you're doing, you bring sanity to your homeschooling life. Here's why: when we don't record the progress we're making, we literally forget about it.

Apparently the brain research shows that we are wired for negativity. We are in constant self-preservation and self-protection mode in our minds. So when we are away from the day of homeschooling we just performed, we tend to only remember what we didn't get done or what we think we need to get done in the future. However, if you take the step of recording what you're learning, what your children are doing, ideas and plans for the future, booklists, movies you've watched, the practices you've tried, you actually stabilize your emotional state. You start to give yourself something else to look at besides what you didn't yet get done. Does that make sense? So this companion guide is free because I wanted to make sure that everybody who was reading the book slowed down. I don't know if you're anything like me but I can read a fabulously practical book, find one insight that I apply right away, and then I'm off reading another book. And I almost forget all the good ideas I was so certain I was going to implement.

So let's change the course of how we do things. Let's be patient. Go slow to go fast. Record the things that are going right. Ponder the things that don't feel right yet. And grow! That's what I'm all about. And I hope that you can find a community to do that with. Of course you can

reach out to your local friend group and go get mimosas and Sunday brunch and hang out together reading the book.

You can also join me. I am literally doing a book club for *The Brave Learner* and you can be a part of it. We are meeting in my coaching community called [The Homeschool Alliance](https://www.bravewriter.com/homeschool-alliance). Go to [bravewriter.com/homeschool-alliance](https://www.bravewriter.com/homeschool-alliance). Or simply scroll down on the home page of [bravewriter.com](https://www.bravewriter.com) and click on the button. It will take you to a place where you can sign up for a free trial. So 7 or 14 days where you can look around and see if what we offer even fits with what you're looking for. Each month we will do a webinar where we work through some aspect of the book. I'll answer questions, I'll coach you, I'll help you with your peculiar and particular situations that feel like they defy logic, and we will together help you take the training wheels off of your homeschool so that you are flying down the road, hands in the air, balancing perfectly. Okay? So come join us in The Homeschool Alliance if you would like coaching and support on your *Brave Learner* journey. If you want to download the guide, go to thebravelearner.com now and simply download it. It's there for anyone for free.

Thanks for joining me and Greta today. I hope to see some of you at the Wild + Free conference this coming weekend. And for the rest of you, we'll see each other again soon on this podcast, probably taking a week break and then I should be back in later February of 2019. In the meantime, continue the project of loving and learning in your families. I'm Julie Bogart from Brave Writer [theme music plays out].

[THE BRAVE LEARNER: Finding Everyday Magic in Homeschool, Learning and Life](#)

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!

