

# AoH Tricia Emmons - 5:9:22, 8.15 AM

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home, kids, clean, living, people, art, homemaker, mom, feel, dishes, house, months, grew, challenges, ron, tricia, life, wall, emmons, husband

## SPEAKERS

Allison, Tricia Emmons

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### A Allison 00:03

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, a mom to four grown kids. And I've been practicing the art of home for 30 years. If you're new here, welcome. We are happy that you found us and we pray that you will be encouraged through this episode today. Well, we're halfway through season six of the art of home and today we're going to bring you a brand new seasoned homemaker portrait. A seasoned homemaker is one who has been practicing her art for 25 years or more. And our guest today Tricia Emmons has been keeping a home with her husband Ron for 29 years. They have six kids, some by birth, and some by adoption. Four have already flown the nest and two are still at home. We discuss their experience adopting two siblings, and then within months finding out they were expecting biological baby number four. Tricia has always worked outside the home in some capacity, so she has a lot of helpful insight for how to maintain balance and realistic expectations in the home while working. She is down to earth, funny and real. I know you will enjoy Trisha his story of home. I'm here with my friend Trisha Emmons, and we're going to talk about her career in homemaking. She is a seasoned homemaker. But before we go back to the beginning of your story, why don't you tell us a little bit about who you are today?

### T Tricia Emmons 01:35

Well, first off, I would say it was more work in progress. Okay. I've been married for 29 years. I have six kids ages 26 to 11. Some from birth, some from adoption. I am presently the kids ministry leader at our church. And I've been full time at that for five years, but I've worked up to it for the past nine years. Okay.

### A Allison 01:57

Awesome. So when did you first become a homemaker? Would you consider 29 years ago when you got married?

T Tricia Emmons 02:04

Actually not. Okay. Do tell. I, we got married. I didn't meet my husband till I was 24. Well, we got married at 24. I met him at 22. So I had been out of school for a couple years. I lived in an apartment for two years before that. So my junior and senior year of college I was in an apartment with some girls. I wouldn't really call that homemade. Probably not they provided the apartment paraphernalia, and we just put up posters. Okay. But after graduating, I moved in with strangers. Oh, really. And in Baltimore, outside of Baltimore, Owings Mills, Maryland, and met two other girls and we shared an apartment. Can you believe that? No, we would do that today. No. How did you meet them? Actually, it was friends of friends. And then those friends had friends. Okay. And so they connected us. And it was really a sweet group of ladies. So

A Allison 03:02

you didn't like put out a want ad for roommates? No. Okay.

T Tricia Emmons 03:05

But it was interesting because I went to school in Ohio, and then took my job in Baltimore City. And so to have the connection with someone who knew someone out there, yeah, I was pretty cool.

A Allison 03:20

That's really cool. Okay, so you're living in an apartment with a couple girls. And that? I'm guessing now that you're a working woman at that point, you had to like do some adulting things. Yeah, your home like we

T Tricia Emmons 03:31

had to buy real real food, food. But we couldn't we I mean, I'm sure if I batched it. I could have had paper plates, but we've got like matching silverware and stuff that went on the walls that wasn't just tacked on the wall. Things like that. So okay, together. So that was the other thing is we had to work together with that, because we all had opinions of the common space. We each had our own bedroom, so you could do what you wanted there. But the common space was joint effort.

A Allison 04:01

Okay. Cool. And how long did you have this letter? That was two years.

T Tricia Emmons 04:05

Okay. Yep. And then during that two years is when I met Ron, okay. And we got married in May, at the end of that second year.

A

Allison 04:17

Cool. And did you stay in that area in Baltimore?

T

Tricia Emmons 04:21

We actually did. Okay, so I continued to teach out there and the Baltimore City Schools public school 139 And he worked for a water system outside of Washington, DC. And so we lived between the two and rented a little apartment. Actually, it wasn't apartment it was a duplex in a historic area called Ellicott City. Cool. 350 full square feet.

A

Allison 04:47

Wow. That's live in large 350 Yes,

T

Tricia Emmons 04:51

it was ridiculous. The stairs like a little upstairs. And if you open the closet and you walked up like eight stairs and that was your upstate

A

Allison 05:00

There's so was that like, probably a really old building from colonial times?

T

Tricia Emmons 05:04

Yep. It was a historic district. And we felt it like, because you had to go through so many bureaucracies. Oh, yeah, anything to fix the house. It was left not fixed by the landlord. But then some folks, that church we joined, we would have our community group or at that time, I think we call them small groups in our living room and our knees would touch. You know, the well, yeah, people before.

A

Allison 05:31

This. I don't think your kitchen table is, but it's about 350 square feet.

T

Tricia Emmons 05:37

I mean, really, it was crazy. And then they had a farm. Okay. And so in Maryland, you called

them farms. Okay. And they raised horses. And they had 33 acres, and we got to live in the garage apartment, which was now 650 square feet. And it felt enormous. Yeah, you almost doubled your space. Wow. So it was wonderful. We got to move in there. And that, even though it was fun to wallpaper and everything, the 350 square foot historic house, it was so much more fun to have that space out there.

A Allison 06:15

Well, were there any thing? Was there anything that was very challenging for you? As far as well? Let me back up. Did you take skills with you and you left home? Any homemaking skills?

T Tricia Emmons 06:26

That is a wonderful question. So I grew up in a home that my mom worked, okay, and most of the ladies in our town did not, nor did they drive. Oh, wow. So my mom was a teacher. And my dad worked also. So I had two working parents, which if mom has worked there, they were working at the grocery store or cleaning someone's houses or watching someone's kids. Okay, so I had an uncomfortable way, but my mom needed to get stuff done. Yeah. So she wasn't worried about training us to do it. But she was very specific about how it got done. And so you just redid it. And same with my dad. He they didn't take the time to tell you. Okay, so when you wash the car, and there were spots left on it, you washed it again. Oh, we had a we joke about this one. Yeah, it's not really a joke. But we had a shoe brush that you would shine your shoes with? Yeah. And that's what you use to clean the carpets. My mom I don't think owned a mop. Wow. Unless she used it for cobwebs. Because we scrub the floors on your hands and knees. Oh my goodness. So I didn't know. Any other way. And like, you know, I didn't we didn't own a toilet brush. Can I just tell you? Oh, wow. So cleaning the toilet? Was not with a brush? No. And rubber gloves? Were for

A Allison 07:52

sissies. Okay, so it was hands in the toilet bowl. Yeah. With a rag or something? Yeah. Oh my gosh,

T Tricia Emmons 07:58

yes. And we had a huge, large garden, not on our property, but out on the hills around where we grew up. And so that was part of the other work. So did I take homemaking skills? Not necessarily. I did take a very good work ethic. Yeah. And a very high expectation for details. And that wasn't so great.

