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SPEAKERS

Roberta Hemphill, Allison, Allison Weeks



Allison Weeks 00:01

Hello homemakers and welcome to The Art of home podcast, where we are exploring how homemakers cultivate a place to belong. I'm your host Allison weeks. I'm a wife. I am a mom to four grown kids, grandmother to one baby boy due to arrive this fall and I have been practicing the art of home for 30 years. Thank you so much for tuning in to another episode. And if this is your first time listening, we are so glad you found us. Our goal is to provide encouragement and inspiration for you to practice homemaking, with joy, creativity and confidence that this work matters. Your faithful practice in both the mundane and the miraculous moments is cultivating a place for you and your people to thrive. And as a 19th century minister and writer Jr. Miller says in his book homemaking. Homes are the springs among the hills whose many stream let's uniting form like great rivers society, the community, the nation, the church. If the springs are pure, the rivers are clear like crystal, if they are foul, the rivers are defiled. A curse upon homes since a poisoning blight everywhere a blessing since healing and new life into every channel. Oh how many of us desire for our homes to be a blessing so abundant that it pours out healing and life into our neighborhoods, our cities and our nations. That is what I am praying for you. Keep practicing your art of making this kind of home. We just wrapped up this season's deep dive series on the art of words in the home and today I am bringing you a homemaker portrait of my friend Roberta Hemphill. She has been married to Jim for 40 years, they raised three kids and recently retired to the Texas Hill Country. Though she worked outside of the home a bit in the beginning of their marriage. After their second child was born. The Lord called her to be home full time, two of Roberta's children are on the autism spectrum. And we talk about her experience trying to understand their condition in the 90s when Very little was known about it, and we discuss how she learned to adapt to this challenging aspect of their home and family life. We also talk about how she turned her passion for photos and memory keeping into a side business and creative outlet while her children were growing up. This is another great seasoned homemaker portrait full of wisdom and insight. Make sure you stick around until the end. I have a very special announcement about our next season. So whether you're hanging out at the pool or weeding the garden, I know you will enjoy Roberta's story of home.



Allison 02:57

I'm here with my friend Roberta Hemphill. And we're gonna get Roberta's story of home. She is a seasoned homemaker. But before we go all the way back to the beginning, Roberta, why don't you tell us a little bit about who you are today?

R Roberta Hemphill 03:09

Well, I am a stay at home retired mom. Yeah, have adult kids. And I have been living in the hill country for the last four or five years. And I absolutely love it here moved here from the Gulf Coast. And I do not miss the humidity. And I just love everything about the hill country. I have three. Well, of course I have a husband, Jim. And he's retired as well. And so we're, we're still kind of adjusting to being home most of the time together. But it's it's good. And we love it. And I have three adult children. Two of them live in this area and other one lives in another part of Texas. Two boys one girl. They're 28 31 and 33. Very good. You are quick with that. I had to think about that. But anyway, I the boys are fairly close. So I see one of them real frequently. The other one somewhat frequently. And yeah, that's about it. I did teach English for eight years of high school English. I stopped teaching when my middle child was 18 months old. So I've been home for a long time and I've done various things tutoring, some part time classes at college and so forth. But I've just really mainly been a mom. Yeah, for years and years.

A Allison 04:42

That's awesome. Well, that's what we're here to talk about. So let's go back to the beginning. When did you first become a homemaker?

R Roberta Hemphill 04:48

Well, that was in the early 90s When Ryan was 18 months old and I just decided it was too overwhelming to teach because you My daughter got the chicken pox and then Ryan got the chicken. I got the chickenpox. Oh, Ryan got the chickenpox. And I was just going nuts trying to find babysitters. So I could go back to teaching and I remember thinking, this is just not worth worth it. I need to be home with these kids. And it just made life simpler really in a lot of ways to be home with them. And they were at two different babysitters. It was just really hard. It was a real hard time. So I you know, I've been home with kids after that I was home with kids there the entire time. They grew up.

A Allison 05:38

Yeah. So how long have you been married?

R Roberta Hemphill 05:40

40 years in July.

A

Allison 05:43

Congratulation to you. That's very exciting. Yeah. Okay, so you were married. So when you when you became Mrs. Hemphill. It was at the first time you had had a home of your own? Had you lived on your own before?

R

Roberta Hemphill 06:01

Well, I met my husband in college. So we actually got married the letter that my last year of college, he was finished and we started he started working on his master's degrees. So we lived in married student housing, and then he got a job in Lake Jackson, south of Houston. So we bought our first home there and Okay, have had several homes since then.

A

Allison 06:26

Okay, so you're in this married housing, because I assumed before that you were doing like the dorm living? Yeah. So now you have your first little nest. Yeah. As a married woman. Did you have any skills, any homemaking skills?

R

Roberta Hemphill 06:38

You know, it's interesting. My sister was a homeroom teacher. And we so she's five years older than I am. And so she could so she loves to cook, she loved to bake. And I loved to talk and socialize. And I just, my mom did not, she was a teacher. And she just never learned to sew. She was an okay cook. But she wasn't real. She didn't teach us all that my sister was just really interested in it. And I just never was. So I'm kind of like my mom, I still I don't have a sewing machine. I just don't do any of that. So, but I don't know, I kind of have different lanes of things that I love to do. I love to scrapbook I so that's kind of my creative outlet, I guess. But so back to skills. No, I do remember when I first got married, loving, planning meals, getting out all the cookbooks, grocery shopping. And we both gained weight after we got married because I was just cooking these huge meals with all these sides. And it was it was kind of fun. But I do remember really enjoying cooking. And then I look back at all the phases of my life. And I loved cooking, I think until my boys came along. They were both very resistant eaters, really. And I became a short order cook. I would I remember making no one liked me when my daughter liked vegetables, but the one that like meat didn't like vegetables, and they love carbohydrates. I was I was making three different meals. And it really robbed me of the joy I had of cooking. And I remember deciding I just didn't like to cook anymore. And I still don't enjoy it like I did when I first got married. But I I like what I like the finished product. I don't I don't know if I don't love the process

A

Allison 08:46

as much anymore.

