



Simple, with Tsh Oxenreider

Episode 195

thesimpleshow.com

Segment One

Tsh: [00:01](#) This is Simple; I'm Tsh Oxenreider.

[00:12](#) Hey friends! In this episode I am chatting with contributing writer Kathrine Willis Pershey, where as always we're talking about what we wrote this week. Katherine wrote about friendships, why they're important to us, why we need to take the time for them even when life is busy, small ways we can cultivate them. We're talking using our phones to send Amy Poehler gifs people, and how all the Internet for all its foibles can also be a really beautiful breeding ground for cultivating some of our best friends. We also park a bit on the legacy of Rachel Held Evans and how our collective mourning of our loss of her has shown us blatantly and beautifully how we really can know each other through the Internet. We are all better because of her life and she is indeed sorely missed. This week, I wrote a good list. It's been quite awhile since I personally shared for little things currently making everything better. If you're new here, it's a series we visit from time to time, both here on the podcast and on the blog. So in this conversation I'm talking more about the little habits that are helping me stay afloat during the crazy busyness of May because is it may just nuts you guys? These tiny little habits serve as anchors in our chaotic days, which is all the more reason we should hold tight to them. And then in the third segment I talk with my friend Stephanie Langford, who is currently still in Guatemala as we answer once more at one of your travel questions. Okay, let's get right into it. Here's Katherine starting us off with the vital importance of friendships.

Katherine, you wrote this week about friendships, which is always a fun topic. I love when we cover friendships because I feel like it can be really volatile even in our adulthood. It brings up all the junior high feelings and thoughts sometimes. I really loved what you had to say. Tell me more about what you're thinking.

Katherine: I've just thought about it a lot because I feel like we go through these arrows in our lives where we necessarily just cannot center friendship. I had shared that that C.S. Lewis quote where he says it's unnecessary like philosophy. It's not actually like what makes you survive, but it's what gives value to your survival. I wrestle with that because I think where would I be without my friends? But then

at the same time I do sometimes set those relationships on the back burner when my family requires so much of me or my job requires so much of me.

Friendship has been such an incredible gift to me in my life. I feel like I really have been abundantly blessed. Just thinking about the ways that I'm trying to nurture, invest in those relationships, given the realities that there isn't all the time in the world and yet they're worth some of my time and some of my money, sometimes it's a matter of plunking down the cash to fly across the country.

Tsh: I think a little bit of this past weekend, my family and I did a quick trip to the beach and my daughter, my 14 year old daughter and I were in our hot tub at the condo, so it was community hot tub, and there is a group of women all together. There are four women and they looked at both in their seventies I want to say. They were having the best time. They all had drinks in their hands and they were laughing and they were saying, so how is your grandkid and told some story and how has anybody seen, I don't even know, Jane lately? Tate and I were just smiling at each other and we talked later about that and she's like, you know what? I bet they have been friends for decades. I think it's really cool that they all got together I've been thinking about them ever since. What a neat example of cultivating a friendship over the years.

Katherine: Yeah. And just the way that your friends can know you if you let them, the way your friends can help you if you let them and vice versa. Those can be such powerful formative relationships in our lives.

Tsh: [04:08](#) Now what do you think, Katherine, you and I are moms, but we've got a wide variety of listeners, parents and not parents, men and women. What do you think makes it challenging in our different adult stages to cultivate friendships? Do you think it's plain old busyness?

Katherine: Busyness is always a factor. I think it's John Ortberg who quoted his spiritual directors saying, we must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from our lives because hurry and busyness has negative effects in every aspect of our lives and certainly in creating the space to cultivate friendships. I think sometimes when you're your friends go into a different stage of life before you or after you and you're not in the same place, a lot of times friendships are based on going to the same school in the same time of life, but then have those divergences and bridging those little gaps that, that open up as we move through the years together. I think being intentional about that is a good one. That can certainly be a challenge.

Tsh: I think that's really true. Even not that I'm a parent of completely older kids, not at all. My youngest is still not quite nine, but I have found that to be true that when my kids were younger, I really value those friendships I had with like-

staged parents I guess. Oh, we're all in the toddler stage together. We're all in the baby stage. That was great for a while. But now that my kids are older, we are friends mostly with other friends who have younger kids. I find even though I would really love to have more in person friendships with people who also have teens, I find that our friendships aren't as dictated by our kids lives, if that makes any sense? That we can just continue to be friends, even though you're dealing with diapers and I am dealing with puberty. I'm grateful for those friendships that span our particular issues in life in the day to day.

