

Homeschool CEO Podcast Episode 47: New to Homeschooling While Starting a New Business: Courage to Try New Things with Meghan Berger

32:28

SPEAKERS

Jen Myers, Meghan Berger

Meghan Berger 00:03

When I started my business mid-October, my new business, there were, I mean, I would homeschool maybe one to two times a week. It wasn't even five - close to five days a week. But it's because I was running an office and getting my business up and launched. And I just think that's the beauty of homeschooling. I've talked to a lot of other homeschool moms and they're like, "Yeah, that's what's great about it. It's like, you don't have to go on a specific schedule every single day, you can just roll with the punches."

Jen Myers 00:34

Welcome to the Homeschool CEO podcast, the podcast dedicated to entrepreneurs who want to successfully homeschool their kids while running a profitable business. In this podcast, we'll reveal the truth of what it really looks like behind the scenes of an entrepreneur who homeschools and how to make it all work. If you're an entrepreneur who currently homeschools or you want to start, you are in the right place, my friend. With 16 years experience combining entrepreneurship with homeschooling. I'm your host, Jen Myers, and this is the Homeschool CEO podcast.

Jen Myers 01:15

How do we as homeschool CEOs, get off of that struggle bus when we feel like the Homeschool CEO life is just not working? That is what today's episode is all about. Today, I'm excited to introduce you to my personal friend and powerhouse network marketer, Meghan Berger, as we talk about her first year of homeschooling. You see, 2020 brought a lot of new opportunities and challenges for Meghan and we are going to talk about how she is conquering each one of those one day at a time. This is definitely one of those stories that will inspire you on those hard days.

Jen Myers 01:52

But before we dive in, I want to share a quick love note from PR85 who took the time to review our podcast and I'm so incredibly thankful. PR85 said, "Yes, there are moms out there like me." First of all, I want to stop and say, "Did you have that feeling the first time you met us in the Homeschool CEO Community?" I know the first time I met another homeschool mom that also ran a business. You know, not a side hustle. That is what I thought too. PR85 goes on to say, "Jen made me realize there are other moms out there just like me who want to homeschool and run a business, not a side hustle. Thank you, Jen, for speaking life into Homeschool CEOs everywhere. Definitely recommend this podcast for anyone who is looking for their tribe."

Jen Myers 02:45

PR85, thank you so much for taking the time to review the podcast. And I am so incredibly thankful that you are part of our tribe. And another person in our tribe is, like I said today's podcast, Meghan Berger, and I'm so excited for you to meet her. So, let's dive in.

Jen Myers 03:04

Meghan, welcome to the show today. I'm so excited to have you here.

Meghan Berger 03:07

Thank you, Jen, I'm so excited to be here.

Jen Myers 03:11

All right. So, Meghan and I met in a mastermind over - was it last summer?

Meghan Berger 03:16

Yeah, yeah, I think it was last summer.

Jen Myers 03:17

Wow. Felt like ages ago. Holy cow. All right, tell my audience a little bit more about you.

Meghan Berger 03:23

Okay, so I just turned 30 years old in October, and I am a mom to four kiddos. I have two girls. They're seven and five. And then I have two boys who are two and one. I'm married to my high school sweetheart. We've been together for 14 years now. Kind of crazy to say that, which is like almost half of my lifetime. And we've been married for eight years. So, I'm also a registered nurse. I don't currently work as one. But I've been a nurse for about eight years now. And I also am in the network marketing industry. So, I have been in that industry for about five years now. Have seen some really, really big successes here. And just recently decided to take a huge leap of faith and leave my previous company where I was a top earner at and start all over with this Ground Floor company.

Jen Myers 04:23

Amazing. Amazing. And one of the reasons, Meg, that I wanted to have you on the podcast is because so often, in the Homeschool C - well actually just with mom entrepreneurs across the board - sometimes they look down on MLMs and think, "Oh, there's no way you can make money at that." But I'm like, "Actually, I have this incredible friend over here that is making money hand over fist." Like, let's talk about that. And you homeschool your kiddos.

Meghan Berger 04:48

Yeah.

Jen Myers 04:49

So, I want to go back to where you were. Actually, let's go back to where we met. Just, if you - just did last summer. You were at the top you - at that point you weren't homeschooling but you were at the top of your company. You were doing phenomenal. And how long did it take you to get there?