A Allison 08:23

Okay, I was gonna say how did this work out? When you are on your own or when you were married at that point?

T Tricia Emmons 08:29

Well, the marriage, we had to work out how cleaning was going to happen because we're both working. Yeah. So one thing my mom had told me is never start something you don't want to always do. And so I took it a little bit like, oh, like, I don't know how I want to. That would be great that

A Allison 08:51

that would be a lot of pressure, because you're here newly married and you're like, Well, if I start cleaning the toilets, then I

T Tricia Emmons 08:57

am always cleaning the toilets Exactly. From now until the day I die. So finally, Ron and I just had a conversation. I'm like, we're both working. So we both have to clean and he had that attitude. He was raised. His parents were divorced. So he was raised, you know, sometimes by his mom, then. Then he went and was raised by his stepmom and dad. So he had different experiences in his. So he I actually have an awesome husband. And so we actually sat down and talked about it. And he hated every Saturday morning of screening. But when do you do it when you're working Monday through Friday? Yeah. So in the worst part about it is he hated vacuuming? And I'm like, What is wrong with vacuuming? So we talked about it, and I can remember we were still in that delicate city home. And I said, Well, what's the thing that you hate the most about cleaning? And he said, the carpet? Vacuuming? Like, that's weird. Yeah. And he said, Well, what do you hate? I'm like the bathroom. And he's like, Oh, I love cleaning the bathroom like sold to this day. I do not clean my bathroom. Wow, my husband cleans my bathroom. You got a good deal, but he does not vacuum.

A Allison 10:07

I would take vacuuming over the bathroom in the day.

T Tricia Emmons 10:10

Yes. And I have bought toilet brushes. I was gonna say, stick his hand. Oh, yes. So as I grew in homemaking, I'm like, there has got to be a different way. And after having three kids, I stumbled upon fly lady. Oh, yeah. Ever heard of that? Okay. Good. I went into a bit of a depression after baby number three. And I couldn't get things done. Yeah. And so in remember, that is what 2000. Okay, so computers aren't something that we carried in our pocket. Exactly. Right. So you would get an email multiple times a day, check your laundry? Or do things like that it just kind of got me to a place. And it reminded me or it told me, I didn't have to do things the way my mom did. Yeah. And a little bit was better than nothing. And so it just totally revolutionized how I cleaned. That's awesome care my home.



A

Allison 11:15

That's awesome. And so you said two things there that I think are important. You don't have to do it the way that your mom did it, or your grandma or whoever taught you. We have to find our own rhythms. Because every family is unique. And every situation is different. And even in within the seasons of homemaking. What works for you when your kids are little may not work for you when they're teenagers? Allison,

T

Tricia Emmons 11:36

that is so true. That is and with the spread of my children. Yeah. And the different houses and places we've lived, I've had to do a different and what worked today doesn't usually work six weeks from now, in my house, right? And having the age of children I had or the situation in my work. Place or our home life.

A

Allison 12:02

Right, right. And then the other the other thing was that What did you say, of doing a little bit is better than doing nothing? Yes. You know, because if you're like me and a perfectionist, and it's an all or nothing kind of thing, well, if I can't do all of the laundry, I'll just put it off, you know, and then it never gets done. Or if I can't clean all the windows or you know, whatever it is, that's a monstrous task. A little bit is better than nothing.

T

Tricia Emmons 12:26

Yeah, I've really grown in that. And you can look around and even see here that I'm it is progress. Like I'm like, I don't know if I like this color on the wall. So we're just going to paint a little bit of it. Yeah, me live life and see if I like that. And then we'll change it. Yeah, grow into it. That's good.

A

Allison 12:43

I think flexibility is a really great character quality to work on as homemakers.

T

Tricia Emmons 12:51

Sometimes it comes because you choose it, but more often becomes comes because you don't want to be frustrated. Yeah. So it's the alternative.

A

Allison 12:59

Absolutely. Well, okay, let's talk a little bit about balance and homemaking. You work outside the home? So we've already kind of touched on that. What are some challenges that that presents to you? And maybe even some benefits? And how have you worked through that over

the years?

**T** Tricia Emmons 13:17

Well, honestly, there have only been a couple of times in my life, my adult life that I haven't worked some way, when we lived in Phoenix for a few years, I was able to focus just on my home and my kids and my husband. And then when we first the very first time we moved to Texas, but every other time I either worked in the house, or outside of the house in some way. So the chat challenges I feel like are almost obvious, in that you have enough work to do at home, right, you can make it enough work to do. And then if you're looking for a 40 hour week, or even if it's 12 hours a week, that 12 hours has to come from somewhere. And whether it's charged 12 hours, I'm kind of that person who the charging of the hours isn't necessarily the amount of time I put into it, because it's brain space. And you're doing it so I'm fortunate that all of the positions that I've held, I was able to do them at the same time as I was doing something else. So that my brain could be planning my meals but also planning what I was going to write for that article or whatever. So they would go hand in hand in some ways. The other challenges were just the when I couldn't be at something my kids were having, or I wanted to host the whatever it was being asked to but I knew what my house look like And even though I didn't have to be perfect in it, it's still needed to not have things out of place completely. Yeah. And so it limited, I had to learn to work within limitations. And so that took some time. And so like I referred to before that flexibility, but also it was always changing. And so I was always looking for another angle of how I could work, but not interrupt the life of my family. Yeah. So maybe that meant working while they were sleeping. Well, mom is not really a great mom when she's when she's sleep deprived.

**A** Allison 15:44

Yeah, do you kind of need some sleep?

**T** Tricia Emmons 15:47

Or doing it? Well, when they started school, and they so I start I did home school for a little while. But when they went to public school or outside of the home school, then trying to squeeze it in there. But if you look at the age of my kids, there was always someone at home. Yeah. So just trying to do things that worked. But the challenges were real. And I think even looking back at them, the biggest challenge that I would have, is not carrying the guilt of that. And recognizing that I was always trying to be intentional. When I had moments. Yeah. And so taking, when I had to be flexible, I had to prioritize. And that's where the creativity comes in. Is you have to decide what is more important to do here?