Katherine: I know one of the things I've heard from friends who either have not married or have not had kids, they really still want to be involved in our lives and not just get thrown to the wayside because we had a baby or whatever [inaudible] We no longer have the preschooler. Those opportunities when you could drift apart to really be intentional and not let just the fact that we are in a different stage determine whether or not we're friends. We want to be more mindful, more intentional than that.

Tsh: [06:44](#) Think about what we miss out on too. If we only surround ourselves with people in our same life stage, we miss out on the wisdom of those older, just the beauty of friendships that are diverse just because people aren't necessarily parents are not even in similar circles. That doesn't mean we can't really gain a lot from being friends with these people.

Katherine: Absolutely. Some of my very best friends don't have kids and that has been honestly my kids are blessed by their capacity to be aunties to my children and vice versa. They love getting to be included in our family life in a way that they welcome, it's not like they're not interested in my life because I have kids and vice versa.

Tsh: I appreciated in your post you talked a lot about investing in the small ways when it comes to cultivating our relationships, that sometimes we tend to think, well if I can't spend hours over lunch with this dear friend of mine, then oh well move on with life, when instead we really can take two minutes and send a meaningful text or even just a hey thinking about you, how's it going? That does a lot, a little bit goes a long way, in other words. I really liked that you encouraged us in that way.

Katherine: A little bit does go a long way. We have this thing with messages. Put your phone away, get off your phone, take the time to just be when you're waiting in line and yet at the same time, sometimes it's a good practice to pull out the phone when I know I'm going to have a few minutes to wait and say, who have I not reached out to? Who could I send, I like to send Amy Poehler memes because my secret alter ego is Amy Poehler. Who can I send a ridiculous Amy Poehler meme to today that would like brighten her day? And it's using that two

minutes and granted maybe I needed to use that two minutes to be, boredom cultivates creativity, all of that good stuff and the we don't want to be on our phones too much, but the phone can be a tool for good. I think that that's an important thing to remember.

Tsh: We don't have to overthink this so much where everything needs to be deep and thoughtful and meaningful. I am all about the gifs and the Amy Poehler's and the Tina Fey's ways we can encourage each other. Just think of what your friend might be doing in the moment. She might be in the middle of a frustrating work meeting or just having changed a disgusting diaper or who knows what, just otherwise having a rough day and just having somebody ping her and say, hey, just thinking about you. Even if there's like nothing to say, you know, it's not like we have some deep pithy, Bible verse or quote or thought, we can just say I am thinking about you. That goes a long way. I actually just the other day, Stephanie Langford, who is a good friend of mine that I met via the Internet, I was thinking about her and at first I was like, gosh, I wish I could just facetime her right now, but she's in Guatemala and I know she's busy with a work thing. Then I realized, wait, who's to say I can't just say, hey, just thinking about you, how's it going? So I did. I just texted her, hey, just thinking about you, how's life these days, you know, down in Guatemala? And she replied like two days later, which is completely fine. She wrote back when she could and then I wrote back when I could. I mean that's another reason why I love Voxel so much, because you can just pick up where you left off and hear each other's voice. But I think those little things, I think that's so fun, that's my favorite use of technology, versus the social media branding and platforming. I mean what a way to cultivate it for good, you know?

Tsh: And you mentioned, you have friends that you made online and one of the things I talked about in my post, I too have friends that I've made online and some of those friends didn't actually develop into actual genuine friends. They are people in my social network, but some have developed into real friendships. I have this interesting experience a couple of years ago that really struck me where I crossed paths with this woman. It was totally one of those we can be friends moment. We both felt it and then she was like, I'm not going there. I have enough far away friends and she said it so graciously. It wasn't like I felt this pang of rejection. I was like, oh, you can do that. You can say I want to be able to invest in the relationships I have and so I'm actually not going to extend myself in this direction even though maybe we would have been besties. I'll never know, but I'm totally at peace with that.

Tsh: That's very interesting. That's an interesting way to put it. I know I personally have definitely forgiven myself. Maybe that's too strong a word. Maybe just giving myself grace to just own the fact that a lot of my dearest friends right now

I have met through the Internet and they haven't stayed there. They've become in real life friends that I would count my actual friends and not Internet friends even if that's how we met. I was thinking of this last summer when I was in the living room of our guest house in London, looking around and thinking, oh my goodness, I know every single one of these lovely women from the Internet and these are actual friends that I know how they walk and I know how we talk over the dinner table and it's not just through a screen. I am so grateful for those friendships that we took the time to say, okay, yes, I will get to know you. I'm just really grateful for them.