Meghan Berger 05:06

So, it took me four and a half years, but I became a six-figure earner in about two years there.

Jen Myers 05:14

Okay. So, you had financial success, you know, in the MLM company doing very, very well. But then life kind of turned crazy on you, because the pandemic hit, and your life changed quite a bit. So, take me back to where you were at that point. Like, what, what, tell me what happened during that summer, as we went into the fall, and COVID had hit and your whole world was changing?

Meghan Berger 05:41

Yeah, so honestly, just during all of the COVID times, actually, my business - last year was the best year in my business. And so, I couldn't be more grateful for that in the social selling aspect of things. But I just felt like something was missing. As we all know, last year was just a complete whirlwind. And when, you know, I was in my previous company and realizing that oh, my goodness, like, my kids are going to have to go back to school and wear masks full time and all of this, my husband and I started questioning, you know, "Do we send our kids back to school?" And I'm going to be very honest with you homeschooling was not on my radar. Like, it probably was the farthest thing that I ever wanted to do. Like, I was avoiding it like the plague. But I knew that we needed to stick, like strong and true to our values and do what was best for our family.

Meghan Berger 06:40

And so, in comes in, I had known you, Jen, from the summer. And honestly, you are the one who gave me the strength to be able to even take a look at what homeschooling may look like for our kiddos. And I think, I don't know, stop me if I'm going too far, Jen. But like, when I first started homeschooling, I think my expectations were so high, because, you know, you go from this public school system to where, you know, your kids are in there for seven to eight hours a day. And then, you're kind of like, "Oh, my goodness, like, am I, am I schooling them enough?" You know, realizing like when you start homeschooling, you're only homeschooling for like two hours a day, especially where my kiddos are at, because you know, they're in kindergarten and second grade. And so, you know, Jen, I have to just give you props, and give you all the credit for helping me and walking me through what it should look like and what my expectation should be around homeschooling. So yeah, I don't know how much further you want me to go into that.

Jen Myers 07:45

So yeah, let's talk about that. Because you're right, you and I spent quite a few times on the phone, talking it through. And I remember you crying saying, "I don't think I can do this and run my business." Because you - during this time, you also left your original business that you are at and started with another company. So, you're trying - you're building another business from the ground up. So, your expectations you said were you thought you had to scold him for seven hours a day?

Meghan Berger 08:11

Yeah...

Jen Myers 08:13

What is your reality look like now?

Meghan Berger 08:15

So, we homeschool, maybe max two hours a day, if that like - usually it's around an hour and a half. Honestly, since they're in kindergarten and second grade, I don't really focus on history a lot. I don't focus on science a lot. Right now, I'm focusing on mainly their math and language arts because I feel like those are the most two crucial subjects right now. And as you said, Jen, I am - I left you know, my, my previous company earning five figures a month that fully supported my family, taking a leap and starting all over with this new, new Ground Floor company. And I needed to find a way to be able to still give my kids something. You know, like the main life skills and being able to learn to read and write but also being able to focus a lot on my new business because let's all be real, like starting up a new business is not for the faint of heart. It's a lot of hard work, but I still wanted my kids to have the attention that they needed. And so yeah, it's been absolute chaos. There are days where I'm just like, you know, what I mentally cannot handle to school them. So, I don't school them. They can read books. We can bake something, incorporate some type of life skill in there on those days. We do that every day anyway, but just incorporating - making sure to incorporate a life skill in on those days that I can't physically sit down with them and school them.

Jen Myers 09:50

I love that you said that because that just gave all the other Homeschool CEOs permission to be like, "Yeah, I can't school this kid today", because their business is taking too much time, or there's a crisis they have to deal with. And sometimes life does not go as planned. And that's okay. Because guess what? Your kid has lots of years to learn everything they need to learn. And they don't have to learn it all today or this week or this month.

Meghan Berger 10:16

Yeah, yeah, exactly, and...

Jen Myers 10:18

And so, with that being said - yeah go ahead.

Meghan Berger 10:20

I was just gonna say, it's amazing to me how fast my girls are starting to learn, like being one-on-one, how quickly they're picking up on reading and writing, and just all of the things. Like, it's insane to me.

