



Podcast Episode 220
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“The Case for Considering Alternative Schooling”

David Loy: Hi and welcome to *In the Loop* with Andy Andrews, I'm your host David Loy. And Andy we're together again here. We just had a brief interruption a second ago from Polly, who came down from upstairs and Robert who joined us as well. I was thinking probably too late, we should've have them join us on the episode. But then I was thinking, well that's probably not a good idea because we'd be here for three hours, if Robert was on there. But we do need to have Polly back on at some point.

Andy Andrews: Yeah, we should.

David: We should. That was about a year ago I guess, that we did an episode with her. I'll try and find that episode number in a second but she's always a delight to have on the show, in contrast to you.

Andy: Thank you. I'm not always a delight? Am I sometimes a delight?

David: You're occasionally a delight. She is always a delight. You're batting at about 500, she's batting at 1000.

Andy: Ok, alright.

David: We had a great voicemail that came in from Julie so let me play that voicemail in just a second. I wanna remind people that the voicemails are always

exciting, we love hearing your questions. And that phone number, if you wanna call and ask Andy a question, that phone number is again, 1800 726 2639. Tell us your name, where you're calling from and then ask your question and we will play that on a future episode, and get Andy's thoughts. So Andy let me play this voicemail from Julie.

Andy: This is from Julie?

David: It is.

Andy: Julie, Julie, Julie, do you love me? Remember that song?

David: I do not.

Andy: You do not. You're too young, Bobby Sherman.

David: Bobby Sherman. I wonder if Julie remembers that?

Andy: Well I don't know. How old is Julie?

David: I don't know.

Andy: She might. Do you remember Bobby Sherman?

David: I do not.

Andy: Oh my gosh, you're so young.

David: I'm pretty well versed musically but.

Andy: Bobby Sherman, David Cassidy.

David: I know David Cassidy.

Andy: Well Bobby Sherman was right there.

David: Contemporary David Cassidy.

Andy: Oh yeah. Easy come, easy go. Here come the brides, yeah man, ok.

David: Alright. Let's play this voicemail. Matt, if you could play the voicemail from Julie and we'll get started.

Question: Hi Andy. I have a question. I listen to *In the Loop* all the time and I've listened to your audio books. I have four children, 21, 17, 11 and 9. We had bounced back and forth between home school, private school and public school for each kid, for many years. Just trying to figure out what's the best for each child. And I was wondering what your insight on it was. We're trying to raise great people and sometimes it just seems like the public influences are getting in a way of what we're trying to teach at home. The private school have better influences, the teachers have more contact with smaller groups with them. But we wonder if we're not preparing them to deal with people on the real world, when they get out. I would just love to have your input on this situation.

David: Alright. Julie thank you for a great question. Four kids Andy and seems like they've gone through all of the different educational options. What do you have to say about that, any thoughts?

Andy: Yeah, well you know, we have done some different stuff as well. And here's my overwriting thought. I really, I know where you are trying to get to Julie. I know what you're doing, you're trying to raise great kids who become great adults. And here's something to just focus in on, if you look at that first grade through the 12th grade and that whole thing, let me tell you where your focus area should probably be. Now again, you can probably get some professional person to tell you, oh no, whatever. I'm just telling you, just from watching for years, praying hard about it with my own kids, watching other kids, being in youth groups, watching youth groups, watching youth around town, that your 7th and 8th grade years, those are critical, those are critical years and let me tell you why. 7th and 8th grade years are critical because 7th and 8th grade is when the kids are really deciding what they believe. I used to think that an 8th grade teacher had to, they must go in wearing armor, because 8th grade, man, they've lost their 7th grade shines and haven't gained their 9th grade maturity. And so they're just crazy people. But 7th and 8th grade is when their wings begin to spread a little bit and that is when they really start to determine what it is they believe and who it is that they think is cool. And I'll tell you something, there is not a more critical time to create a great relationship or to have a great relationship created already with your child than 7th and 8th grade, alright. Because and in fact, we did something very different with Austin, for 7th and 8th grade, we homeschooled Austin, in the 7th and 8th grade. Now Polly and I aren't actually smart enough to do it ourselves. So with a friend, who had a son that was the same age as Austin, we actually hired a teacher. And so Kelley Clear, we called it Mrs. Clear's school for boys, she only had two students. And so when we would take Adam to school, he went to Orange Beach Elementary, we would take Austin by this place and he would go to school. Now homeschooling obviously gives you a lot more opportunities for just flexibility. And so that made odd field trips and times that we would say, hey, can we prepare for these two days a couple of weeks now, can you all work around

where dad can take Austin and they can go off a couple of days? And so for those two years, we were able to do that. And those two years, we heard so much craziness going on in middle school, it used to be junior high school, but now it's middle school. And there was this odd girl boy thing really happening, and feelings are hurt. Well we just kind of lifted him out of that. Now somebody would say, well you're not, he's not being prepared for the real world. Well I think if you met Austin now, you might think that he seemed a little more mature than some of his peers. A lot of that happened in those years. And remember, Polly and I are trying to, we're trying to raise kids who become great adults, ok. This high school thing, this junior high school thing, it seems to be incredible, the social life of high school and all that kind of stuff, seems to be incredibly important to parents to look back and that was the best time in their entire lives. If high school was the best time in your entire life and everything was downhill from high school, you probably are just dying that your kid, go to every party, go to every social event and be involved. But as far as I'm concerned, this maybe just me, ok, but you're in high school very short time. And the rest of your life should be more important than high school. It should get better and better.