Katherine: Yeah, I've been thinking about that a lot lately in light of Rachel Held Evans passing, I know that we were both part of her greater network. I don't actually know how close you were, but what we've witnessed on social media is these incredible acts of genuine friendship. You can see how real and authentic the friendships that clearly were cultivated through the Internet, but then nurtured in real life. I don't know if you read Sarah Bessey and is it Jeffrey too? I don't know his work as well. I've been reading Sarah Bessey for years, but they're circling around first the GoFundMe and then that incredible remembrance they wrote for the Post. I feel like we've witnessed obviously a tragedy that is beyond reckoning yet also seeing these beautiful glimpses of friendship. That's the power of friendship the way her community circled around.

Tsh: Completely. I was distant acquaintances with her, is maybe the way to put it maybe in a way similar to you. We have interacted, we've always been friendly with each other. Our paths will cross once in a blue moon. I didn't know her super well, but I have definitely personally benefited from just her existence and the work that she's put out in the world. To see her circles and her sphere of influence because of the Internet, you can't argue with how beautiful the Internet can be sometimes. And here on this podcast, we do talk quite a bit about making sure you have plenty of analog time. Don't live your entire life through a screen. Get offline, don't spend all your time on social media. I still am a big believer in that 100%, but man, whenever it's done well, whenever it's done right, you cannot ignore the beauty of this technology we have in our lives right now that we got to lay witness to what one woman can do through her words and through her work and just through her friendship. Like you said, at the end of the day, Rachel is a real person with real friendships and her closest friends being Sarah and Jeffrey. It was so neat to see how many people through the #BecauseofRHE hashtag she connected to each other and it wasn't just friends with her, it was friends of other people becoming friends through their friendship, with Rachel. I just thought that was such a beautiful thing.

Katherine: And speaking of technology, I had never gotten around to reading *Searching for Sunday*, which is so weird to me because I put it on my to read list the day it was

announced but I just hadn't read it and I put it on my library. Do you have the Hoopla app at your library? It's the audio book app. I literally checked it out and started listening to it within 25 seconds of deciding it was time and I cannot tell you what a gift it was to hear her story in her own voice, which was so warm and gracious and all the things that all of her friends have been saying about her. It's so abundantly clear in her work and her ministry.

Tsh: Yeah. Just to come full circle with our chat here about friendships and Rachel's legacy, to me, I've been feeling all of the more, not so much a sense of urgency, but maybe it's that a little bit, but a sense of not wasting time, if that makes sense. Not only rolling up my sleeves and do good work, like write that book, say that thing, love that person. But also don't wait to text this person to tell them how much they love you to grab coffee with the person. I never really told Rachel, I am really grateful for who you are and what you do. And so to me, I feel all the more empowered to do that and to not waste time not doing it or just saying, I'm going to do that later.

Katherine: Absolutely. This actually reminds me of one of the more poignant and difficult moments in my early years. My mom's best friend Louie, who is my daughter's namesake, my daughter's middle name is Louise. She was killed in a car accident when I was 16. And witnessing that loss was just so painful. Seeing my mom grieve and also grieving for a woman that I loved. I very clearly remember being in her memorial and having all those same thoughts that you just voiced about Rachel's passing and that sense that I have to let that person's gifts inform the way I'm going to live my life. Being open to being transformed not only by the grief but by the gift. That was the loss that started my path toward ministry. That was when I was I have to do something with my life. She did something with her life. I have to do something with my life.

Tsh: [17:49](#) That's really good. What a witness to the power of good relationships of just being a person and interacting with other people. I think the takeaway we can get from your post, from this conversation, and from Rachel is don't waste time not reaching out to the person that's on your mind. Do make that connection. Even if it feels too small, it's not too small. We matter. We we belong to each other. That's the beauty of friendships and that's a gift and I don't want to waste that another second.

Segment Two

Tsh: [22:18](#) My post this week was a little bit different. It's funny. You and I talked right before we started this chat about May and how May just tends to be nuts every year. It surprises me every year. I don't know why it does, but it's a little December where suddenly it feels like everything is happening. The calendar gets really full and busy and I don't know, it's just end of school year. I've got

work deadlines, we've got summer plans on the horizon. Just all the things are catapulting and snowballing into one big thing. And so my post to this week, I realized I need to create a good list. I haven't done a good list in a few months and this is a feature we do regularly on the blog and on the podcast and I absolutely love them. They're some of my favorite things and I realized I need to do one myself.