R

Roberta Hemphill 08:47

Not really. I got a little burnt out.

A

Allison 08:50

Well, I can understand that. Yeah. Having to do multiple meals for different people that and that's no fun.

R

Roberta Hemphill 08:55

Yeah. I think what I enjoy doing the most is now at this stage of life. I love to set a table. Yeah. And I do like doing a really nice meal. I like having people over. I like entertaining. And that's probably the social Yeah, well, I carry Yeah. And I just love setting a table with a theme or for the holidays. That brings me a lot of joy. And my mother in law. My mom liked to set a table and she liked getting out of China. She loved dishes, and I really, I've really taken on all those things from her. And then my mother in law love to set a table and she was so careful about it. And so she just did such a beautiful job and I find myself thinking about my mom and my mother in law. They're both gone. And i i there's some there's a joy, I feel such a connection to them when I do that. So and I think I like that From the time I was young, I think my generation we you know, we had wedding China and got all that out and I still enjoy doing that.

A

Allison 10:10

Did you inherit any of your mom's China?

R

Roberta Hemphill 10:12

Did Yeah, I have really too much China, but I try to use it all I really try to use

A

Allison 10:18

guilty. My hand is raised. Yes, I am of the I have too much China. I can't get

R

Roberta Hemphill 10:24

it's, it was our mother's and it was so dear to them. And so, it I enjoy it. I get it out. I try to make sure that I use Yes. So China once a year, all the China I have. So that's that's been good. But when we moved to the hill country, my mother in law had China, the Spode with the deer, and oh, Brown. Yeah. And she came to this house once. And she, she stood right where you're sitting. And she said, You need my child. Oh my goodness. And so I have it, and I use it a lot. And it's really special. And she used it all the time, every special meal. So that's, I like that legacy.



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A

Allison 11:12

I love that she sat here and because I'm looking out your backyard and there's it's very wooded, and there's trees, every and we have a lot of deer. I talked about the deer a lot on the show, because they're they're my nemesis. I love to see them. But I don't love that they eat on my plan. But that she sat here and saw that that would be such a good fit for your environment. That's really sweet. Well, what about what was hard for you? What's there something when you first started out or started keeping your own home? Was there something that was particularly difficult that you had a real steep learning curve for?

R

Roberta Hemphill 11:46

Well, I think mine is probably just my personality. But I did. I struggle a lot with perfectionism I did as a child, I kind of think I probably had some OCD tendencies. And when I got married, I just, I wanted the house perfectly clean all the time. I I remember taking a toothbrush, when we lived in married student housing, and I when I cleaned, I would clean the steps that had little treads on the stairs going up. We were in a townhouse. And I remember I remember the guy coming back when we moved out and he said, We have never had such a clean i I've had to let go of a lot of that. And I do think my children helped me with that. Because I I would just drive myself crazy to be really clean, keeping everything perfectly clean. And I honestly think my brain chemistry probably corrected a little bit. Because I still I like things to be real clean. But I don't I'm not as obsessive. But that's a struggle for me. It still is a little bit just trying to be too perfect. And I really did that as a new mom. I really when I had my daughter, I just I was trying to do everything perfectly. And I remember my sister came to help when my daughter was born, and to visit and help and she said well, can I fold your laundry? And I said no, because I'll just have to refold everything. That's how particular

A

Allison 13:21

and this was the home ec teacher who wanted to fold her yeah, she probably would have done a pretty good job.

R

Roberta Hemphill 13:28

So true. But she still teases me about that. That's a really but I've really let go and I you know I Jim does a lot of things around the house. I found myself after he retired thinking, okay, don't unload the dishwasher. I can do it better. And then I thought reverted don't. Ya let him do some things he's not going to do. Nobody's going to do everything the way you do. That's probably the thing. I have to remind myself of a lot. Yeah. Otherwise, you know, there's not a lot of joy in life if you're just obsessing over everything, so

A

Allison 14:03

Exactly, exactly. Well, let's talk a little bit about balance. You alluded to having some a few part time jobs here and there. So what kind of work did you do outside the home? Because when you made that decision, when everybody had the chickenpox, yeah, you're like, This is not

working? Yeah. No, we have to do something different. So then that was when you officially became you know, a homemaker full time. Yes. Staying home with your children. But you did some other things outside the home.

R Roberta Hemphill 14:31

Um, over the years, I taught I did gifted and talented testing with kindergarteners at one point I did. I taught at the college I helped people get ready for the tests that they had to take. Oh, entrance test. Yeah,

A Allison 14:46

like essay T prep. Yeah.

R Roberta Hemphill 14:51

Then I did my favorite one of my very favorite things. I taught expats for about five years and at one point I had 13 different students from nine different countries. And so what

A Allison 15:02

were you teaching them English? Yes. Oh, and

R Roberta Hemphill 15:04

just a lot of it just depended on the student most of them knew English. But they needed polishing and or pronunciation, okay? Or they didn't know how to pump gas. I went gas with some I mean, you know, I just did a lot of it was cultural yeah and stuff it would they would just be. So my the company would hire me through another company to what I teach them. So it was really fun. I enjoyed that a lot. And I made a lot of really special connections with people, I feel like I could travel and go here. They're everywhere, too. And I have friends in other countries. So that was really rewarding. That's so enjoyed that.

