

## Homeschool CEO Podcast Episode 54:

### Chronic Illness, Homeschooling, and Entrepreneurship: Finding Success with Rhythm, Routines, and Harmony with Ally Adair-Chung

25:15

#### **SPEAKERS**

Jen Myers, Ally Adair-Chung

#### **Ally Adair-Chung 00:02**

So, I had to get to a really, really tough place where I could not take care of myself and my kids before I did this. But I really hope if anyone is listening and you are struggling with chronic illness, please don't do that. Don't do what I did. Simplify to start. Simplify to start and honor what your body needs because you have so much more fun with those amazing kids when you do.

#### **Jen Myers 00:22**

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 01:05**

Welcome back to another episode of the Homeschool CEO podcast. If you deal with chronic illness, is it possible to successfully homeschool and run a business? Today's guest, Ally Adair - Chung, says "absolutely." Ally is a second-generation homeschooler, homeschooling coach, curriculum and child development junkie, and mom to three incredible kids. She holds multiple teaching credentials and has supported hundreds of families on their homeschooling journey. She also deals with chronic illness every single day, both for herself and her son. Yet Ally is still building her business and homeschooling and today she's sharing all of the secrets on how she makes all of that happen. So, let's dive in.

#### **Jen Myers 01:55**

Alright. Ally, welcome to the podcast today.

#### **Ally Adair-Chung 01:59**

Thank you so much. I'm so excited to be here.

**Jen Myers 02:01**

Alright, before we let you meet Ally, y'all I have to tell you something really special about her. So, Ally and I - I'm not - we met through the Homeschool CEO community. But we met because something about her Instagram bio made me think, "Oh, this is a girl that I can refer my struggling homeschool moms to." Because that is not my wheelhouse. I am the business side of it more so than the homeschool. And I'll never forget the day Miss Leah, from our community was just like, "What do I do?" And she was just, she was a new homeschool CEO, new to homeschooling, struggling. And I said, "I know exactly who you need to meet." And I connected the two of you and she said, "Thank you so much. Ally is magical. She is my savior."

**Ally Adair-Chung 02:51**

I'm - thank you for connecting us. I love, I love supporting mamas in that situation, that overwhelmed state.

**Jen Myers 02:57**

Yes, where you're like just, you're ready to throw in the towel. And you're like, "Why? Why did - this is not what I signed up for."

**Ally Adair-Chung 03:03**

Yeah, there's too many threads to pull to get started. You don't know where to go. And it's like, it just stops you in your tracks.

**Jen Myers 03:09**

Absolutely. Absolutely. Alright. So, Ally, with that introduction, tell our audience a little bit more about you, who you serve, and how you help them.

**Ally Adair-Chung 03:16**

Awesome. So, I run Conscious Family Project and this whole business came out of I've spent the last decade working with homeschoolers through independent study charters and privately and then just by friends asking me to come speak at things or help support them along the way. But as the world shifted with COVID and so many families were finding themselves in a position where it just wasn't working for them and they needed a solution, I realized that I needed to get in a position where I could be supportive of more people more quickly. And so, I developed Conscious Family Project and I offer courses and coaching. And my big thing is helping families create a homeschool that serves them and their unique children and their unique dreams and mission for their family. There's definitely not one way to homeschool.

**Ally Adair-Chung 04:04**

So, that's what I do. That's what I love to do. And I'm a second-generation homeschooler myself. I started homeschooling when I was in high school because I had this opportunity to travel as a singer. And my parents were terrified. They were absolutely terrified to homeschool me. They even went to my high school and they're like, "Will you please give us work to have her do while you....?" And they ended up going and buying the textbooks that the high school was using and they're like, "You're going to go right back. You're going to go right back." It took about two months before they brought all of my siblings out. And they're like, "What? This is

amazing." My mom went to school and got her credential, got her bachelor's and credential so she could support homeschoolers through the charters in our area. It completely transformed our family.

**Jen Myers** 04:45

I did not - I knew some of that story but I didn't know all of it. So, that is amazing. What - just what away to impact your family. You know, it's not wasn't just you. It was everybody that got to experience that benefit. And I know you're in California, which is a little different for homeschool families because you guys have the charter schools and the hybrid schools. You have different things, right?

**Ally Adair-Chung** 05:06

Yeah, we have a - we have three different options. But the charter schools, it's like you're doing school from home. You have choice in the curriculum and things like that. But you have a credential teacher that's overseeing you.