Jen Myers 10:36

Isn't that crazy? But that wasn't what your experience was during that first month of homeschooling. What do you think made the shift? What was that that changed between that first couple of months where you are really struggling to where you are now,

Meghan Berger 10:48

I think just having the expectation that they're going to learn. They're going to pick up even if you're not seeing results that day with your child, like reading - learning to read a word that day. They will pick up on it. We've been working - I've been working diligently with Madelyn, my five-year-old, to be able to read and I will - she read, like a whole entire short story today in record time, and that just was so fulfilling to me. But just having that expectation, and not putting the stress on myself for then to have like to succeed on my time. Like they're going to succeed on their own time.

Jen Myers 11:36

That is so good. All right. So, what about extended family? Does everybody support you homeschooling? Or have you had some pushback?

Meghan Berger 11:44

Yeah, so my mom really does not state her opinion. I'm pretty sure I could read her mind. But my mother-in-law, still to this day does not support us. She - I think it honestly might just be her generation. But she constantly like almost every time she sees us, she's like, "You know, your kids really need to be in school. They really need the social aspect of things. They need to be around other kids." And I kind of joke around and say, "Well, I mean, that's why I have four kids. They have social - they have social interaction." But all jokes aside, she has not been supportive of it. And she's made little comments to our kids, unfortunately, just around like, how they need to be in school. And so, which I don't care for, because then that's bringing them into the middle of it.

But yeah, she has not been supportive. But it's just one of those things that we've had to have a conversation with her and say, "Look like, these are our kids. And there are bigger reasons why we don't want our kids in the public school system. There are more concerns as to why we don't want our kids in the public school system." And since she does not have kids in the public school system right now, she is not aware of everything that is going on. And so, I just try to bless and release her because she - and just know that she just doesn't understand because of her lack of knowledge. And honestly, a lot of people don't understand homeschooling. And so, I mean, I wish more did because there's so much beauty in it. And my husband and I are finally to the point where we are on the same page that we will most likely never send our kids back to public schools.

Jen Myers 13:26

That's awesome. And something else, when you were talking about her being of a different generation, this is one thing that I ran into with my own parents, actually my own mother. I learned to say to her, "You know, school isn't like it was when you were younger. Neither are the jobs that are available after school." Back when our parents would have gone to school, it was to produce employees, factory workers. I mean, it was part of the Industrial Revolution. But the thing is, now our kids are graduating to jobs that don't even exist yet. Whatever Madelyn will do when she grows up, probably doesn't even exist right now. There's no way to teach it in a school setting. So, it's more important that we teach her how to learn, how to follow passion, how to research, critical thinking, how to do sales, and negotiate, and all of those things, those soft skills, because that's going to get her so much farther in life once she is out on her own.

Meghan Berger 14:22

Absolutely. Jen, I love that you brought that up because one of the biggest things that is huge in our household is personal development. I am huge on my kids learning something new every single day. But not only that, growing their mindset outside of the box, right? Nothing against like, I don't want to sit here and diss public schools because some people don't have an option, right? I'm so blessed to be able to have that option to be able to homeschool my kids. But one thing that I've noticed is, you know, since my girls have been out of school, they're learning to think for themselves.

My seven-year-old when she was going into kindergarten, the first weekend said, "Mom, so-and-so told me, they didn't like my outfit today. So, I don't ever want to wear that outfit again." And that is not what I want my kids to be surrounded by. I want my kids growing up knowing that they can be themselves and be loved for who they are, and not have any outside voice to - to determine who they become, right? And I feel like that is, I mean, we're always going to have outside voices and outside opinions, but I feel like, constantly being surrounded by that in the school system can definitely impact the way that you grow. And the way that you - just the outlook that you have on things and being able to live up to who you truly were meant to be.