**A** Allison 16:43

Well, you're talking about like, in the home or with schedules, or all of the above

**T** Tricia Emmons 16:48

Tricia Emmons 17:10

all of the above. Like, I loved making a good meal for my family, home cooked non Hamburger Helper really mean making it? And I like doing it from scratch. Well, there were times that that's not an option. Yeah. And it would be better that we ate a good home cooked meal that is semi home cooked my homemade. Yep. Rather than grabbing McDonald's, or doing you know, an alternative, you know, cereal or whatever, which we do and have done so I'm not downplaying cereal as a

A

Allison 17:26

that's a totally legitimate. I mean, maybe not every night, but yeah. Okay, well, that's really interesting. So it sounds like you had to, you probably had certain expectations, going into life as a wife and a mom, and then maybe needing to adjust your expectations other than the working and trying to find that balance. Were there any other expectations that you brought in anything else that surprised you about home life as a married person? And with kids?

T

Tricia Emmons 17:54

That's a great question. I was not raised in a Christian home, okay. And my husband and I came into it both as well that you were believers, believers and wanting to follow Christ. And so that looked different. And I would put a lot of how my dad was, I expected my husband to be most of those were negative, unfortunately, until I get to know my dad better as an older father, a father of adult children, but from a kid's perspective, and his involvement. So when Ron was willing to do dishes, and the bathroom and helped make lunches, you know, he was very much a part of the homemaking in a lot of ways. And then it was his home. And so those kind of things were again, my mom took care of everything. I have a really embarrassing story to tell you. Yeah, go ahead. We love embarrassing stories. When I was 12, or 13, my mom asked me to go check the dryer or washer. I don't know which one. Yeah, honestly, and see if there were any clothes in it so that she could, XYZ, whatever it was. So I went and we lived in Ohio. So our laundry was in the basement. I went and I looked and I came back. And I told her I'm like, No, there's no clothes in it. And then she went and looked. And I didn't know the difference between the washer and dryer. Oh, no. So I promised that my kids would not have that problem. Yeah, when they get older and so they've been involved in doing that as well as there's like fruits and vegetables that I had never tasted and went to college and was embarrassed and ate them in the wrong way. And so I've tried to expose my kids to different things. Yeah, because of that, but that involving it wasn't just my job. You know, I can lead this in this way. I feel like home making the house is the place that I get to set the temperature for Yes, absolutely. But as I invite others into it. They belong, that they take ownership. And that's been the cool thing.

A

Allison 20:07

Yeah, I love that. That's really good. Let's talk a little bit about challenges. So I know you guys have had some challenges in your home and what, maybe speak to that, what are some challenges that you've experienced? And how, how have you seen God stretch you and grow you through those challenges?

**T** Tricia Emmons 20:28

So I mentioned in the beginning that I'm a parent of adopted and birth children, we had three birth children. At that time, our youngest was eight, and we decided to adopt. And we adopted two kiddos, they were siblings. And then, a few months after the adoption was complete, we got a bonus surprise. So within 18 months, we went from three children, a family of five, to six children, a family of eight. And so And unfortunately, at that very same time, we were also had moved from a different state. And we're in the process of losing a home in the other state. I was not working a job that was producing any money. Ron had a great job, but six children challenge any. Yeah, budget. And so our finance was were very bad as well. So budgeting or becoming flexible and frugal, and creative in our finances. But the challenge of becoming a home to kids who had very different home experiences,

**A** Allison 21:58

and how old were the siblings when they came to you?

**T** Tricia Emmons 22:01

So our oldest son was clay, and he was nine, but in two months after that, he was turning 10. So he was nine in 10 months. And then Alison, was 22 months

**A** Allison 22:13

old. Oh, okay. I didn't realize that she was that little when you have a daughter.

**T** Tricia Emmons 22:17

Okay. Yes. Which was again, remember, my youngest at that point was eight. Yeah, so I had been out of the little kids state quite a while.

**A** Allison 22:28

But isn't that interesting? How God just got you ready for Gracie? Haha, because you're you now you had the 22 month old? And then surprise, you're gonna have a baby? Yes. So kind of got you back in the mode of littles. Yeah. And remembering what that's like. Yeah. Because for all you mamas listening, who have a bunch of littles around your ankles. I know it's hard, but you forget you do pretty quickly. You do you forget how hard it is and how loud it is.

**T** Tricia Emmons 22:56

And just I every kid is different. Yeah. And so I joined a mops group. And I'm like, I just got to get in touch with people who have kids again, because maybe I'm just old. And I'm out of touch with how a kid should be acting because my memory of my other children were very different.

Right? She right? She was just an active little girl.

A

Allison 23:16

Yeah. Oh, my goodness, that's so interesting. So you bring these kids and you go from family five to family of eight, overnight, it feels like feels like and then you've just relocated to a new state? How can you speak just a little bit into maybe some of the things that you guys did that you felt like we're successful, to integrate these children into your family?

T

Tricia Emmons 23:43

Again, I feel like it goes back to that, involving everybody. When we felt God leading us to adopt, we pulled the kids in right away the three older ones, at least Jacob and Lucas and had them be a part of it from the beginning as much as they could, right. And so when we have clay and Allison come and join our family, we had to involve them in there as well. Because for those kids to feel like this was their family, or wanted to be their family. They had to feel welcome. And so the sharing, this was another place where I had wrong expectations. And that I thought good nutrition and a schedule and a routine and lots of love. And someone who knew education would be the best answer for these kids. And the Lord really used those kids to shape me and I will see how much my shaping shaped them or my help shape them but I see how the Lord just used them to teach me so very much and my own kids and watching how they are could give up things. And it talks about lowering your expectation of how to clean and your flexibility of what the meal was going to look like. That was paramount at that time. Yeah. Wow. So some of the things we did was we made sure that they had everything that everybody else had. So it wasn't like they had to borrow anybody else's, which was easy for the 22 month old. But for a kiddo who's coming in between the ages of my present boys, that was more of a challenge, yet, it was easy. To make sure he had what he needed. The church that we belong to, at that time, was just such a blessing to help us give him things that made him feel like they were his own. Right. And, and we held lightly and, or loosely, rather, to what bed was yours, and what bedroom was yours. So again, that flexibility, Word and creativity because who fit better to, to be together at that time, we were living in a rental home, and we let the boys have the master bedroom. Run and I stayed in a den. And the girls had the other bedroom. And it just because it just made sense, ya know, with their things in their stuff. So we were never really holding tight to traditional ways that it should be

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Allison 26:33

Yeah, no, I think that's great. I mean, you have to, I think parenting and homemaking to do it. Well, you have to think outside the box. And then bringing, adding adoption to the mix of that is definitely has its own unique set of challenges. And really, really needing to think outside the box, which is where we go next in our conversation is talking about hospitality. Like you said, before we started recording that you always wanted to be like, open door, you know, and not just to come in and have a meal with us and use the bathroom. But like, there's a bed for you here. Yeah, no, you can stay here. What are some other ways that you guys, practical ways that you show hospitality?