**Jen Myers** 05:18

Gotcha. Okay. We have something a little bit similar in Iowa. But nothing - you know, everybody says it's so hard to homeschool in California. But I'm like, "Actually, they have some really unique fun options. So, I don't think it's as bad as people assume it is before they really understand them.

**Ally Adair-Chung** 05:32

Yeah.

**Jen Myers** 05:32

Alright. So, Allie, I know that your journey with homeschooling and running a business hasn't always been easy health-wise, can you tell us a little bit more about that?

**Ally Adair-Chung** 05:41

Yeah. So, I as a kid, I went through bouts, where I would get really sick for long periods of time. I had chronic ear infections. I had trouble eating. I had all kinds of issues growing up, but we didn't know what was going on. And then I would go through phases where I was completely fine. I was traveling as a singer and dancer, but then I got to college and all of my symptoms got a lot worse. And it took us a few years but we found out that I have a chronic degenerative genetic disease that causes me a lot of pain. And it can - I go through flares, where my body just doesn't work the way that I need it to, the way I want it to.

**Ally Adair-Chung** 06:17

And it's one of those things where I've always been a person where like, you can fight through it, you mentally - mental, weaken mental power, we can get through it. But sometimes my body just won't. And it's taken me a long time to get to a place where I accept that and can work with it. But it's definitely something that has made me have to be more creative and have more systems in place so that I can have this life that I've always wanted of homeschooling, and serving families and, you know, living a different way. So ....

**Jen Myers** 06:46

I feel like so many families that deal with chronic illness, whether it's for themselves or for a child, they feel like, you know, I can't possibly homeschool and run a business. I mean, my health isn't gonna hold up to that. Can you kind of share a little bit about how you're making that all work for you and your family?

**Ally Adair-Chung 07:02**

Yeah, so one of the things I do is we use rhythms in our family in a big way. So, a rhythm, it actually comes from this Waldorf - from the Waldorf homeschooling philosophy, but I've kind of taken it and run with it in a much bigger way. So, the idea is that you aren't tied to time. You're not scheduling to the minute where we all end up behind, right? So, if I wake up in the morning and my body is hurting, and I'm going to have to go a lot slower, or I'm going to have to change things up so I can get more rest, it doesn't mean that we're going to get so behind on our schedule we'll never catch up. And then we get to the end of the day, and we didn't get anything done. So, I use rhythms where we know we wake up. We have like our morning routine. The kids have free play, which if you know they need more free play, mom can get rest in, we can do that. We can just kind of figure that out throughout the day. And then we have the time we work. It's a flow that the kids know intrinsically. We've - we've stuck with it so long they know what's going to happen next. So, it's - I'm not fighting for transitions. I'm not having to drive the bus all the time. So, all of that mental energy and that energy that you have to use pulling people through the day is eliminated.

**Ally Adair-Chung 08:13**

And then I have our meals are on rhythms. Our chores and taking care of the house and things, I - my business is set on rhythms. This is the day that I do, you know, not even the day, it's not assigned to the day, but I have the system. I work on my social media, then I work on this. And so, when I have pockets, I just move to the next thing. Having those in place has been really helpful so things get done, but they're not so tied to a time or space so that I can prioritize what my body needs. And what my kids - I have one child who has health and developmental issues and when stuff comes up, that's the priority. Because I know that if I don't prioritize what my body needs and what his body needs, then nothing else is going to get accomplished anyway.

**Ally Adair-Chung 08:56**

So, and I also think of this when - when my kids are watching me have to take a break or, you know, needing to do school on the couch that day so that I can be resting or switching up what we're doing in school that day. So, it's a little less mental fatigue for mom. They're also seeing that I am prioritizing myself and that I'm taking care of myself and that that's okay to do. And I look at my daughter and I think like, if she ended up in my position, I would never want her to carry the guilt that we so often put on ourselves, especially if we have chronic illness or we're doing multiple things. Because you've got that mom guilt of running a business and doing homeschooling, right? I don't want her to carry that. I don't want her to, to - I want her to honor who she is and what she needs. And so, yes, it's a mental battle sometimes for myself, but I simplify it as much as I possibly can with the rhythms. And then I just have to prioritize honoring what I need in that moment. And if I start having that mom guilt pop up, I just take a breath and go I want my daughter to do this for herself.