Jen Myers 15:54

Oh, absolutely. And I think even as entrepreneurs, we understand that at another level, because we understand that what is it - our net worth is equal to our network. You know, those people that are the five closest to us really impact where we go in life. And I remember when I really understood that even for my kids, I realized who am I setting - and it's not that I kept my kids in a bubble because they interacted with all different ages, all different, you know. I'm huge - anybody who's in Homeschool CEO for more than I don't know, 30 seconds - knows my stance on diversity, because I'm super vocal about it. And so, we expose our kids to all different religions, all different skin colors, all different lifestyle choices, all different things on purpose, because we wanted them to understand the melting pot that they were going to walk into one day. But at the same time, I was really protective of who that inner circle was, who will you're letting feed into our kids on a daily and weekly basis, because I realized, similar to your daughter, that trauma that happens before the age of 10, where somebody doesn't like what you're wearing, it can damage a child and you know, at home, we can undo that we can work against that for sure. But as entrepreneurs as adults, we're so conscious about who we're surrounding ourselves with, we need to be equally conscious about what we're intentional about who we're surrounding our kids with.

Meghan Berger 17:17

Yeah, absolutely. You know, again, I love that you brought that up, because it brings me back to a childhood memory that I have - actually multiple, on how I never like, growing up surrounded myself with the drivers and the doers. I always, I honestly was a follower. And it wasn't until I joined the network marketing industry that I started to find who I truly was. And because of the people that I was surrounding myself with, they were bringing it out in me. And so obviously, you're going to come across people who, you know, want to try and tear you down and do all the things but teaching my children that that's who they want to steer away from. And they want to surround themselves, like you said with those top five people that want to see them do better and want to see them succeed is so crucial. And so, that's one of the things that we work on daily, my daughters have a gratitude journal that they do, too. And then of course, focusing on life skills and affirmations. And honestly,

those things are more important to me preparing them for the outside world, than, "Okay, let's sit down and do a history lesson of history that happened, how many years ago that, I mean, you're never going to need for.."

Jen Myers 18:40

Well.... And you know what I have really realized in the last year, as different things have happened in our society? A lot of our history books are very biased. It's not even what happened. And that's really hard for me to fill - I mean, still, even to this day, as I process that to understand. How can you look in three different history books? And they all say a little different thing from a different perspective.

Meghan Berger 19:05

Yeah. Yeah.

Jen Myers 19:07

That's a challenge. So, you know, the way that we solved it is we read lots of living books, you know, biographies, and we focused more on that and characters, and talking about what made these past leaders great, or not so great. And talking about those qualities. And assuming that over a date, or, you know, I wanted my kids to know how things happen. But I always wanted it to be in the lens as unbiased as possible. Even if that made one side look bad, or the other side look bad. It didn't matter to me if it was the honest truth. Or we talked about, you know, how could this have been interpreted by the other side? You know, so often we're teaching our kids to date. You know, I'm not saying "we" but you know, in general, like our traditional schooling system, whether it's homeschooling or you know, public school. It doesn't matter. Traditional schooling would teach you a bunch of data without saying, "How could the other side have perceived this differently? You know, what are the different aspects here?" And then that goes back to, you know, like teaching our kids to think for themselves and how important that is.

Meghan Berger 20:06

Yeah, absolutely. And that's one thing that I'm still learning to do is to be asking my kids more questions so that they can learn to critically think on their own. That's been a little bit of a challenge for me, because, you know, as an entrepreneur, sometimes, you know, we have in the back of our head, like all the scroll of items that we have to get done in a day's time, right? So, you're like, "Okay, so how can I get through this session." But I also try to step back and slow down so that I enjoy it, because I truly do enjoy homeschooling, it's like my one-on-one time, time with them. And I just love watching them be able to pick up on things so quickly, that I just have a feeling they would have never picked up on that as quickly like, as quickly as if they were in, you know, public schools. I - when I started my business, mid-October, my new business, there were I mean, I would homeschool maybe one to two times a week. It wasn't even five - close to five days a week. But it's because I was running an office and getting my business up and launched. And I just think that's the beauty of homeschooling. I've talked to a lot of other homeschool moms and they're like, "Yeah, that's, that's what's great about it. It's like, you don't have to go on a specific schedule every single day. You can just roll with the punches."

Jen Myers 21:31

Absolutely. One thing I do want to touch on is what did your schedule look like on average day? I know because you still you're still in the baby stages of this new business. You're homeschooling with four littles. You know, the oldest one is seven or eight?

Meghan Berger 21:46

Yep, seven.

Jen Myers 21:47

Okay. I knew she was pretty little yet. So, what does an average day for you look like?