A Allison 15:47

So well. How old are your kids when you were doing these this work? Well, it

R Roberta Hemphill 15:51

was after the kids were gone. When they when I stopped teaching, I was a Creative Memories consultant for about 15 years and really enjoyed that because it was kind of my teaching. That was when we would go and do home parties, and we would teach people how to do their

pictures. And that's real important to me. In fact, I am currently doing my 31 year olds, baby book. That's how behind I got on my

A

Allison 16:21

pictures. It's never too late, folks,

R

Roberta Hemphill 16:24

I am having a ball, I am enjoying it so much. I just sit there and smile while I'm doing it. It's just so lovely. Like I did, I was always real good about keeping up with pictures until Ryan was 18 is really when I started staying home. It's interesting. That's when I kind of stopped. And then I did projects over the years. I've done a lot of albums for my kids. But I have about a 10 year gap. And all the pictures are in boxes, they're ready to put in albums. And I started this year, my goal was to do one year, every month. And I have done it. I've done almost five years worth of pictures yet for you. Sure.

A

Allison 17:08

So if you don't know what Creative Memories is, because I think they're still around, but it's not like it was in the 90s and the early 2000s that they were like a big Yeah, a big deal to do. It's a scrapbooking company. You would do home parties, you would be like a representative like you would work for them. Correct? Right? You would represent and show their product and sell their product. Right. And they would train you. Yeah, I'm sure how to use their product and and so now we have chat books and shutter and Shutterfly and things like

R

Roberta Hemphill 17:39

that. And I may have digital, I do digital scrapbooking now. Okay, but I I have about those 10 years worth of pictures are all developed. And I have a ton of scrapbooking supplies. And that's what I just thought, I'm going to do these to my kids. They all have all their pictures, their stories. And I think going back 30 years later is actually has been kind of good because I've really simplified. I throw away a lot of pictures I used to put in every, every single one I've gotten much more discerning Well,

A

Allison 18:13

you know, back before digital, everything was digital. It was you treasured every single photo because there was a whole process. Yeah, just to get that piece of paper, that picture and it felt like so wasteful to throw it away. Exactly. So I and I understand very well. And

R

Roberta Hemphill 18:28

I think I hope that my I don't think the boys, they enjoy kind of looking at looking at albums, but

my daughter is expecting twins later this year. So graduations, I'm excited about that. And she's pretty good. She does digital, but I'm really hoping if I could give any advice to young moms, I would say, once a month, even if you once a month, take a picture of your child and write a little journaling about what they're doing at that stage of their life. And then a lot of people are doing that now, but they're putting it on Instagram or Facebook. And I'm wondering, is your child can I have that it's all on your phone. So I know my daughter is going to be really overwhelmed with twins. And it's hard to keep up with photos. But she manages to put quite a bit on Instagram. So I think she can probably do something once Yeah, yeah. And then print it.

A

Allison 19:30

So you do yours digitally now that the stuff that you're doing like from today on, it's all digital. And are you doing that through Creative Memories or is that through something else?

R

Roberta Hemphill 19:40

Yeah, I actually am it's well, there's a kind of a spin off company called forever. And they have software that I love because it's kind of scrapbooking and it kind of it has the same feel creative. Yes, it kind of feeds that creative side of me. And I can journal and it's so much easier though because you don't have the maths. Oh,

A

Allison 20:03

yeah, I'm just Yeah, it was such a production when I was going to scrapbook. Oh, yeah. All the things out and yeah, glue everywhere. Exactly. No stamps and all the rest.

R

Roberta Hemphill 20:11

But I am going to use that stuff up and yeah, I'm going to, I'm going to get hand the kids their albums and say, you can have them now and you can serve them at your house. Yeah.

A

Allison 20:22

That's great. Do you when you do you do yearly? You do them by the year. Now now. It's like an annual kind of like an annual scrap. Yeah. Okay. Yes. Yeah. Just curious how because some people do it by like, an event or a vacation or right.

R

Roberta Hemphill 20:38

Well, I am doing right now. I've kind of just we have a cabin that we go to in the summer. And it's really a special place for our whole family. So I decided because I get a little bit frustrated when the kids aren't when nobody really looks at the album's. So I think at the cabin, people are going when did I What was the year we did this or Yeah. So I've decided to make just a

cabin album. And those pictures I take. I'm just going to leave there. I have a Christmas album. I put every Christmas I put a few pictures. Put that on the coffee table. It's amazing. They'll pick them up. Yeah, look at them if it's a theme. So but other than that, yeah, it just kind of go by the year.

A

Allison 21:23

Okay, cool. Well, that's so interesting. How did you find because you said you struggle with perfectionism? How did that work into the priorities that you said? And then how? Because I like to talk about balance. And I like to talk about how did you manage to find your rhythm as a homemaker, you know, working through the challenges of being a perfectionist, and then all the demands that come with being a busy mom with three kids? And, you know, what were some of the things that you did to set your priorities? And what did God teach you through that?

R

Roberta Hemphill 21:56

Well, I would say that balance was something I really struggled with. I tried to because I'm social, that's always been the kind of person I am. So I wanted to be in junior service league. And I look back, and I think I was going out in volunteering, probably a little much. But then maybe sometimes it was a little bit of an escape, because I was home with the kids all day so I can get out and be with other women. So I don't think it was all bad. But I do look back. And I think when I was doing Creative Memories, and in junior service League and raising three kids, I do think I, I remember thinking at the time, I'm juggling, I'm spinning too many plates, right? I need to I need to stop doing some things. So I had to kind of learn that the hard way. And balance was always an issue for me. I'm not going to sit here and tell you that I I was that was a real gift for me or something that I handled really beautifully. Because I didn't Yeah, but I think as I got older, just got a little easier. i i My boys are both on the autism spectrum. So that was the hardest thing about being a mom, hands down. Wow, it was really hard.