**Jen Myers 09:58**

Yes, and we've talked about that before in Clubhouse too that we are setting the example. And even if there are days when we don't want to take it and do it for ourselves, do it for your little one that's watching you. You

know, if even if you're thinking it doesn't matter if I stop and prioritize self-care, but yet you want your child to, so if we need to set that example first. So, I love that you took the time to point that out, because it's so important. You know, their follow - they follow what we do, not just what we say.

**Ally Adair-Chung 10:26**

Exactly. Modeling is far more important than any speech we can give them.

**Ally Adair-Chung 10:30**

Mm hmm. So, so true. So, tell me what does rhythms in your meal times look like?

**Ally Adair-Chung 10:36**

So, for us, I like - Mondays we do a specific meal. Tuesdays we do have specific meal. And because we have - so like we have taco Tuesdays, and we have, you know, things like that. And I have a very simple meal plan that is set out for our week. And because we know what's coming, and we do like, you know, we spice it up and change things up. Like we have burgers on Monday. We also have a lot of allergies in our home. So, burgers look a little different for us than they do for other people. But we have burgers on Monday. And like, you know, sometimes we make them with sriracha. You know, I mean, like we make it fun, but I know what's happening so, that simplifies my grocery list. I'm not having to constantly - that's basically anything I can do to take more mental energy off of me or physical energy, like taking that pressure off, I do and knowing what the meals are going to be each day, then I know if I've got a little extra energy one day, I can start prepping something for the next day. I don't have to worry about the grocery list. I don't have to worry about kids who aren't going to eat something or want another meal, things like that. It's just simplifying. And doing that, we do it with our laundry, like we do it with everything. There is just a system and a feel in place so everyone can jump in. Everyone knows what's going to happen. And it's just all about being simple.

**Jen Myers 11:54**

So good. So, have you always been this way? Or was there something along the lines that made you say, "You know what? We need to simplify."

**Ally Adair-Chung 12:02**

Definitely. So, when my son was, so when my first son was born - I was never supposed to have children and all of that stuff. So, I went, you know, way over the top, and like, I'm going to be this - this image I had in my mind of the perfect mom, right? I'm going to do absolutely everything. And I got to a point where I was so depleted and so exhausted and in so much pain that I actually couldn't even snap or unsnap his onesies. Like I physically couldn't do it. And I was going to - had to start going to physical therapy to get back to the point where - so I was having to snap his onesies in a way where I could use like leverage to open them. Like I got to that place I know is like well, not only is this not sustainable, but I'm not connecting with my son the way this precious, amazing guy, who I never thought I'd get to spend my life with and like, you know? And my poor husband would come home and it was just, I was so done that I missed him too. I couldn't connect with it. I needed to rest. I had - I was just done. I was completely depleted.

**Ally Adair-Chung 13:13**

And I did this a couple times where it got really bad. And I just, you know, pulled up from my bootstraps and push through and push through. And finally, after my second daughter was born and my son got his diagnosis and I had done all this bootstrapping up, I realized that it was over. There was no more bootstrap. There was nothing else I could pull from. And I couldn't get through the days. I was having to, you know, holding them both, nursing them both. It was just crazy. And I was like, that's it, I have to stop. I have to stop. We have to stop. And there is a way to figure this out. And I, at the time was nerding out over all the homeschooling stuff for my own kids. And I'm like, we were using the rhythm idea to do our art and our baking and all this stuff. And I'm like, you know what, this works so well. Coz everyone knows what's going to happen. I don't have to think about it. And so, I was like, that's it, we're gonna do this for everything. Then my husband can jump in and take care of stuff. You know, if my parents come, they can help. The kids can take care of more things and help.

**Ally Adair-Chung 14:07**

So, I had to get to a really, really tough place where I could not take care of myself and my kids before I did this. But I really hope if anyone is listening and you are struggling with chronic illness, please don't do that. Don't do what I did. Simplify to start. Simplify to starting to honor what your body needs because you have so much more fun with those amazing kids when you do.

**Jen Myers 14:27**

Such good advice. And honestly, whether we're dealing with a chronic illness or not, that's good advice for everybody. You know, we don't have to have this over complicated supermom complex that we have to do all the things. You know, we just had a training just yesterday in the Homeschool CEO Society that I know you attended, Ally, where we were talking about outsourcing and we - this idea in Western cultures that we have to do it all in order to be a good mom or be a good business owner - where on earth did that even come from?