Meghan Berger 21:52

Yeah. So average day, I would say I always get up early before the kiddos wake up. I get my workout in. Fitness is extremely important to me. So, I get my workout and get my shower and get ready. And then kiddos are usually waking up about that time. So, I get them breakfast, get them dressed and ready for the day. Sometimes the girls are like, "Can we stay in our pajamas today?" And I'm like, "Yeah, sure, why not." Because they usually get themselves dressed. But depending on what they decide to do, then we'll start homeschooling usually around eight o'clock, because I like to - I feel like their, their minds are way less, you know, combobulated in the morning, and not as - they're not as distracted in the morning. So, we've had more success with, with homeschooling in the morning.

Meghan Berger 22:41

So, we homeschool, usually from like eight to 930 or 10, depending on if they need a break in between lessons. And then after that, I take time for like the next hour to return messages for my business. Reach out to people about taking a look at this business and what it could do for their family. After that it's lunch. I have like a pretty structured day. I don't know if you wanted me to go through my whole day. But around 11 o'clock, we eat lunch together, get them cleaned up. And usually about noon, the baby goes down for a nap. And then, the others and I - we play a game or do something along those lines. And then, one o'clock rolls around and I return more messages and do my reach outs. And then, usually around two or three o'clock I take one to two business calls.

Meghan Berger 23:31

And right around then my husband's usually coming home from work. He's also self-employed. So, he's usually coming home from work around that time. And then I come down to my office, usually from about 330 to 530 and work my business some more while he preps dinner and all of that. And then, we do our dinner and bedtime routines. And then, usually after we get the kiddos down for bed around 730, I'll come back down to my office for a couple of more hours. It just really depends. Sometimes that schedule is not - obviously when you have kids, nothing is predictable. But we try to stay on that schedule. And then, I always shut off my phone and everything by 10pm. No later because I am very - sleep is very important to me as well. And so yeah, that's - that's pretty much my day.

Jen Myers 24:20

I love that you said that as you're going through your day, because you said how many hours - that you're working kind of in the pockets of time. It's two hours here, two hours there, two hours there for your business.

Because so often women will say - even homeschool CEOs be like, "Yeah, I only work three hours a day or two hours a day." But that's not really realistic, especially when you're building a new business. So, thank you for being honest there. You know, it's kind of like I heard this quote a while back. And it was from a mom who's also an entrepreneur, who is now homeschooling her kids but didn't homeschool them while she was building her business. But she makes, I'm thinking like 13 million a year. She's past the 10 million a year mark and she said, "Balance from a mom who is on the other end of the business spectrum is an illusion, because they're speaking to you after they've already spent 5, 6, 7, 8 years building their systems so that they could have the freedom and flexibility and that balance later - a decade later, not necessarily in that first year of business.

Meghan Berger 25:21

Yeah, correct. So, I am very open and honest with people when I tell them what kind of time goes into building a successful business, because I, number one, don't want to waste their time. But I also don't want to waste my own time when I'm leading someone, right, and when I'm coaching them. And so, you know, I have been a six-figure earner within the network marketing industry. But I will tell you that that has consisted of late nights, early mornings, many, many, many hours. And that took me two, two and a half years to build to just be a six-figure earner. But I obviously wanted more than that, right? I wanted to continue to build and build and build. And so, you're right, if you're wanting to build a massive business like that into the millions, you're looking at years and years and years of pouring in time.

Meghan Berger 26:14

Think of it though, as if you were to go and start a brick-and-mortar business. I mean, you wouldn't just open a Chick-fil-A and then work two hours there. There's no way it would survive. Like, you have to think of all the backend things you have to do such as, you know, prospecting and getting the word out about your business. And then when people come in, training them on how to do exactly what you're doing, so that you can have a sustainable business, just like the gal you just mentioned. But yeah, I think, honestly, because I kind of wanted to throw this out there with MLM businesses and network marketing. I think people don't take it as seriously, because there's such a low investment cost. There's such a low - low investment to get started, right?