A

Allison 23:16

Let's talk about that. Because I didn't know that about an eye. My next question was what was a particular challenge that you faced? Yeah.

R

Roberta Hemphill 23:23

Well, when I taught school, you know, I'm the youngest of four children. I felt like we were just kind of a normal family. Nobody really had any struggles or issues that were daily, you know. And when I was a teacher, I was teaching high school. And I look back now on some of the students I had, that I now know, probably were on the autism spectrum. Course I didn't even know what it was. I didn't even know when I'll get to that. But I remember just thinking, you know, why is that kid acting weird? Or, you know, I just wasn't understanding at all and probably pretty judgmental. And I'll tell you, God brought me to my knees in that respect. Because Ryan the middle one when he was about four or five he just was really contrary very difficult argued about everything. And it was he was a really tough kid to raise and he was

darling. Just precious and kind of sneaky and funny, but he was just difficult. It's hard to even describe I really Yeah, I we took him that was back when people didn't really know that much about now. It's so common. Yeah, I'm terribly common, unfortunately. And, but at the time, I remember we took him to several specialists. We took him to Texas Children's we did all these things trying to cause even my pediatrician I'd say there were some issues with balance and toe walking. There were some things that were kind of red flags to my pediatrician. And he'd say, you know, something's, something's just a little off, and I can't really pinpoint it. So I took him to all these places, and no one could identify what it was. That was about a three or four year period. And finally, we took him to a doctor. He was actually psychiatrists, really good guy worked with a lot of kids. And he said, I think Ryan has Asperger's syndrome. And I said, I'd never heard of it. I bet at the same time, it's a relief to have a name for it. Yeah. And then Jim, and I immediately went to an autism conference, sat in a room full of all these parents. The stories were just, it was incredible. I remember thinking, Okay,

R

Roberta Hemphill 25:58

I now know what I'm dealing with. And so, but it was real school was just super hard. Because every year we would, we'd have to tell the teachers what to expect and how to handle things. And right. It was just really overwhelming. Jays, my youngest when he was three, he still wasn't talking. I mean, he would say words, but he wasn't really putting sentences together. And I remember thinking, Oh, he's the third child. He's just not talking because everybody talks for him. And that's what you know, grandmothers would say and everything. And then he went to school at three, they were giving him speech therapy, and so forth. And then he started having some issues. And I still remember, my daughter's kindergarten teacher she had, she's a neat lady, and she had taught all our kids. And I remember I was telling her something about Ryan, and she had Jason her class that year. And she put her hand on my arm and she said, Roberta, you're worried about Ryan, you need to be worried about Jace. And I remember, I felt like somebody had punched me in the gut. I thought I can't do this with another child. So but you know, I did, and I was on my knees. For years, it was hard. It was really hard. The hardest thing I think was school and dealing with teachers and trying to find a place for them, because they were smart boys. But they needed a very specific kind of teaching. So and, you know, I do think that diet, and, you know, I look back and they were such resistant eaters, and I just, I had so much going on, I just didn't really work on the diet aspect of things. If I could go back and do anything over it would be, you know, I think I don't think it would have fix things, but I think it would have helped mood issues and that sort of thing. And I relied on medication from doctors, because I was so desperate to do anything to help them to focus at school to, you know, and so forth. So we went down the whole, you know, Ritalin, Adderall, and all that. And it I remember, when Jace was in ninth grade, I said to my husband, I would rather have a happy ditch digger than a child who does on school, and then he would come home and he was miserable. And he's such a sweet to this day. He's so so sweet. So happy. Probably my happiest child. But when he was on medication, yeah, like it slightly changed his personality. So that's another thing I would do differently. I, you know, I wish I could go back and, and do some things differently. But, you know, you learn as you go. And yeah, I try to be here for other moms. Because I when I hear anybody say they have a child on the autism spectrum, I, I completely understand it. So it's a hard world.

A

Allison 28:53

Yeah. So were you able to find some community to gather around you to help you with that? Or

was or were you at that stage? It was that time period where it just was so foreign? It was,

R

Roberta Hemphill 29:05

you know, I, I really didn't I had a couple of good friends that listen to me cry. And you know, it was hard because even family members, you know, and I always have been really close to my in laws. My mother in law, in particular have so close to her, but she just never really understood and it was kind of critical. And that was really hard for me to because I didn't I wanted her to understand, but I think she's in heaven now. I think she understands.

A

Allison 29:33

Yeah, I'm sure she does. Wow. Well, thank you for sharing about that.

R

Roberta Hemphill 29:39

Yeah, it was hard. But you know, both boys, I remember thinking when they were little that they would probably build me in prison. I've never gone, they've never gone to prison. They they both have jobs, okay, as an Amazon driver and Ryan works for a tech company and he lives by himself and he's, you know, he's doing really well. They're both doing really Well, I'm really proud of them.

A

Allison 30:01

Do you have a word of advice or wisdom or insight that you would share with a mom, maybe a young mom who's has a child

R

Roberta Hemphill 30:11

on the spectrum? You know, the problem with autism is it's such a huge spectrum. Yeah. And they're all so different in you, you even my boys are total opposites. And they do have some common features that, you know, they both things that they have to deal with. But really, they're also different, I guess, learn. And I do think therapy, therapies help. We I didn't have that. But I do think special schools, therapies. If I could go back and do something over and had what's available today, I would take advantage of every school, every therapy, yeah, everything that you could possibly take advantage of. But it's hard. And I do think having a support system is important. And, you know, networking, and I do think there's a lot more of that available now. Sure, yeah,