T

Tricia Emmons 27:14

Well, it's kind of happened to us, rather than us purpose to happen. Our kids have just invited kids. And some of those kids have keys to our house. When they didn't have keys, they would come in through the windows, you know,

A

Allison 27:32

and I hope none of my kids did that.

T

Tricia Emmons 27:36

Not to my knowledge, but it is possible. But it is. Once it started happening at first, I was little taken aback by it. But then I thought this is really cool, too, that they feel comfortable being here. Yeah, I liked it. Yeah. And so I wanted to promote it. And how do we continue to promote that. And again, it starts for me awkwardly or uncomfortably. And that's what has happened. I became friends with another lady and awkward, it was just uncomfortable. And I'm like, Hey, you want to come over? Because we're like, not even close in age. My kids aren't even close to her kids age. And she started coming over and now. So every Friday, oh, she comes over. And so we try to make that available. But I think one of the key things is in that is I had to drop the idea that all the dog care would be swept up and the dishes done. Yeah. So I with working, you know, there's only a limited time and that's my Friday morning. That's when I get that done. And if we're going to deep clean or do any more that happens on Saturday and all hands on deck on that one. But if someone is available and needs or wants to come on a Thursday night, yeah. This is what you get. This is what you get. And so my my philosophy is as long as it's not.

A

Allison 29:07

Unsafe, unsanitary, and unsafe situation. Yes.

T

Tricia Emmons 29:13

We're good. And I only did those a couple times. Yeah. But that wasn't those were some of those challenging times with our, with our large

A

Allison 29:23

family. Yeah, yeah. Large Family Living. I mean, we only had four but there was, I mean, there was a whole era there were we just never went upstairs that went that's the wing, the wing that the boys lived in. I just had to pick my battles. Like if I go up there, I'm going to be so angry. Yeah. I would I see you know, because not that they were busting holes in the wall or anything like that, but they weren't keeping it to the standard that I would want if I were living up there, but they weren't you know, it wasn't we didn't need to call on the health department or anything but it just you know, but there were spoons. Oh yeah, dishes, cups, dishes. Are things

yes, all the dishes end up upstairs that grew hair. Yeah. And then sorry, folks, if he especially if you have boys, but that's and they're all gone now and I can walk upstairs and it smells really good there. And my daughter used to joke because she always lived kind of on the opposite side of that hurt. She always had the room because she's the only girl kind of away from her brothers. And she would go to their room and be like, it smells like hot dog water in here.

T

Tricia Emmons 30:31

That is such a specific event. I don't know where you got

A

Allison 30:33

that from, but she's like it smells like hot dog water in here. That's the boy smell, apparently. So anyway, that's great. We will get back to Tricia story in just a few minutes. Right now it's time for historical homemaker hints. This is the part of the podcast where we highlight some of the helpful and not so helpful hints doled out to homemakers throughout history. Today's hints come from the art of homemaking in city and country in mansion and cottage by Margaret Sangster published in 1898. Margaret has a strong word about the importance of giving one's full attention in conversation. I think one of the most common forms of incivility, as seen in daily life is the failure to show interest in what people are saying to you. This lack of interest is ineffectual chill on family or social intercourse and acts as a wet blanket whenever it is found. The fact is that when people are together, they should be interested in each other's talk and each other's concerns. Letters, the morning paper, one's own thoughts and plans should be put aside in the family. And whether in the sitting room or at the table, a common life shared should make possible common conversation and polite intercourse. Well, there is nothing new under the sun is there? It seems we humans are prone to distraction and self centeredness. Can you imagine how disappointed and appalled Margaret would be if she saw how we allow our phones to come between us and meaningful conversation with others today, as much as it annoys me when I'm talking to someone who has their face in their phone and is clearly not giving me their full attention. I am ashamed to say I have absolutely been guilty of this myself. Let's try to do better, shall we? And since we are talking about phones, let us address our posture. Continually hunching over the phone or computer screen can wreak havoc on our back and neck. So perhaps we should give Margaret's daily posture check a try. An easy way to practice walking well, is to start out right. Just before you leave the house, walk up to the wall and see that your toes, chest and nose touch it at once. Then and that attitude walk away. Keep your head up and your chest out and your shoulders and back will take care of themselves. A Southern school teacher used to instruct her pupils to walk always as if trying to look over the top of an imaginary carriage just in front of them. It was good advice for it kept the head raised. Don't think these things are of no value they add to your health and your attractiveness to things to which everybody should pay heat. Good advice, Margaret. And hey, if you're always looking over the top of an imaginary carriage for the sake of good posture, you certainly won't be distracted by your phone as much. Well, that's all for today's historical homemaker hints. As always, please remember, these hints are for entertainment purposes only. And we leave it up to you, the listener to determine the safety and soundness of this advice. And now back to Tricia story. Okay, how do you think that homemaking we've kind of maybe already answered this question, but how do you think that homemaking helps build community?