The reason I need to do it is because life is so full right now. I need to pause and remember the good things in my life. As always, I covered the four things that we talk about a thing, habit, a work of art, and philosophy. Whenever I got to the habit I realized, oh wow, I can write a lot of these things right now. I could go a lot of different directions because I've been grateful for holding onto quite a few little bitty habits. I ended up writing about this one which of course we link to the post in the show notes so you can read more about, making sure I don't say sorry whenever I ask for things or just the classic thing we women deal with a lot. I wrote about that. But there's quite a few other habits right now. I thought I would park on this idea of cultivating little daily habits, especially when life feels full because it's tempting to let these slide in the name of so much to do. But it's actually when it's all the more important to do them because they act as little anchors in our day to day where we can just hold on and say, okay, this is my usual, this is my rhythm, this is the thing I know how to do. I can just depend on for a few minutes before I move on to the next thing on my list that feels a little unknown or chaotic or wild or full.

I could think of six more things that I thought I would just share that I've been doing these days that have just helped my nuts life feel not so nuts right now in May. The first one, by the way, I will say all these habits, they almost feel like non habits because some of them are so obvious, but they still are anchors in my day. The first one is one of those, it's water. Drinking water all throughout the day has really helped me feel physically like I should, is the only way I know how to put it. I've been cultivating this habit of having a big jar, a with straw and a lid that I'm always filling up and I keep it by my desk while I'm working and then I keep it on my nightstand while I'm sleeping and then I wake up and I just immediately start drinking that water while my coffee is going and then all throughout the day I'm drinking water. It sounds like no big deal, but it really is a thing for me. I can actually physically tell when I'm not drinking enough water. I get headaches. I feel hungrier than I should. There's a whole weird conglomeration of just feeling off that tends to happen when I don't drink enough water. Drinking enough water when my life is busy has been just a nice little habit right now that's been helpful for me.

Katherine: I need to take that advice. I am surrounded by coffee cups and there's nary a glass of water on my desk.

Tsh: I totally get that because I also sip coffee probably until about 2:00 PM. I'm right there with you. To me, I have to do both at the same time, otherwise I get a little too jittery for my own good.

[26:11](#) Another habit right now, I don't know if you'd even call this a habit, but I'm going to just go, there is gardening. Gardening has become this new little interest of mine. I almost don't feel right saying it yet because I'm such a newbie. I don't know what I'm doing most of the time, but we have a little four by eight foot plot in our backyard. Everyone knows where right now renovating our little old house so making an amazing backyard is super down the list of priorities. But we decided we're just going to carve out this one little rectangle and just have fun with it and see what we do. We've got all sorts of things planted there right now. Tomatoes and watermelon and cantaloupe and zucchini and squash and peppers. They're going nuts right now. It's just this time of year here in Texas. They're about to start, all the fruits about to start coming and it's fun to watch. For me, getting in the dirt every day and I'm talking like 10 minutes, it's not long, has really been good for just centering an otherwise really busy life and especially when that feels very screen oriented. I'm working on my book manuscript right now. I am taking a coaching class, which is all through the through the screen. Just getting my hands dirty and digging in the dirt for 10 to 15 minutes a day has been really good for my centering, I literally need to water the garden, I need to pick the weeds, I need to check on the plants so it's not something I can just get to when I want without consequence.

Just having that garden that needs me has been really good for me and it reminds me that the earth keeps on going, that the seasons are cyclical. They'll come around again and again, whether I take time to notice them or not and it forces me to pause and notice them.

Katherine: It is literally grounding.

Tsh: Exactly. I'm glad I'm sharing this with you. We've got Andrea, a co-host who just shared on the podcast where she's learning all the names of all these flowers and trees and the natural world around her. And then we've got Christine who is literally a farmer. And so for me, I'm like, I've got some plants.

Katherine: I have some plants and we have the worst garden in the universe, which I think I originally wanted to start it. I remember I learned how to make my first compost bin from your blog. You've always supported the backyard gardener. But my thumbs have have yet to turn green.

Tsh: I'm the same way. This is just a good season for us at the moment. But there are many, many years where we just don't have the time. I'm right there with you

Another one that's a small one that that packs a big punch is going on walks whenever I need to listen to something. I use Voxer a lot for my work. It's how I primarily communicate with my assistant and with other people I'm collaborating on for different projects and they're little five, ten minute conversations or messages I need to hear instead of just listening at my desk.