A

Allison 31:12

I'm sure there are,

R

Roberta Hemphill 31:13

there are lots in my suit, my daughter is not on the autism spectrum. She's a really good student. And she would just go in her room. And, you know, she just it was kind of chaotic. A lot of, you know, I just couldn't get him to do homework. It was just a hard period. But I think she's so much more compassionate, and kind. And she was even in school to the kids that didn't, didn't fit in. And that's another thing I think that has improved is recognizing that these kids need to be embraced for even with their differences. And I don't think my boys had that. And it was hard. I remember thinking, as a mother, my daughter was, you know, she was excelled at things. So the parents would want me to be in groups with her parent with those parents. But then with the boys, I felt a little bit shunned like, oh, there's that's another, you know, those boys that don't fit in as well. And you kind of end up getting blamed for it. And that's, that was hard as a parent. But you know, both and I have to say about my boys, too. They're both Eagle Scouts. And my husband was wonderful. He was on every camp out. And he helped them. We got them through Eagle Scout, and I'm very proud of that. That is they did white

A

Allison 32:32

achievement. Yeah. Yeah. We did scouts too. Yeah. So let's talk about the seasons of homemaking. What was your most difficult transition from one season to another as a keeper of the home? Was it when you brought the babies home? Was it when they started leaving? Or was it something else?

R

Roberta Hemphill 32:51

Well, there, I remember transitions. And coming home with babies was a huge one. And it was probably harder with two kids. The first one it wasn't as hard it was. And then, you know, after we had two kids, I remember we always wanted three. And then after we had two, I'm like, Oh my gosh, I don't think we can do this. We're overwhelmed. And then And then, you know, along came js and you know, I just kind of learned to juggle, and you know that but that was a hard transition. And then probably the next transition. I think, for me, the empty nest transition was not too bad because they each left one at a time, you know, from three kids to two and then two. And then Jace was around for a long time. My husband was working overseas, and he lived with me for part of that time. So I don't really remember like all of a sudden, oh, my house is empty of kids. There was a little bit of back and forth. So I think you probably focus more on young homemakers. But you know, I will say being home with my husband all day long was a transition. Yeah. And you know, we were still getting to that. But, but I'm grateful that we're that I have him here all the time. But yeah, it's some days I'm I kind of like to be alone sometimes. But luckily. And I've that's one thing, I would advise young women. I remember Jim hunted, he always went hunting with his dad and his brother. And when I when the kids were little I really resented it. I remember thinking, what you should not be hunting you. You need to be I don't want to be left with the kids. I just dreaded it when he left and I was all alone with the kids. But you know now I'm so grateful that I that he persevered and kept that hobby up because now that's his outlet and he's not he kind of has his own things. Yeah, and I We both need a little, little break from each other. So when he goes hunting, I really enjoy my alone time.

A

Allison 35:06

Yeah, yeah. No, I'm glad you brought that up because it can be easy to fall into that resentment of thinking. I'm here all day long with today's kids, and what do you want to go somewhere?

R

Roberta Hemphill 35:21

And in now, I recognize that he needed an outlet and I was off going to junior service League and why isn't that? I did things too. So I think it's healthy to have your own outlets.

A

Allison 35:35

Yeah, I totally agree. What does it look like in the season that you're in right now homemaking? Because he's here? And all the time? Yeah. With you. And there's no children here anymore. Right? Correct. Right? So how has it changed? What does homemaking look like now?

R

Roberta Hemphill 35:51

Well, because we're fairly new to this area, we've made friends, we're you know, we have a small group at church. And we, we oftentimes will have the group over here, we've made some friends different, we're just involved in different activities. And I do find myself when the calendars a little free of think, oh, I want to have so and so over for dinner. And so we've been doing quite a bit of entertaining. And I, I think

A

Allison 36:22

I think there's a little more freedom in this stage to do that, you know, you have, because there's not sort of these built in demands on your time that you can't quite control when you're when you're still raising children, you know, they need you so much more, even when they're even when they're teenagers. But once they're gone, and that responsibility is no longer there, then you have a little bit more freedom.

R

Roberta Hemphill 36:45

Yeah, yeah, your time i We do a lot of entertaining. Yeah. And we have friends, a lot of friends that moved from the hill country or moved to somewhere else in Texas, and we'll have people over, we have guests, a guest area now. So it's fun to I really enjoy that. That's, that's been a real blessing. I get up every morning, and thank God for where we are, and what we have. And just life is pretty good. You know, I will say, just to go back to the boys, I still have to oversee a lot, you know, finding a new apartment, well, helping them with the exam, get overwhelmed a little bit with apartment leases and finding new apartments. But, you know, I really struggle to sometimes my my husband's a little better about not helping. He kind of gets after me because he'll say what if something happens. And I tell my boys that too. I'll say, if something happens to me, you're gonna have to do this on your own. And that that worries me, you know, I, I feel like I'm still overseeing a lot of things. And even though they're quite independent, I worry that

they're not going to keep up with something that they need to keep up with. And so that's been a little bit of a struggle, and I do a lot of that. I check the youngest, especially he checks in with me every day, and well. I usually have something I'm reminding him about.

A

Allison 38:20

But he is living independently. Yes. So that's something Yes, absolutely. Okay. Well, let's talk a little bit about the tasks of homemaking. And this is kind of a rapid fire question and answer time about the tasks of homemaking. So what's a task that you love?

R

Roberta Hemphill 38:35

Keeping up with my pictures? Yes. Setting a table. Okay. Good. Having a nice dinner for friends family.

A

Allison 38:46

All right. What's one that you hate? or dislike very much.

R

Roberta Hemphill 38:52

Keeping up with? We did get a dog that sheds horribly. And I am forever cleaning floors. Oh my but I have to say, Oh, this is probably my best hint ever. Okay, I got a Bissell pet Pro and it vacuums cleans the floor. And it. It really does a good job. And it it's a lifesaver, because I have a lot of floors. I hate doing floors, but I like them to be clean. Yeah. And I don't like to look at non care.