**T** Tricia Emmons 34:05

I think one, helping people feel welcome. I think helping people take ownership, whether that's in your home, helping your own family do that. Right. And the community. I remember when my boys specifically went off to college, and just the responsibility level of mom. They think the milk belongs to everybody. And so kind of that process of you want to share, but there are like limits to that sharing of who who's responsible for replacing that milk. Right. And so in our house, it was unfortunate that you had to ask before you took the last of anything and it became a courtesy which then I feel like kind of helped my kids to be more are sensitive, yeah and aware of others. But in the same case, if you visit our house more than three times, we have showed you where the cup is at your own, you know, not in a negative Yes, Nan way. But you are now family. And we're going to ask you to help do dishes clean up the table. And now let's play cards right now. So that is one of the ways that I feel like it helps our community so that someone would feel welcome. I grew up in that community that was as big as my subdivision. Houses were a lot closer together. But you just knocked on the door and went in. And there was a cup of coffee waiting for you. Yeah. So I love to have that. That'd be awesome. Unity, but no one's home.

**A** Allison 35:45

No. Yeah. And it's in we're a lot more spread out. And, or even if you live in one of the neighborhoods where you're closer together, it's just, yeah, it's just people are not available. For whatever reason whether they're, you know, just put just live very busy lives down. And I think we miss a lot. We miss out on a lot with just not slowing down and being available. Yes. And I think maybe that's what we're getting at is being a homemaker. Whether you are a full time homemaker or not. You're intentionally making yourself available to the people in your home and in your community. I like how you put that. Yeah. So all right. Well, let's talk about the seasons of homemaking for just a little bit. What was the hardest transition for you?

**T** Tricia Emmons 36:31

I mean, yes, three to six. Yeah, I

**A** Allison 36:33

know. That's a given. Okay. But was there anything else that was difficult? You know, maybe when your kids started to leave, because you still got kids at home? Yeah. Because you have quite the gap. Yeah. Let's remind the audience again, you said at the beginning, you're only six

**T** Tricia Emmons 36:47

to 11 to 11. Okay.

**A** Allison 36:50

That's a big gap. It is. But what was hard? What was a hard transition for

**T** Tricia Emmons 36:54

you? The President transition we're in right now, I feel like is one of the hardest. It is amazing how, who is in your home? Changes the personality of the home? And the dynamics? Good and bad? Yeah. So. So just making, I mentioned this before, my routines and my rhythms change, and I can't hold too tightly to, this is the perfect way to do this. Because it's going to change and having certain people in your house makes that happen. Right. And then what we do each day, I still I will tell you, I still do my calendaring. I still clean with a timer. I you know, do things this some things the same. But the challenge with this not being my primary hub, because with my kids in three different places, my older kids, one in state two out of state, I want to be with them. Yes. And I want them to come, or I want us to meet somewhere because the relationships are

**A** Allison 38:13

I know I read making I read somewhere that having children it and then sending them out into the world is like having just little pieces of your heart out there. You know? And that's really true. Yeah, I'm happy for them. I'm so happy for them, you know, and I feel like I did my job when they they've gone out and they're productive adults. But there is still, you know, a piece of my heart there with

**T** Tricia Emmons 38:39

him. Yes. And so even even just knowing that we're how we felt about our own parents. Now, they get to be those people who think about how we did it. And knowing that we're still in progress, you know, of doing what we're doing and learning new ways to whatever to do. That is part of it. Sometimes it breaks my heart. And sometimes it encourages me greatly. Yeah, when I see them in the way they're living so Exactly. Yeah.

**A** Allison 39:19

I again, we just keep coming back to that being flexible. And the one thing that's constant is that nothing is constant.

**T** Tricia Emmons 39:27

Not for me, at least I ya know, I don't know what that looks like. And it was really sweet when my son and his wife came home. And they said, you know, we we forget that you're still like driving someone to dance. And you're still doing this. And yeah, I would love to downsize. But it doesn't really make a lot of sense to do that right now. Right? It's not a priority to do that. Because we have lifestyle going on and not that life ever stops, but it's a different stage of life.

A

Allison 40:04

Yeah. Different in your perspective is a little unique. I mean, there's people that have big gaps and children and have children later on in life, but it's less common, I guess. Yes. To have the situation. So what? How does your homemaking look right now, in the season that you're in? How are you growing? How are you bringing your girls along with you and teaching them? Your younger girls?

T

Tricia Emmons 40:30

Yes, yeah. Well, we've started doing more of let's clean as we go. Okay, kind of thing. Let's invite people, let's be a part of what we're doing. So we don't we still have our Saturday morning cleaning. I will say that. And even when we had all six kids at home, I had to have jobs for everybody. Because idle hands. Yeah. So way, and then they fight over who's gonna do why yet? And so I created jobs for them. Well, then I have to and I still have all those jobs. Yeah. So it's really fun, because they like to be a part of what we're doing. And they've become more proficient and things. And it's more of a, not a half, two, or figured out kind of way. But like with laundry or with just helping them I think one of the things I'm sorry, I'm probably all over the place. But one of the things is, you still have homework to do. But your bathroom still needs cleaned. And you still need to have dinner, right? And make your lunch for tomorrow. Right? That's real life. Yeah. Like, I don't know, if my kids will have the blessing of being able to stay at home work looks so different these days, like you are at home. And that is your job, right? Where you're making an income from it. So I just want to part of our job as a mom, is to prepare them. And so when I don't know what the future holds, it's a little difficult, but I can teach them with what I'm doing now. Sure. And so trying to remind them that people over the project, but they catch more than I teach. So sure, what am I living that? Am I showing that? So it's alongside, I feel like everything we do is alongside one another if Gracie actually loves to do dishes, and she's pretty good at it. And so I don't have to be beside her. But we do it anyhow. We used to have a little thing where we did it. And we set the timer for two minutes and seven seconds and you rotated every two minutes and seven seconds. But you know, we had six to eight people doing that. Yeah. And so you had something to do. So you had washing?

A

Allison 42:52

I have a question. Why two minutes and seven seconds? Good

T

Tricia Emmons 42:55

question. Ron. Just set the timer one day and that's what it was. And so that's what it states. Okay. I

A

Allison 43:01

was just trying to think is there a significant? Yeah, number 27. I don't know what did what is that? Okay, no, so then, okay, so you set the timer. Everybody's say working in the kitchen cleaning up after dinner? Yes. You set the timer. And you had

T Tricia Emmons 43:15

someone washing? Okay, someone rinsing? Someone drying? Someone putting away that's four. Then you had someone take care of the trash. Okay. Someone's sweeping the floor. Okay, so that's now we're up to six. And then you the other two. One was taking care of music. Okay, other one was working out. Oh, so I don't know if you notice we have a little Yeah, pull up bar pull up bar. So you worked on your pull ups or you did lunges or something. So and so then every two minutes and seven

A Allison 43:45

seconds. You would switch you would switch? Wow. Yeah. And that worked.