I will take that opportunity to put on my shoes and walk around the block and it really forces me to just get out of my head space and move my body, get some fresh air, and I come back feeling a lot better. Plus, there's something about the act of walking that helps me listen better and think of my thoughts to whatever is being said that it just ignites some different synapses in my brain. I also do that whenever I have a podcast I want to listen to or I'm working on an audio book. If I'm not in the car, I'll see if I can maybe go on a walk around the block as part of my listening habit.

Katherine: That's a big one for me. I walk most mornings. I think I wrote about walking for the blog once getting to like walk and read at the same time. That to me is multitasking at its best.

Tsh: It really is. That's the right kind of multitasking. It actually benefits both. Another one for me, and I feel funny, not funny, I feel silly sharing this with you, a literal yoga instructor. I have been doing quite a bit of yoga lately, but if I don't have time to do a full yoga class, I will still wake up and basically morning and evening stretches. I've got this very simple routine that are yoga poses, but they are intentionally done for the purpose of just stretching, either waking up my body or transitioning into a rested body routine that don't take more than five, 10 minutes. But it is amazing how much better I sleep and how much better in the morning I feel when I wake up, I'm not nearly as stiff as I used to be. It's become this habit of mine now that I actually depend, if I end up not doing it, I feel the difference physically. So just a simple, taking five to ten minutes to stretch in these different ways has made a big difference in my sleeping. I've been really surprised.

Katherine: That's helpful to hear because I either go to a class or I do nothing. It's either an hour or nothing. I've never been good at cultivating a home practice, but I need to try that because there are days when five or ten minutes of stretching would definitely go a long way when I can't get to a class.

Tsh: Yeah, I get that. I will link in the show notes to a youtube video of a yoga instructor who has a morning stretch routine that's 10 minutes long that I first started doing several months ago whenever I had a super early morning flight. I wanted to do a few minutes. I had some time before my Uber came. I wanted to do a quick stretch because I knew I'd be sitting for a long time and I ended up loving it. Now I know it by heart and I've tweaked it to where I've cultivated my

own. But in case that helps anybody, I don't even know what to do. It's 10 minutes long and it's a great way to start off your morning. I'll put a link in the show notes for them.

Another one that I've talked about before on the blog and even on the podcast about a menu planning. Right now, we have got a super simple, easy menu plan and that has to be the way it is right now because of my book due in a few weeks, my next book manuscript. Whenever I'm in that mode, plus I've got Literary London coming up plus into the school year plus my coaching class, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. The last thing I need to be doing right now is coming up with inventive, creative meals or recipes. Not only do my kid's not really care, but it just takes the brain cells that I need for these other things. There are times and places for trying new recipes. I actually really enjoy cooking. My husband Kyle loves to cook. We are both big believers in that. But right now that's not the season. So just having a really simple rotatable menu plan, meaning we do the same things every couple of weeks. We're not reinventing the wheel has really helped with this habit that helps us both not have that panicky, oh great, now I need to come up with something amazing for dinner nor eating out. Sometimes that becomes our goto, like I just don't know what to cook. Okay. Hamburgers it is, let's go to the drive thru. Not when you have a basic plan. That's been a huge help for us.

Katherine: I go through seasons where cooking feels creative and wonderful. And then seasons where cooking feels oppressive and terrible and be able to turn to the easy than crowd pleasing staples.

Tsh: That's right. My kids, they're just at a stage right now. Some of them are more picky than others, but in general they're not going to care if we eat tacos every week. Really and truly they're kids.

Katherine: All my kids want to eat is tacos every week. That one thing that I can make that literally everyone is happy with because we have a vegetarian, I'm mostly Paleo and we have the one kid who refuses to eat pizza and the other who refuses to eat mac and cheese. I don't even know what to do.

Tsh: I can't even imagine a kid that won't eat pizza. That's otherworldly to me.

Katherine: That's what I'm trying to tell her. I don't also want to be like, come on peer pressure. Everybody does it. Come on, you [inaudible] send her.

Tsh: Then the last thing that's really been more of a recent revelation, but it's really been good for me and it ties into this idea of essentialism is asking before I do something, asking myself what's my best contribution here? It's a weird, sounds a little corporate question, but I mean it pretty broadly and it can be sort of

nebulous, meaning it doesn't mean a three point answer, but by asking myself this, it keeps me within the boundaries that I need to be healthy when it comes to relationships, when it comes to saying yes to some project.