A

Allison 39:23

Does anybody like to look down here? I don't think so. All right. How about your worst homemaking fail?

R

Roberta Hemphill 39:31

I thought about that too. You know, sometimes I think just having company over and trying a new recipe. I think I've learned I've done that recently. And my biggest challenge that causes the fail. Uh huh. Is timing. You know, I think one of the biggest challenges for me is when people come over especially Clean these homes now that are every, everybody's in your kitchen. It's yeah, the event onset everybody. But even before that, I mean, even in every one of our houses anytime we had a party, oh, yeah, everybody ended up talking while I'm trying to concentrate. Those last thing. So I think what I've learned is it's better. And my mother in law did this. And I don't know, it took me so long to learn this, but it is better to have something made that you can just stick in the oven. And I still sometimes will make things or there'll be something I need to put together. And our gym will grill and I'm doing the vegetables in the

meet Stan in the vegetables still need 25 more minutes. I had had happened just recently. And so then it was a failure. It really wasn't as good as it could have been. I have that a lot. And I I don't know, I've got to work. I think timing

A Allison 40:56

in when you're talking about preparing food, especially when it's it doesn't matter so much if it's just you and your husband and if you have people coming over. That's that is a skill. It's a skill it is that you should practice and yep, think about and be strategic about and but also just give yourself some grace that you know. Yeah. It's okay if it doesn't come out exactly when it's supposed to. Because yeah, people will congregate in the kitchen. It doesn't matter how small the kitchen is.

R Roberta Hemphill 41:23

And I am one of those people. That's probably why I like to be alone sometimes because I can really plow through things. When people I'm really easily distracted. When I'm trying to get a meal together and people are talking to me that

A Allison 41:36

you want to talk to them. Yeah, you because you said you were social. Yeah. So yeah, exactly. I understand. All right. So what about a memorable homemaking achievement that you're proud of?

R Roberta Hemphill 41:47

Um, you know, I think over the years, I've I have some really special recipes that no matter when I make them, or what, you know, goodies and cookies and things that everybody wants the recipe. I don't, it's always a compliment to me when people ask for recipes. And that is I have that happened with just a few things that I've that are just favorites over the years. And I did make a recipe book. It's a online thing. But I did years ago, I did a family recipe book, I got everybody's favorite recipes. And I made this book and I put pictures with it. And I get that out all the time. And it really makes me think about the people. You know, we I put my mom's favorite recipe my mother in law has all hers. And it's it really makes me think about them. And then we give one two, you know, each of the granddaughters now has one and I think that that's passing down recipes is usually a neat thing. And important especially

A Allison 42:51

make it tying the story or the you know the photo about the person to it. That's a really great, that's a really great way to make memories create a legacy.

R Roberta Hemphill 43:01

R Roberta Hemphill 43:01

Well, and I think I think your question was what is my achievement and achievement proud of making that album? Oh, yeah. It's it's very special. And everybody in the family loves it. And they talked about as years ago, but

A Allison 43:16

that really cool. Yeah, it's really cool. All right. So how about your top three homemaking tips? You already talked about the BISSELL? Yes. Cleaner. Yeah. So do you have any other great tips they don't have to have originated with you just something you use a lot.

R Roberta Hemphill 43:32

Oh, I just learned something. Yeah, just last week. Okay. This is another product.

A Allison 43:38

That's okay. We're not sponsored or anything. We like to share what we like you know what?

R Roberta Hemphill 43:44

One of my neighbors I anyway, it I had some trouble with squirrels eating the cushions or chewing up the cushions on my patio furniture. So I have a neighbor who's a seamstress and she's kind of helping me with figuring out what to do about these horrible cushions. And then she looked at my patio furniture, it's wrought iron. And she said oh, you need some rejuvenate. I've never heard of it. And so she said oh yeah, it's on Amazon. She showed me a picture of it. I cannot believe that I didn't know about this. I I felt like I had brand new furniture really? I even took a before and after I did half of one thing and then it just brings it it almost like polishes wrought iron. And so then I did my all these metal banisters out here yeah, they looked horrible. And I put rejuvenate on them. And they look brand new. Wow. It was amazing. So that's an that's I just learned that that was a really because it just for wrought iron or is it for metal Yes. But then they make it for so now I just ordered some because they do doors and my front door gets so much sun and it starts looking really weathered and it You know, a pledge or something on it but I have a feeling that the rejuvenates gonna do a lot and it has UV protection in it. So

A Allison 45:06

it's for what you going to do on your doors for wood.

R Roberta Hemphill 45:08

Yes, they have they have different formulas. They have one for wrought iron. And then I saw there's one for vinyl. So if you have like vinyl chairs that you want to Yeah, look really good. You can do that. So

YOU CAN DO THAT. SO

A

Allison 45:20

okay, I want to hear about how the woodworks because I have the same problem. My front door. Yeah. Gets all the afternoon sun and it's totally weather. It did not in a good way.