T Tricia Emmons 43:50

And that worked. It was the most fun we had in all hands on deck cleaning up. Now. Again, it was a seasonal Yeah, it was flexible. And it didn't last very long. But

A Allison 44:03

that's fine, though. Maybe somebody might want to try that. Okay. But make sure you do that extra seven seconds. Two minutes and seven seconds. That's so funny. Okay, we're gonna go into a q&a time. Okay. Just a rapid fire. You can tell me a little story about the answer. Or you can just give me a quick answer. If you want write about homemaking tasks, one that you love cooking. Okay. Yep. One that you hate.

T Tricia Emmons 44:30

cleaning the bathroom.

A Allison 44:32

I kind of knew that was coming. I really think it's because you had to put your hand in the toilet when you were a little. You were traumatized. Right. Okay, how about a task that you grew

T Tricia Emmons 44:43

to love? Planning, meals planning? Grocery shopping grocery lists.

A Allison 44:50

Okav. that wasn't your favorite thing initially.

**T** Tricia Emmons 44:53  
Not at all. It was very hard for me to figure out like, if I'm going to make these foods what?

**A** Allison 44:59  
What do I need? Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's a skill. It really is

**T** Tricia Emmons 45:03  
a skill. But I had a book that I followed for a while. And then I just started it became how you did it was called once a month cooking. And I'm like, Oh, this is genius.

**A** Allison 45:14  
Okay. Did you actually do the one side leading raw a little I did

**T** Tricia Emmons 45:18  
it. Wow, you're first married before kid boss before we needed to.

**A** Allison 45:22  
But it was probably helpful because you were both working full time jobs

**T** Tricia Emmons 45:25  
and it gave us the opportunity to give meals away. Oh, I love that. Awesome. I love that because we were working. You don't necessarily have time to make a meal for someone who whatever their situation had a baby or in the hospital or whatever. Yeah. And so we were able to do that because we're like, Hey,

**A** Allison 45:44  
we've Caitlyn. I have a casserole in the freezer. Exactly. Oh, that's really I never thought about that about freezer cooking. Really smart. Okay, how about your worst homemaking fail.

**T** Tricia Emmons 45:56  
So remember, this talked a little bit about having meals over? Well, Tricia became a friend to

So, remember, I've talked a little bit about having people over? Well, Tricia became a tyrant. In the preparation, it was not worth having people over because you were just so mean, oh, my God, they I was a totally different person when the person arrived. But leading up to that my kids and even my husband said it was not worth it. And I'm like, I gotta switch. Yes, yeah. So that was my biggest fail. And I think, I hope, my biggest achievement also because I feel like lowering the expectation of what it needed to be. And inviting that other person in now It's first time over then, you know, I am a little bit more. Yeah, about stuff. But like the food has to be right and plated nicely or whatever. But not. Not crazy.

A

Allison 46:48

Not anymore. Do you like turn into a different person with your family? Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Yeah. Oh, gosh, I think we've probably all been there. Oh, good. I've been there because we don't see that sign. Yeah,

T

Tricia Emmons 47:00

I don't know. You know,

A

Allison 47:01

if I, I know. No, I've been there. And there's actually there's a really funny video. It's, I don't know, I can't think of what it is. It was floating around the internet for a while there. And it's a it's like a husband and wife team that do these videos. And the husband often will, like play the wife and like, dress up, you know, with it's like all in jest and put a wig on some lipstick on and like, be this and he does that whole thing where he's like this tyrant running around the house. You know, yelling at people and because someone's I was coming over and they're gonna be here in an hour and you better you know, oh, it's really funny, actually. So yeah, you're in good company. Okay, how about your top three homemaking tips?

T

Tricia Emmons 47:43

Oh, I had a several. So I'm hard. It's hard for me to like narrow it down. We'll say having a junk drawer is really important. But it has to be an order, like not an organized junk drawer, but almost empty. Because then when that person comes, you throw anything in it. So if you do go through it, when it's not your crisis time, you know,

A

Allison 48:08

that reminds me of this is actually a tip that I remember seeing when we were selling a house at one point. And they're like, when you find yourself, the realtor is like, we're in the driveway. Show your house right now. You know, you take a laundry basket and you just go along the counters and you sweep everything into the laundry basket and you put it in the back of your car.

T Tricia Emmons 48:32

The back of the car. I've seen people hiding things in their oven, and that is very, that is very dangerous. Yeah, don't do that. Or the tub. You know? Yep.

A Allison 48:41

But they're going to look in the bathtub. So this is true with your buying, they won't look in your car, because you're gonna leave probably just don't forget, it's there. Just don't forget it's there. Especially if it's like bills and things or bid or food or, you know, anyway, okay, so that's about 10. Okay,

T Tricia Emmons 48:57

keeping menus, so I'll keep my menu from for 12 months. Okay, so I get a calendar and I kind of write like what we're having. Yeah, because I get stuck. And I know some people it's no big deal about food for them. But we I like variety. I grew up having like the same five things for dinner. Again, you know, over and over. Yeah, I never wanted to do that. So like every few days, I introduced something new or make up something like with the with limited finances at different times. Yeah, we were very creative with rice and beans. You put a little spice in there and now it's Mexican rice and beans are anyways, I've kept at least 12 months of my calendar menu. Okay, and then I can look back at what I made. So I don't I'm not really reinventing the wheel, but we're not getting stuck.

A Allison 49:47

That's really smart. Because you'll be like, Oh, I forgot about that meal. Yeah, yeah, no, that's a really good idea. I do something similar to that. I keep it on my phone in my notes, because that's where I that's where I do my menu is on my notes. up. All right, so tip number tip number three,

T Tricia Emmons 50:04

substitution be creative. So many times I didn't have I mean, we didn't always have an he be so close. Right? And we never had we didn't have a Walmart. So you had to substitute. And now that we have the computer in our pocket, it's easy to find a substitute for things, but finding substitutions. Bananas substitute for a lot of things. Yes, they sure know that. I always have been and so always keep an eye on it. Yes. And if you can't keep fresh ones, keep them in your freezer. Absolutely. Yep.