For example, if somebody asks me right now to be on their podcast, I've told Caroline, my assistant, you've got to tell them I cannot be on any podcasts until the fall. I just can't. I hate doing that. But the reason is because when I think about what's my best contribution here, not only is that taking away from the time I need to work on my book and to prepare for London, but I'm not going to be a good guest for them. I'm not going to be able to prepare, I'm not going to have coherent thoughts, anything like that. It's actually not a good contribution for their show either. Non-work wise, this works out in other ways too. When it comes to the house right now, for example, what's my best contribution here? Is it to get onto the kids about their chores and what they haven't done or is it really to encourage them on what they have done and to let some things go right now because at the end of the year is just nuts. The end of the school year and they're right there with me, is my best contribution really getting onto them about why is the house not perfect or is it just relaxing and being okay with really a subpar house at the moment because none of us really have the time, that kind of thing. It's really a basic question of what's really important here, but asking what's my best contribution here, puts the onus on me to decide what am I going to put on myself and what am I going to just let go because it's not mine to have.

I've been doing that a lot in almost every single thing, every single decision I've had to make right now. It's really helped me say no to a lot of, pretty much everything except what I absolutely have to do right now.

Katherine: Your reflections on how that looks at home right now hits so close to home. I am wondering if my kids were behind my back, accessing your Voxer and the sent you a message, please tell our mom that her best contribution is not to get on us about our chores because that is really relevant right now.

Tsh: It's relevant for us too because the past few months we've come up with a couture routine that's really worked well until doesn't, until we just let things slide because of life and then suddenly it's like, oh my goodness, there are things everywhere and why haven't you done the dishes in several days? All that stuff. I suppose it's another angle of being okay with good enough or embracing partial solutions or these things that we talk about all the time here, that it's just asking what do I really care about? What really matters? And I care about my kids cultivating the habit of doing their chores and of working well, but am I in the business of having a spotless house because someone's about to come and do a magazine shoot? No. Why am I going to get onto my kid for not putting up

all the dishes when he clearly worked hard in 80% of the way? You know what I mean?

Katherine: Absolutely. I think about how much investment it takes on our behalf to get our kids to do some of that stuff. At this time of the year, we don't have the bandwidth to positively encourage them in that way. Letting it slide a little toward the less magazine shoot worthy things might be why.

Tsh: It really is. If anybody listening right now is in that season of May, their May is nuts like they tend to be every year. Think of those little habits you can cultivate that you might be tempted to push aside because life is so busy. Instead think of how you can embrace them because life is so busy. Keep those little things going. Maybe that's making sure you're drinking more water. Maybe that's going to bed at a hard 10:00 PM maybe that is going on your run even if it's a 15 minute run instead of an hour long run. Whatever it is. Think of those little anchors you can have in your day to just make you feel sane and keep your head above water.

Segment Three

Tsh: [39:07](#) I'm here with Stephanie Langford to answer one of your travel questions. She's in Guatemala again, as you remember. She's in a guesthouse and she sounds a little bit different than usual, but it's still totally listenable.

Steph, let's talk about, I believe her name, it's hard cause it's on Instagram, @jessiagemm. Sorry if I got your name wrong, but she asks, I love the idea of world schooling, but I'm not a teacher or homeschooler. Where do I start?

I think this is a great question because we can dive into a little bit of what is in fact world schooling and even homeschooling a little bit and then maybe a little bit of the practical. Let's start broadly Steph. What would you say to someone who loves the idea of world schooling but isn't sure where to start?

Stephanie: [39:48](#) The thing is, world schooling is really just taking the inspiration from the places where you go and using that to inform the things that your kids are studying. When they're studying at school, for example, or even in your homeschool, if you do that, you're just using particular types of curriculum or maybe you choose content that you feel is important. All you're doing when you go travel and you've world school, if you choose different content based on where you are that feels really relevant, but you're still working on the same skills. They're still working on their critical thinking and they're working on reading and writing and maybe learning how to formulate an argument about something if they're an older child or they're just gathering information if they're younger, they're just learning about how interesting the world is. It's really just

taking inspiration from where you are, but applying the basics of education to that. Do you feel like that's a good explanation of it? It's the best I could come up with.