R

Roberta Hemphill 45:29

Yeah, I Well, I just got that. Okay, well, yesterday. I'll let you know how it works. But that was good. And then Oh, and another. If you know I'll do another plug. I have found a little I'm gonna go back to that because I found a little bit of joy in cooking again, because my daughter told me about Tegan. I can't

A

Allison 45:52

think of her last name. Oh, big harvest. Oh, yeah. And I can't think of it. I get

R

Roberta Hemphill 45:57

a recipe every day. Tegan Gerard. I think I get a recipe every day, my email, and I print most of them. And then I just put them I make them if it's good. And they almost always they're always good. Yeah. They're all and I put it in a binder. Yeah. So I'm kind of I've really got in a rut with recipes for a long time. And I was making the same things over and over. I really enjoyed doing her recipes. And so I've that has actually been kind of fun. I'm kind of enjoying cooking. Yeah, again. Yeah, there's stuff. But

A

Allison 46:30

yeah, that's a great tip to just try something new. Yeah. You know, you never know what might spark your interest again. Well,

R

Roberta Hemphill 46:37

and another tip that this was years ago, have you heard a fly lady? Yes. Okay. I was really struggling with keeping up with housework when the kids were young. And I started doing some fly lady con. I didn't do it. Like every thing that she does. But it just that concept of trying to clean one room a day, I kind of did that for a while and then I kind of modified it. But there's always dust. There's always organization. And I like to kind of like to organize, but I'll just say okay, today, I'm gonna just do my closet. And I'm just gonna kind of spruce it up, clean it. And if I focus on one thing a day, it's amazing how then you're not overwhelmed when your company or something?

A

Allison 47:21

All right, let's talk about the art of home a little bit. How do you see homemaking as an art?

A

Allison 47:21

Yes, just constant keeping it constant, a constant state of, I call it just general tidiness. Yes. Then you never have such an overwhelming overwhelming mess that you feel like you're buried under and you're never going to correct, you know? Exactly, exactly. You're never faced with this gigantic, clean cleaning day or cleaning weekend. Right? Right.

R

Roberta Hemphill 47:48

Well, I think that you're modeling for your kids. Good homemaking skills. And I think that's really important. I think some of that's been lost in the next generation. So I've I don't know, I guess, as an art, I would just say, balance. Yeah. Keeping up with things that are important and what things that are truly important. You know, like, to me, the pictures in the stories of my kids growing up is truly, that's a lot more important than a lot of other things. So I think the art is just juggling it all and still trying to be gracious and be a good hostess and be a good mom. You know, I'm always want to be there for my children, you know, and so I, and I've learned that over the years that I think I've gotten much better at saying no, you know, what is the phrase say? Only yes, to the best. And you don't have to say that you can, you could say to say no, say no to the rest or something. Yeah. Say Yes to the best. And I try to say, okay, is this really important? Because I and I also, any time that I feel resentment, about something I've been asked to do, and then I don't really enjoy it, and I feel a little bit resentful. I try to remember not to go back to that my friend Mildred. She's She was a precious lady. She was an older lady at our church years ago, and I just loved her. She loved my children. She worked in the church nursery, and she we just adopted her and I still remember one day I said, Mildred, you know, this was years ago, and she said, I said, Do you Do you want to go to lunch on Tuesday or whatever? And she said, Okay, and I said, Well, are you sure? And she said, Roberta, I don't do anything I don't want to do. And so we i laugh i those words echo in my head a lot, I think Wow, she doesn't do anything she doesn't want to do. Wow, what a concept. And so we would it's become a joke with our family will say, Oh, I don't do I don't do anything I don't want to do. But my my daughter as she was becoming an adult, she would say to me sometimes I just remembered what Mildred said, I don't want I'm gonna I don't do anything.

A

Allison 50:22

Yeah, that backfired a little bit on you there.

R

Roberta Hemphill 50:25

Yeah. But I admired that in her. It's like she she was probably 8590 years old when she said that. And I thought, you know, there's some wisdom there.



A

Allison 50:34

Yeah. Just setting setting some boundaries. Yeah, is important. And there's so much good that we can say yes to. Yes. As moms and keepers of the home and women, we just want to do all the things right. But we have to pick out the better part. The part the best part out of the good that God has called us to do exist season that we're in. Yes. and be okay with saying no to the other things. Yes, absolutely. Really hard. I think it is as women. Well, let's talk a little bit about gratitude. So why do you think that gratitude is important for the homemaker? And how have you seen gratitude improve your experience in home?

R

Roberta Hemphill 51:15

Well, I think if you're grateful for what you have you take good care of it. And I will say that that's something I pride myself on, I really try to take good care of the things that God's blessed us with. And it's just a part it's a feeling. And, you know, I think with my children, I tried to teach them gratitude, writing, thank you notes. You know, they still write thank you notes. My daughter does, I don't know that the boys always keep up with that. But I tell them at least text or send an email then if you're not going to write a thank you note, but I think the art of gratitude and writing thank you notes. I do that all the time. I think it's very important. Yeah. And I, I'm always, I don't know, I just really try to be gracious in everything that I do. I don't know that I always fulfill that goal. But I try.

A

Allison 52:12

How did you come to the place of gratitude for the children that God gave you and the path that he called you to walk particularly with your boys through autism?

R

Roberta Hemphill 52:22

Yeah. Well, it was very humbling, in lots of ways. And, and I, I do think it drew me closer to the Lord. In lots of seasons. Yeah. When I was kind of at wit's end. And I, I knew that some of the challenges were beyond me. And I did have trouble letting go and letting God take care of, you know, the issues, especially with the boys, because there were so many things that I couldn't fix. And there was nothing I could do. But I do remember, a really wise lady said to me once, she said, God doesn't have grandchildren. And there he is, you need to, you need to let him handle some of these things. And that, that was really good for me, because I think I wanted to fix everything. And there are some things I just couldn't fix. And I had to remind myself always to go back, you know, I always helped to be in Bible study. There was always not that I was always doing a Bible study. But I anytime I did a Bible study, there was always something that helps, it helps so much, you know, you know how that is, you've got just speaks to you in that season through that Bible study with that, that day with what you're dealing with that day, I had a lot of things that, that were like that. But you know, there were, I mean, I lost my mom, when the boys were little. And that was really hard. I mean, there were just a lot of things that I just felt like, Okay, I, I need God's help with this. And

A

Allison 53:58

can you look back now at where you are now in this journey and have gratitude for that? Or is it

can you look back now at where you are now in this journey and have gratitude for that? Or is it hard? Because I would imagine it would be really tempting to want to be bitter. Yeah, about the experience.