A Allison 50:39

They freeze really well. Yeah, that's really that's really good. I can remember back in the day, before the internet. Yes, there was a time before the internet. That's how old I am. When I was first married, I had a cookbook. It was the Southern Living like ultimate Southern Living

cookbook. It's my favorite cookbook ever. And they had a substitution chart in the back of the book. I mean, that thing is like torn and dog eared because I would reference it often. You need to make copies of Yeah. And

**T** Tricia Emmons 51:05  
put it somewhere. I know because that would. Because that was the thing like baking soda. I

**A** Allison 51:10  
don't. I don't. Yeah, here's what you can sub for this or I don't have any buttermilk. But I can do this for buttermilk and all that kind of stuff. It's really, really helpful to is to have that. Oh, yeah.

**T** Tricia Emmons 51:20  
That's a good one. Yeah. You just

**A** Allison 51:23  
add lemon juice or vinegar to regular milk. There you go. Okay, awesome. Tips. Thank you very much. So let's talk a little bit about the art of home. How do you see homemaking as an art?

**T** Tricia Emmons 51:35  
Well, I have to be honest that when I first read that I was like, well, art, I had just gone to the Mcnary last week. And it's always funny to me, because I'm like, that's art.

**A** Allison 51:47  
Oh, yeah, sometimes. Yeah. Sometimes what's there is like, I don't know about that.

**T** Tricia Emmons 51:51  
Oh, if one of them honestly was a, like a printers, like an old printing press, the drawers that had the letters and stuff in it. It looked like it was six of those drawers connected together on the wall, which I did like, Yeah, but to call it art. Right. And so the art of home, everyone's a critic. Yeah. It's an opinion. Oh, my gosh, sorry. Yeah.

**A** Allison 52:17  
That is hilarious. I am loving this perspective. This is brand new, okay, please go on.

T

Tricia Emmons 52:24

In the value is to whom it was made. Everyone sees it differently. So it's in the, the beauty of it is in the eye of the beholder. And what I love about art, and what I found myself doing it the big day, was walking around and looking at the materials that people use, and the medium that they had, and I I think about that with this. What, what helped me create the type of home I have. So I think that that's part of

A

Allison 52:58

how I see it. Good answer. I like that a lot. Really good. Everyone's a critic. Well, we talked a little bit about beauty here just now. And I love looking at the materials and, and the things that we have to work with. To make it beautiful, but we do have to clean the toilet, and do the laundry and make a meal again and wash the dishes again. And those sorts of routine and what could be monotonous tasks. How can we find beauty and meaning in that?

T

Tricia Emmons 53:32

My husband is really appreciative when he has clean socks. Yeah, yes. Even if he has to go to the clean laundry basket to get them. That helps me. But if that that wasn't always the case. And so I found I had to purpose myself and pray for the person socks. I was doing. The mismatch sock or the dish. I'm so grateful that I have food to put on this plate. You know, there were times that it was again, we always had food we never went without don't don't get me wrong. Yeah, but cheese was a luxury. There were days that cheese was a luxury. Yeah, kids will laugh about it now. And they request rice and beans. But there were days. Yeah. And so I think having an opportunity to pray for when I'm doing the doing the things. Yeah. And always knowing that there's another reason because I am more of a people person than not. I'm going to have someone to share, I hope share my home with and whether that's the person who's living here, or it's the person who's coming on Friday, right? I want so that kind of gives me a purpose for the mundane It's a motivation. Exactly. Yeah. No, that's

A

Allison 55:02

that's a really good way to look at it. I like that a lot. So you touched a little bit on gratitude just now, how do you think that gratitude is important in the home? And how? What are some ways that you've seen it improve your experience?

T

Tricia Emmons 55:15

Well, anytime I'm discontent or grumbling, the remedies, gratitude. And if I can't get myself to remember, I don't deserve anything. And so when I'm frustrated, or angry or irritated, that window does not stay open by itself. I got 12 other window. Yeah. Yeah. And so in my view, in my this, there's so many things to be grateful for. And I think if we're not grateful, even in the 350, square foot home, right, I can look back. There's so much joy, and positive memories, and

even the hard things of the fact that the wall in the floor separated at an incline. And so the Maryland cold would come in. Yeah. But it was things that we can be grateful for now, right. But what we learned and how it grew us close, we cuddled

A Allison 56:24

you were freezing. Yes. Our first house had no insulation. It was a rental. And it was very old. And fortunately, it never gets that cold in Florida, but it does get cold and you know, kind of like here at night at night. And we had a water bed. Yeah, and the heater didn't work. So we're like, we're like, sleeping on water, literally sleeping on water. And it's you know, 20 degrees outside, which means it's 20 degrees in the house. And just Yeah, freezing. Freezing. We were very close. Yes, we slept like entwined. And now it's so funny because I sleep. My he calls it my pillow fortress. I think I got used to this when I was pregnant. Yes, I needed all the support with the extra pillows. And so now I have to have one under my head one in front of me and one behind me because I sleep on my side. So you

T Tricia Emmons 57:18

definitely don't have a full size bed.

A Allison 57:23

Bed but I need all my pillows anyway. So I can relate to freezing at night and needing to cuddle and but we I mean, it was I would not call that a trial at all. Not in the in the least it was uncomfortable. Yeah. It was annoying. Yes. We didn't live there for very long, obviously, because there was also rats in the walls. But that's a whole other story. So we can relate. But I look back very fondly on that now. And I just think about how we we bonded over Yes. A circumstance that was less than ideal. Yeah. And I'm grateful for what we had. Yeah, I'm grateful we had a roof over our heads and Yeah, most definitely shag carpet. No.

T Tricia Emmons 58:08

Oh my goodness. It was avocado.

A Allison 58:12

No, it was red. Oh, like burnt Orangey. Red? Oh, no. Yeah, it was pretty. It was really bad. It was really bad. So Okay, how about support, we need one another as women. As women, seeking to honor our husbands and our families and take care of our families in our homes. What are some ways that you were able to foster community and support with other women over the years?

T Tricia Emmons 58:42

I have all we have always been involved in a church. And I feel like that has helped in that way.