**Ally Adair-Chung 15:00**

I don't know, but it is toxic. It is so toxic. Well, I noticed while we were listening to that incredible training, I noticed even I had thoughts come up. So, even though I firmly believe in that, I had thoughts pop up, like, "Well, then how are my kids gonna learn how to take care of things? And what if I don't teach them well enough?" And then I thought through that, and I was like, this is kind of one of those things where it's like, you never see a college student without a pacifier. Or like, with a pacifier, right? People will say, like, you got to force the pacifier out, you got to do this. But you know, it happens. There are things that happen naturally. It's not, you know, if we don't force our kids to do the dishes every day, it doesn't mean they're not going to ever be capable of doing dishes. But it is interesting how deeply ingrained these ideas are and how they pop up. And it always goes to that said, I'm not going to be doing enough. I'm going to be failing them in some way, when in reality, if we can stay connected with our kids, and honor who we are and who they are, there's really not much else you can do to help them be successful in life. So, I don't know. It was so interesting to me, though, that I had those thoughts coming up, even though at the same time I was like, "Yes, yes, you're right." And then it was like those little cultural things that are in your head.

**Jen Myers 16:14**

I had the same thoughts. I remember thinking, "Well, what if I raise my child to be lazy? You know, what if they just sit around and they become a worthless part of society and they don't contribute and they just expect

everybody to wait on them hand and foot?" And then I thought, "Well, wait a minute. I'm not setting the example of just sitting around doing nothing. I'm working. Like I'm doing things." And yet, there's a whole bunch of mind shifts that happened to that. So, kind of going back to what we're talking about homeschooling with chronic illness, I think that's probably something that we need to give our moms permission for, to ask for help. And to say, no, that we don't have to do all of the things. I mean, if you are running a business and you're homeschooling and you're dealing with health concerns - I'm getting ready to go through a health concern. Actually, by the time this podcast airs, I'll be on break probably a little bit from the podcast, recovering from a health situation that I had, that I had to stop and deal with. And I had to realize, you know, sometimes in life, we have to put our health as a priority, whether it's our mental health, whether it's our physical health. And that's 100% okay.

**Ally Adair-Chung 17:21**

And your kids are not going to suffer because of it. I think that's one of the things that always pops up. If I don't do all of the science experiments and all of the history projects and read it, you know, and we do math and reading, if we don't do all of that every day, that my kids aren't getting enough out of homeschooling. I feel like that's one of those mindset shifts too. There is so much more to be gained than just those things. Those things are nice-to-haves, but they're not must-haves and simplifying your homeschool, and using, you know, Mystery Doug on YouTube for science for a week while you need to rest. It's incredible to me what my kids come up with.

**Ally Adair-Chung 18:00**

I also had a hyperemesis pregnancy this last time and literally had to keep like air dry clay and things under the bathroom sink. And that's what my kids did while I was like puking my guts out for months and months on end. Crazy. But you know what? My kids came out of that time, and they're not behind. They're not missing things. They learned so much more about empathy, understanding. They got so creative, and they love their little brother so much. Seeing them care for him just shows me how much they learned during that time. And yeah, we did more podcasts and you know, more YouTube learning and things like that during that time. But you have to let go of the guilt for that. It's still growth. It's still becoming human. It's still, you're still doing so much. So, if you need to get - cut back for a while or do things simply, there's nothing wrong with that.

**Jen Myers 18:52**

And one thing that you said to that I caught was kids are always learning.

**Ally Adair-Chung 18:56**

Yes.

**Jen Myers 18:57**

Always. You know, I share the story. 14 years ago, when my husband broke his back. Actually, we're just talking out about it before we hit record on the podcast. For nine months, nine long months. And in case you were wondering nine months of a husband in a hospital bed, not walking, not knowing if he would ever walk again, going to physical therapy three times a week, trying to run a business and homeschool four children under the age of 10. Seems was like 55 years. I mean, it just went on and on. But the point is there wasn't a lot of formal schooling happening because I didn't have the bandwidth. I was trying to run a business and keep the, you

know, keep the house payment paid and, and the lights on and food on the table. But, you know, now I'm on the other end of that 14 years later, and three of them are graduated. And they don't have gaps. Like, you know what? I don't look at them and think, "Oh, they missed an entire year of school. They didn't learn one thing." Even though we didn't really do - I didn't do a science experiment that you're. I'm sure we didn't learn anything about history. We might have done basic math and reading. That was probably the extent of that school year. But they learned, like you said, they learned so much about empathy and the ability they - that of the year that I really learned to run our house like a CEO when I learned how to delegate the chores and to realize 80% done by somebody else was better than 100% done by me.