R

Roberta Hemphill 54:15

At times. Yeah. Yeah. At times, and, and I think always praying for something to get better that never did and that that was right. That was a little, you know, it's like, come on God, you're gonna come through for me here and work a miracle. And but, you know, I had to adjust to what my expectations were, you know, God made both of them the way he did there. You know, it's hard for me, like, you know, Ryan is he has such different social skills than I do. And the struggle with wanting him to handle things like I do, or like Jim does, was really hard for me, but I just, I had to just learn Learn to accept and acceptance and give them grace. You know, because and I need a grace. I mean, there were time. There were a lot of things I didn't handle as well as I could have. And it was a hard journey. And you know, and I'm still it's easier now that they're adults, though. It's it's a lot easier. I don't know if I answered that question. But

A

Allison 55:23

the last question that I want to ask you is, if you had one word of advice, or encouragement to a younger woman who's listening to this, just about homemaking in general about parenting being a mom being a homemaker, what word of advice that you give her?

R

Roberta Hemphill 55:37

Well, this is probably cliché, but I think just savor. Savor the moments because it goes really fast. And I know everybody said that to me. And at the time, you don't really think it's going fast? Because every some days are hard. And but it does. I look back and I think, wow, my kids are 2830 and 33. i That's, yeah, you know, that's, they're adults. And I feel like I turned around three times and that happen. So I would just say, savor the moments and just love them. And, you know, they're not going to remember how clean the floor was. But they're going to remember, little special things that you did. And it's surprising to me now what they remember, and what they don't remember. Yes. And little quirky things that we did, that were spontaneous and not perfect. Yeah, some of those things are the things they remember where, you know, I was so worried about having a perfect birthday party with the matching themed cake and napkins and and I don't remember all that they didn't care. They liked it because somebody, you know, fell off the pony pony land. They, they remember some something that happened that was not planned. Right. So and so I guess that's my point. Is that some of the the things that you don't plan for are the best memories.

A

Allison 57:12

Absolutely. I totally agree. Well, thank you very much for sharing your story of home.

R

Roberta Hemphill 57:18

I've enjoyed Thank you for having me. What an honor and a privilege I I just would love to have heard lots of good advice. Yeah, on a podcast. Yeah, we're no podcast. I

A

Allison 57:31

wouldn't that have been great. Books, people. We had to read books.

R

Roberta Hemphill 57:35

Yeah, exactly. Exactly. But thank you for having me. I've enjoyed our discussion. You're welcome.

A

Allison 57:39

Well, that was a fun conversation. I love when Roberta said some of the things that you don't plan for are some of the best memories. This is a timely statement. It is summer at the time of this recording in for homemakers, with kids off from school or kids home from college. Summer can be a challenge and an opportunity, a challenge because the whole atmosphere and dynamic of the home changes with the summer schedule. And I can hear some of you saying what schedule, you're laughing because there is no such thing as a schedule. You are just trying to survive and keep the kids from bodily harm. But the opportunity lies in the way that the longer, less hectic summer days can lend themselves to more spontaneity. The question is, will we notice those opportunities to make a few unplanned memories. Now I'm not advocating for a free for all wild summer, but I heartily recommend leaving large chunks of margin in your summer schedule. And on that note, I intend to take my own advice. I've decided to do something a little different for the podcast in the month of August, which will allow me to take the month off while still providing you with encouraging and inspiring homemaking content. There are so many wonderful resources available on the topic of homemaking. But I remember the days when I had no time to read, and I know a lot of you are in that season right now. So rather than simply giving you a recommended reading list for the summer, I am going to read a classic resource to you. I will be reading homemaking, or the ideal family life by the Reverend Jay AR Miller published in 1882. That was where the quote at the beginning of this episode came from. Many of you may already be familiar with this work, but to those who are not. I am really excited to introduce you to Jr Miller's beautiful poignant writing. Though it was written 140 years ago primarily to the members of Miller's congregation. Its message is just as powerful and pertinent for modern homemakers in every corner of the globe. Every Wednesday in August, the art of home podcast will present another installment of the book. We will begin on August 3 with the show Biography of Reverend Miller and the first chapter called The wedded life. Each Wednesday following we will present two more short chapters of the book. And we'll have worked through the whole book by the end of the month. This book is in the public domain. So you can find a version for free online at a website like Gutenberg or Google Books. Or you can get a new printed copy for about \$10 on Amazon. I will link those in the notes. It's not necessary to have a copy but you may want one to help you work through the chapter reflection questions that we've created as a companion resource. The questions will be distributed through our weekly newsletters. So if you plan to read listen along, make sure that you're subscribed to the newsletter so that you will receive the questions every week, just go to the art of home podcast.com/subscribe or click the link in the notes. Thank you so much for

listening. If you have found some value in this episode, would you consider giving the show some love in one of the following ways share with a homemaker you know who could use some encouragement in her practice of the art of home. Sometimes just hearing from someone farther along the path like Roberta can make a world of difference to the woman who is struggling to keep going and her homemaking. You can also help us out by leaving a rating and a review on your podcast listening app that helps other people who are searching for homemaker content to find us and then decide whether or not this is a good fit for them. And finally, you can leave us a tip in our virtual tip jar. Buy me a coffee tips can be given in \$5 increments as few or as many as you would like every little bit helps offset the cost of this podcast. So thank you so much for giving. Just go to [buy me a coffee.com/the art of home](https://buy-me-a-coffee.com/the-art-of-home). Well that is all for this episode. We will be back next week to wrap up season seven with another homemaker portrait. Until next time, keep practicing your art of making a home