And whether I pursued it or was pursued. When early on we worked with the youth in our church. And so those parents, I would hang out with them. Oh yeah. And just not just to get to know the girl but I wanted to learn from them again. I didn't know a lot about homemaking. I wish I'd paid more attention than my mom. You know, she can and she did things. I don't know how to do any of that. But these ladies would talk me through it. I can remember one lady after having kids. She just invited me out to her house. And I would hang out for hours upon hours and just sit and I have some of my recipes are still from Michelle's kitchen watching her make them and we just talked through while our kids played ours. And our husbands were on their way home and you know, I would leave soon as rich would show up and Ron would be home shortly after and it was just it really was relational discipleship. I mean, yes, we talked about the Lord as well. But I just saw her in action. Yeah, and saw these ladies in action. Not always parenting directly, right, but talking about it, cooking their meals. I was alongside cleaning with them. So I mean, some of the some of the we talked about that earlier. But some of the things I've seen, I'm like, Oh, you could use? Yes paper for that. Yeah, you know, so it was really cool. I was very blessed. That's awesome.

A

Allison 1:00:18

And that's something that that's exactly like the point of what we're doing here. You know, this show is sort of like a gateway to get to enter into somebody else's story, someone who's a little farther along than you, perhaps and learn from them. But we are always encouraging the women listening to go and do what you did go find that woman in your community, or women who you can sit in their kitchen and watch them cook and or, you know, come alongside and help them or or invite them into your home. Yes, you know, if they're older and their kids are gone, invite them over, you know, into your mess

T

Tricia Emmons 1:00:58

into your mess. That is

A

Allison 1:01:00

so true. A lot of times, they're just waiting for the for the invitation.

T

Tricia Emmons 1:01:04

It is interesting that none of us like at that time. I didn't feel worthy to do that. Now I'm at the kind of at the other side of it. I didn't mention but I am going to be a grandma. Yes. So exciting. Oh, that's so exciting. But that other side of it where I don't feel like I know enough to share. And I know anything that you don't know what you know, because you already know it. Exactly.

A

Allison 1:01:34

Exactly. And you and you. Everybody knows a little bit more than somebody else? Yes. And we learned everything we know from someone else. So you know, how are they going to know if we don't tell them?

we don't tell them.

**T** Tricia Emmons 1:01:49

Right applies to many things.

**A** Allison 1:01:50

It's not just the gospel, but everything, you know, we need to speak. We need to speak into people's lives, whether it lands or not, and just trust God with the results. Well, okay, I say that with a caveat. When it's wanted, like, there's a line you can cross especially, you know, you and I are learning this as mothers in law, fairly new, both of us to that role, and just making sure that we keep a healthy distance, you know, and that's a whole new thing to learn how to navigate. Yes, well,

**T** Tricia Emmons 1:02:23

any adult child really?

**A** Allison 1:02:24

Yeah, that's true. You know, yeah,

**T** Tricia Emmons 1:02:26

we are now on call advisors. Yes. I like that. Not in posers. Right. Yes. And I keep reminding my oldest that this is the first time I've ever had a 26 year old, so I don't know what I'm doing. Yeah, exactly. She was a lot more forgiving when she was nine months.

**A** Allison 1:02:48

Right? So funny. Always Learning, we're always learning. So in that vein, to the younger woman who's listening, whether she's a brand new bride, or maybe she's an in the trenches, Mama with kids all around, and soccer practice and ballet, and what would be a word of advice that you would give to someone coming behind you?

**T** Tricia Emmons 1:03:14

Nothing set in stone. We have do overs. Every morning, you wake up his mercies are new every morning. Your opportunities are new every morning, that when things aren't working, you don't have to keep doing them that way. And whether it's a task or the way you're relating, because if if we're so focused on a task than we aren't relating, but our kids can forgive, and we can try again. And my dishes really don't care. It's just like even a new dish detergent. Yeah, I'll try a

new one that did not work. And it's okay to say it doesn't work, I think not holding on to whatever it is that you're doing. And thinking that you're going to find a perfect way. Right. Just release that now.

A

Allison 1:04:08

Yeah, that's a good word. It's a good word. Well, thank you very much for sharing your homemaking story with us.

T

Tricia Emmons 1:04:16

You're welcome. It's been a pleasure. Same.

A

Allison 1:04:20

We hope you have enjoyed today's homemaker portrait of Tricia Emmons, I certainly enjoyed having this conversation with my friend of almost nine years, our kids have grown up together and made lots of memories. So it was really fun to sit with Tricia, and hear some stories that I had not heard before about her and her experience in the art of home. I loved her take on the art of home, that everyone is a critic, and the art has a value to those who made it and beauty is in the eye of the beholder. The fact that she notices the medium and the materials that the art is made out of and she applied that to her homemaking, and no And that that's going to be different for every single person. I just think that was a really great correlation to make between art and home. And her advice to younger women, Nothing's set in stone, we do have a do over because God's mercies are new, every single morning. And when things are not working out, you don't have to keep doing it the same way. Those are some wise words, my friend, be encouraged in your work homemaker, it has eternal value, and just keep showing up. That is all God asks of you to be faithful to what He has called you to do today. Thank you so much for listening. If you find value in what the art of home is doing to encourage homemakers all over the world, what do you give the show some love in one of the following ways. Share the show with someone you know who could use encouragement in their practice in the art of home rate or review us on your listening app of choice that helps people to know whether the art of home would be a good fit for them. And then finally, you can support us financially through a one time gift through buy me a coffee gifts can be given in the amount of one coffee, two coffees, or three coffees, and that would be 510, or \$15. Just go to buy me a coffee.com/the art of home, make sure that you're following us over on Instagram. That's how we mostly communicate with our audience. We post regularly over there, I do reels and lives maybe once a week or so. And they're usually related to the content that we've been producing that week. So you don't want to miss that. We have some really great conversations in our stories and on our post with all of our audience members. And that's where we love to connect with you guys. You can also hear from Us Weekly in our free newsletter. That's where you're going to find out everything that's happening on the art of home. We tell our newsletter audience first of new things that we're working on and what's going to be on the lineup for the next season coming up. Also, that's where I share a lot of things that I'm doing in my own practice at the art of home, as well as some of my favorite memories from the many, many years that I have been doing this job. I share recipes. I share all kinds of fun things you just never really know what's going to be in that newsletter. So make sure you subscribe, just go to

[the art of home podcast.com/subscribe](https://theartofhomepodcast.com/subscribe) And there's links down in the show notes to all of these things that I've mentioned. Well, that's it for this episode of The Art of home. We will be back next week with another homemaker portrait. Until that time, keep practicing it your art of making a home