**Ally Adair-Chung 20:22**

Absolutely. Absolutely. And they get so much. I know, kids fight chores in the beginning, but they get so much out of having that responsibility, and authentically contributing to a family. It's amazing to see what happens when kids have that opportunity.

**Jen Myers 20:39**

I agree 100%. Alright, Ally, what would you say to a mom who right now is looking at her life going, "I just don't know if I can do this. Like I'm already running a business and we're trying to homeschool, but my health is right now kind of running the show. And I feel like a failure. Like I'm failing my kids and failing my family and failing my business." What would you say to her?

**Ally Adair-Chung 21:01**

So, I'm going to start with a kind of a cheesy thing, but failure is an opportunity. There is no failure in the term that we use it as where we make it a part, make it a part of our identity. Like we say that it says something about who we are, because it doesn't. It says something that there's something to learn or a place to grow in our circumstance. It has nothing to do with who we are. So, first thing is that you're not failing the way you think you are. And that that failure is time to step back and assess.

**Ally Adair-Chung 21:31**

So, that means if everything is going wonky and your health is really in a bad place right now, stop homeschooling for a minute. Just stop. Step back and see what's working, how much energy, you know, things are taking and look for shortcuts. Look for simpler ways to make things work. There is nothing wrong with using Outschool classes or, you know, using Mystery Doug, using - there's so many amazing resources that didn't exist when I was being homeschooled. There is nothing wrong, mama, with, with taking advantage of those incredible resources available to you. And putting your primary focus on your health, your relate - and your relationship with your kids. If those two things are strong, any other tools that you use are all icing. So, you're not failing. There's lots of tools use them.

**Jen Myers 22:21**

So good. Thank you so much. Alright, Ally, where can our audience connect with you?

**Ally Adair-Chung 22:28**



So, the fastest way to get me is on Instagram, @consciousfamilyproject. You can also find me on my website at allyadair.com. And I've got some, I've got some really great courses and things coming up soon. So, make sure you check those out.

**Jen Myers 22:41**

Okay, and those should all be live by the time that this episode airs. So, be sure to give me the links and we will link all of those up in the show notes.

**Ally Adair-Chung 22:48**

Perfect.

**Jen Myers 22:49**

She has Homeschool Like a Pro. I know you've got a bunch of them coming down the pipeline, right?

**Ally Adair-Chung 22:53**

Yeah, including one on rhythms. I have a course just on rhythms and how you can get that sorted. So, if you need that, I've got it for you.

**Jen Myers 23:00**

Ooh, I know you're gonna have people from the Homeschool CEO community sign up for that one. Alright. Perfect. Thank you so much, Ally. This has been fantastic.

**Ally Adair-Chung 23:08**

Thank you for having me. I really appreciate you and all that you do for us, our community.

**Jen Myers 23:13**

Thank you. Oh, and before we end, I want to tell everybody, this is important. Ally, you must let me forget. If you want to talk to me and Ally, we are together, also with Candace Dugger, every single Thursday night at 9pm Eastern Time, 8pm Central, 6pm Pacific Standard. All three of us are in different time zones. We have a different guest mod every single week on Clubhouse. And we are talking and answering all the things about running a business, homeschooling. We talk about leadership. I know we have one coming up on special needs. We've done finances. We've done all different things. Everything. We love it. So, if you want to join us more and you want to join us live, that is where you get to hang out with us every single Thursday night.

**Ally Adair-Chung 23:54**

We would love to have you.

**Jen Myers 23:56**

Absolutely. See you next week.

**Jen Myers 23:59**

Friend, do you deal with chronic illness? If so, you are not alone. In fact, there are quite a few moms within our community that are also successfully juggling entrepreneurship and homeschooling, right alongside chronic illness. You can make this work and you can do it well. If you know anyone who would be inspired by Ally's story of simple rhythms and homeschooling methods, would you consider sharing this episode with them? Ally might be just the encouragement that your friend needs to keep going. Alright, friend. That is a wrap for today. And I will see you next week. Bye.

**Jen Myers** 24:40

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 Podcast 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](http://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.