Tsh: [40:45](#) That's actually fantastic. I love how you framed that because all of this is just almost like adjusting your rudder a little bit. You're still steering the same ship though. You still have the same perspective on education where you would like your kids to go. It's just maybe angling your course direction a tiny little bit. I love that idea and I think it's helpful to know just broadly speaking that when it comes to things like world schooling or even homeschooling, that it's okay if you're not a teacher. I know a lot of people do benefit from their education background, but in our experience with homeschooling, it's a lot more, I don't want to say student led in that our kids make all the decisions about what they do, but it's a lot more helping them learn how to learn than it is me imparting all my wisdom and all my knowledge. It's not like we show up to China and I already know everything there is about Chinese history, so buckle up kids. I'm going to give you a full lesson. Not at all. They are learning how to use the world around them. Our hike on the Great Wall of China and technology that we have, YouTube videos and great books we can check out from the library to learn and it's teaching them how to learn and not necessarily what to learn because I'm the smart teacher.

Stephanie: [42:01](#) That's one of our major goals as homeschoolers or home educators anyway, if our kids leave with those basics, right? The reading, the writing, the critical thinking skills and the ability to learn and a love of learning. If they are curious about the world, they want to keep learning and growing and they have the skills to know, okay, I am in China, I am going to the Great Wall of China. How can I learn about that? What tools are at my disposal? If they know how to do that? They have what they need. I feel like world schooling, it really helps us in that goal of showing our children how they can continue to grow and get the information they need that's going to serve them for the rest of their lives.

Tsh: [42:47](#) I agree. While we're just talking broadly, I think it also helps depending on what your end game is, whenever maybe world schooling ends. Jesse, I don't know what your situation is, but let's say you are interested in this idea longterm as more of a lifestyle. Then your world schooling approach might look different than say somebody who is asking, we want to travel for six months but then come back and get right back into our traditional school setting, which is totally valid and fine. How you make decisions on your approach to education might look different. Let's say you, just because we're using this example, you are going to China and you are doing a great wall experience. Your end game might look a little bit more like what are some deliverables we can show the school that while we were gone, our kids did learn? You might care a little bit more

about maybe cataloging your experience in journal writing or essay writing. Perhaps you even do a little study on the geography or geology there as part of your science or it just depends. Whereas, if you are planning this to be more of a longterm lifestyle situation, you get to call the shots on what matters to you based on your kid. It's also important to answer that question.

Stephanie: [44:09](#) That's true. If we were going to talk to that person who does want to just travel temporarily and they want to make sure that their kid can fit back into where they feel like they should be at. If I was going to suggest something to them, I would say focus on those basics. You keep up with math, with reading and with writing. I think it would be a good idea to look at what your child would be doing during the time that you're gone so that you have just a general idea of okay, they would be working on five paragraph essays, they would be covering long division or this particular type of geometry in math class figure, figure out where they would need to be and then just determine ways that you can continue their learning on the road.

That could be carrying curriculum with you for something like math. But it also could just be, okay, we know the general math skills, we know approximately where they should be at, so we're going to use a bunch of apps on the iPad. We're going to just bring a simple workbook or even just carry a notebook and we're just going to write out questions for them to work on while they're on the train or the airplane. Or we're going to do a lot of math games. You could then for your writing and your reading, I love to give the kids books that have to do with where we're at. You take the example of China, if you're going to be there for a little while, then you could have them read a book that's based in ancient China. Then you could have them read something that more modern, maybe that took place during the revolution you can read a lot of different perspectives. You can have them read historical fiction, you can have them read a biography together as a family. And then you can also supplement that by watching things like youtube videos or looking up interesting websites or articles. And then like Tsh said, then you add in some of that application. Now you're going to work on a five paragraph essay because we know that that's where you should be at but we're going to apply it to the wall of China instead of whatever they would be doing back at home. You're just finding ways for them to work on the exact same skills but using the place where you are and the things that are available to you. And then you can add in from there there's this amazing nature reserve and there are these types of animals there so we're going to go there and we're going to learn more about the flora and the fauna of this place where we are. It's actually neat to see how it comes together. Wow, we really are learning all of these different subjects. You're looking at maps as you travel so they're getting to know the geography of the area. You would be surprised when you look back

and you see all the different things that you've done. You're like, wow, they actually got a really rich education during that time period.