Meghan Berger 26:58

For me, it's - it's around \$200 to start in my business. And that includes your product and everything. And so, I feel like people don't look at this as an actual business sometimes because of the low investment that, that there is. And I'm here to tell you that network marketers - network marketing - is not for the faint of heart. These are some of the most grit, I want to say "grittiest" but that's not really a word. But these people have so much grit to build these big businesses through network marketing, because you don't have a boss over your shoulder telling you when you have to work, what you need to do. You're on - you're not technically on your own, because you do have a community of mentors, if you're in a great business with awesome mentorship. But yeah, I - that I kind of trailed off, but like back to that, you have to put in the time. And sometimes you just have to pivot. Kind of like what we talked about Jen with, you know, homeschooling one day a week or not homeschooling for a full week or whatever it may look like to be able to support your family and get your business off the ground and running.

Jen Myers 28:03

Well and I think that too - why entrepreneurs make such incredible homeschoolers because we understand the pivot, and that pivot creates clarity, and that we don't have to have it all figured out. And we're willing to put in the time and the energy and the passion into our kids. And our business.

Meghan Berger 28:20

Absolutely. Yeah,

Jen Myers 28:22

And that's what makes us Homeschool CEOs.

Meghan Berger 28:23

Exactly. Yes. And I just love - I mean, people tell me all the time, I don't know how you do what you do, but it's all about the pivot. It's all about...

Jen Myers 28:35

Making a decision.

Meghan Berger 28:36

Yeah. And figuring out what works for you. What works for me doesn't work for this person, or this person or this person. All - you have to figure out - and I'm, I tell you what, I don't know how many times I reached out to Jen. And I'm like, "Help. That's not working. We need to figure out something else." Like, I had to trial and error for a little while to figure out what worked for us.

Jen Myers 28:58

Yeah, yeah, I was. Yeah. And I was right there with you. And it was such an honor to walk beside you during that transition. And now to see where you are and now to see your face light up when you talk about homeschooling. Because y'all at the beginning it was not lighting up when we were talking about homeschooling. You're laughing now, man, but you - it was not lighting up when you talked about homeschooling. It was tears when you talk about homeschooling.

Meghan Berger 29:18

Yeah, no, it was. But I absolutely love it.

Jen Myers 29:21

Oh, I'm so glad to hear you say that. All right. So, what would you say to another Homeschool CEO who is in that struggle? Where you were at the beginning? If you are sitting down for a cup of coffee with her, what would you say to that mom?

Meghan Berger 29:34

Well, I would probably first say don't homeschool or do anything for a couple of weeks. Like really, really let yourself come, come down from that hiatus of stressing about it. That's exactly what I had to do. And I had to regroup myself and tell myself that no matter what, my kids were going to succeed. No matter how many days

or hours that I put in to this day, they were still going to succeed. So, I had to set that expectation. But honestly, it's all about taking the pressure off of yourself. And just going with the flow, and leaning on other people. Join homeschool moms CEO groups, like Jen has - her amazing Facebook group. Join the supportive community that understands what you're going through, so that you can lean on them on those days where you're like, "I have no idea what I'm doing." That's the advice I would give and just take that pressure off of you because you are doing so much right now. And no matter what, it's all going to work out anyway.

Jen Myers 30:40

Awesome. I agree. 100%. All right, Meg, tell our audience where they can connect with you online.

Meghan Berger 30:45

Yeah, so you can connect with me on Facebook at - my name is Meghan Berger. So, it's m e g, h, a n. And then last name is Berger. B as in boy, e, r, g, e, r. And then, on Instagram - love Instagram - my handle is meg.berger. So, you can connect with me on any - either, either platform.

Jen Myers 31:10

Perfect. Thank you so much for joining us today. This has been fantastic.

Meghan Berger 31:13

Thank you so much, Jen. It was an honor.

Jen Myers 31:16

Wasn't it refreshing to hear how honest Meghan was about those hard days at the beginning? You know, those days when things weren't working. One of the core values in Homeschool CEO Community is that we are authentic and transparent. If you are having a rough time, either in business or homeschooling, let's talk about it. Send me a message on Instagram and let me know how I can support you this week because we are all in this together. Talk to you soon.

Jen Myers 31:53

Hey, friend, I just want to say thank you so much for tuning in today. If you loved what you heard, please be sure to head over to Apple Podcasts and leave a review. I really appreciate it. And for more information on connecting with other homeschool CEOs just like you, be sure to check out our website at www.homeschoolceo.com. And as always Team Homeschool CEO, you ladies inspire me. Thank you for always showing others what is possible. You guys are awesome. See you next week.