Tsh: [46:50](#) That's right. Just the mere act of travel alone is educational. It's almost like through immersion, through the act of travel, your kids will get a pretty outstanding education that will really surprise you because you're also getting that same education really. We've alluded to this before in a previous chat. Having kids perhaps help with the planning is also a way you can incorporate schooling. When it comes to budgeting or when it comes to tracking times and places and where to go when and maybe exchanging money on the market or some other form of that. The physical logistics of travel can be part of the education. I think it also is helpful to, Jessi didn't tell us, but it's helpful to know how old were talking. Steph, I know you and I, our oldest are both 14. My youngest is eight years is still preschool. We know from experience how different our educational approach is when they get older versus when they get younger. When we did our big trip around the world, Tate, our oldest was in fourth grade and I can look back now because she was nine turned 10. I can see now how I stressed about things I really shouldn't have stressed about just because at the time she seemed older and needed to, I say needed to in quotes, be at a certain place when it came to her math, let's say, or her writing. And while I think the motive there, the heart was great, broadly now, zooming back out, I can see, oh my gosh, if I would have just relaxed and leaned into the experience more, it would have been phenomenal because she was still only in fourth grade and it was fine. Now, as we think about the future and we're brainstorming and dreaming big about what would it look like to take another big trip with Tate in high school, it would be considerably different because we care more about different objectives. Her transcript for when she starts looking in the college scene. That's just a few years away for us now. That kind of stuff matters a lot more. You have to consider your kids' age as well.

Stephanie: [48:53](#) Yeah, that's very true. That's something that we are taking into account now that we are on the road pretty frequently and we do have a 14 year old and an almost 12 year old. Even right now we're doing different things for the different ages of our kids. We've actually put our three younger kids temporarily into a local school where they're getting to really build some community and be in school together with other Guatemalan kids, which is really awesome for them at their age. I'm less concerned about the particulars that are big kids, they're sticking with the curriculum that we have them working on. They're doing a lot of different online courses. Our oldest is reading classics and she's writing essays for us. Her work is a little bit more intense and so we've chosen not to put them into something like that. Instead they're doing some intense Spanish lessons as well at a local language school. You really do begin to combine it differently depending on where they're at. I feel like that's the beauty of world schooling is

that there's just so much flexibility and there are so many options and opportunities and it just feels like the world opens up to you and you realize how many different ways there are to learn and how many different things there are to learn. It's not like learning this thing is better than that thing. It's all valuable. I just love that.

Tsh: [50:08](#) I do too. I like that you brought up technology because that's another thing I would add. You might be really surprised at how few things you need because of technology, YouTube alone. But if you just add in some online classes, even here in the US when we are home, we employ some online classes for certain subjects. You can take that with you, math or something like that can be entirely digital and you don't need a big huge textbook or Kindle's with your library attached to it, you have all the books you would ever need because it's just in your back pocket. We use that all the time when we were traveling, we constantly checked out books based on where we were. It was such a great experience. I did that for me as well. I like to read based on where we were and that way when you have your library card basically with you, you really don't have any shortage of tools. You can do this really minimally as well.

Stephanie: [51:05](#) Yeah, I would agree with that. We carry some computers, we have an iPad. Each child who is a reading age carries a Kindle. The only curriculum that we actually carry physically is one that we use for our kids' language arts program and everything else they do online and in some manner.

Tsh: [51:22](#) That's perfect. I love that. It is. To wrap up, Jessi ends with where to start. I think the answer of where to start is to really consider maybe your mindset and to perhaps write down or formulate what is my educational philosophy, what are my priorities for my children? Then go from there and make a plan. In essence, world schooling absolutely should not stop you from travel. In fact, it can really be one of the best parts about your experience. It could be one of the benefits and not the liabilities.

[51:59](#) You can find Stephanie at Wonderlingfamily.com or on Instagram @Wonderlingfamily. You can find Katherine at KathrynWillisPershey.com and on Twitter @kwpershey. And to keep up with me. I'm on Twitter @Tsh and Instagram @TshOxenreider and of course, at theartofsimple.net where you can find my writing as well as Katherine's. Head to the show notes for this episode number 195 at thesimpleshow.com where you can find all sorts of things, links to things we talked about, where you can sign up for my weekly email called Five Quick Things, how you can become a patron and support the work it takes to create the show for just a few dollars per month, as well as how to connect with Katherine and myself. The show was produced by Chad Michael Snavelly and Jesse Montonya and thanks also to Caroline TeSelle, Andrea Debbink and my

furry intern, Ginny. Thanks so much for listening. I'm Tsh Oxenreider and I'll catch you back here soon.