I think I've told you before David, that I used to, having some roots in Nashville, and having known, I still know a bunch of them but one time, I knew every country music singer there was, every single one of them because I was doing that television show in Nashville for years and years. And now I don't really know any of them, the newer ones. But I used to think when I would hear something on the radio, I would hear a song and I'd think, man, that must be pretty cool, that years from now, they'll be driving along somewhere and hear that and go, man, I did that. And I used to think, that would be very cool. Well as time went on, I knew some people who, you know, their careers tanked, for many different reasons. I remember going with a friend to look at, he was looking for a house to buy in the

Nashville area, and a couple of houses he looked at, they said, now, so and so used to live here, that this was so and so's house, a country music singer. Really, like, what happened? Well you know, they had to downsize or they got divorced, well they no longer could pay for it, whatever. And I thought then, man, I know they do a tour of the stars' homes in Nashville but you could go on a much larger tour of the homes the stars lost, in Nashville.

David: Yeah, that's really sad but true.

Andy: And so as time went on, I knew one guy, a good friend of mine, that he had five number one hits in a row, in his like twenties, ok, five number ones in a row, and never cracked that charts again. And he still sings but he's, in a recording contract, you didn't hear of him in years and years. And so now I occasionally hear one of those number one songs on the radio and I think, man, what does he think when he hears that? Does he think, oh my gosh, the best my life ever was, was in my twenties, and it's been all downhill from here. I mean, what an awful thing. Well high school is important, ok. This is an important time but it's not the most important time.

David: That's right.

Andy: College is important but it's not the most important time. And so what you want to do is have your child in a position where, I guess I wanna say, well some people say, well you can't keep them safe forever. No, you can't, but you can keep them safe in the 7th grade.

David: That's right, yeah.

Andy: And so a lot of times people say, well you know, they need to be socialized or whatever. Ok, socialized how? I mean, do you want, socialized how? Do you want them to be socialized to have the language that is going on in the high school, do you want them to be socialized to the things that kids are doing in high school? Do you want them to be socialized to the morality that is going on in high school? Or maybe you do, I don't know. Maybe you have an unbelievable place, I don't know. Or do you want them to adopt different standards? And so one of the things that I found is that during the times that I was, that we were homeschooling Austin, we were able to take him places and have him meet people and see how life kind of goes on, alright. And so he was socialized with adults. Now I will admit, at 16 years of age, Austin seems to me, more comfortable in the company of adults, ok. Now he's not uncomfortable, he has friends, he does stuff with them, he goes to birthday parties and whatever they do. He goes to the prom, he goes to, he does that stuff. I mean, you've met Austin, you've watched him, you've been around him, I'm just saying, each child will be different. You know, Adam, we have found a private school that he's going to in 7th and 8th grade. And it's a very small class. It's just like, we talked to, I think at one point we answered a question, where we talked to a guy and the guy said, that the parents of another kid in his son's 5th grade class, were taking their son and another girl on their first date. And I still think, good grief, really? I mean, they don't really even think about dating but you're gonna say, hey you're dating. You're dating, you're going on a date. I am? I need to start liking girls but going on a date. Ok, great. I mean, do you really want to have those things kind of...

David: Forced?

Andy: Yeah, I would much rather a child, and I don't know, I seemed to be like circling the subject or circling the target here.

David: Well it does feel like you guys have done, there's some similarities here to Julie as well. She said, that they've done homeschool, private school, public school. You have been in all of those situations. Within the last 18 months you've been in all of those different situations. So there is something to say for the variety that or the different experience that that variety brings. But I think what you've just said is very crucial, every child is different and you are taking a different path with Adam then you did with Austin, because they're different people.

Andy: One of the things you have to keep in mind though is critical, is, where do you want to go? Where is it that you're wanting to take this? That is what you have to keep in mind. And if you are doing this correctly and especially if you do it correctly in the 7th and 8th grade, you do it correctly then, you can begin to, you can trust your teenager in a way that most people are not able to. I've seen people with their kids, like, why aren't you going to that party? Why don't you go with them? Now why aren't you, now she seems very nice? Now why aren't you hanging around with him, now he's a great kid? And he goes, well I'm just so. See we have a 16-year-old who would talk to us. Now he's quiet like all 16-year-old boys and so sometimes I have to go on these walks and bring things out of him, but what I'll find a lot of times, is that he doesn't want to necessarily say to Polly and me, hey guys, I know you think he's so great and I know that you're trying to get me to go do stuff with him but he does stuff that you don't know about. And he acts in ways and he does things that you do not know about. Though you think you want me to go hang around with him, you really do not want me to hang around with him. And yet he's not going to blow their covers so to speak, he's not going to be tattletale or whatever, but he's going to quietly.

And I remember one time when Austin was in the 6th grade. And I said something to him, talking to him about something, language or something like that, and I said, I don't know if you ever hear certain. And I said something about the F word.

And he said, why, I do hear that. I said, you do? He said, dad I hear that all the time. I'm like, in the 6th grade, really? And so of course when he was in the 6th grade, there were three kids in the 6th grade that got arrested for smoking pot, in the 6th grade. And so you can imagine what 7th and 8th grade got to be like. But to be able to choose where you're going and then you will be able to trust that child. And now I have conversations with him. I asked him not too long ago, he told me about, because he will occasionally come out and say, hey dad so and so, I'm a little worried about so and so, I'm afraid they're fixing to get in real trouble. And I can listen to this without asking all the details, right. So I'm not gonna say, really, tell me, what did they did here? Because I'm not into the national enquirer version of it. Really, they're not my responsibility anyway. My responsibility is Austin, ok. And so I'm more concerned with how he is seeing this, how he perceives this, how he has to deal with it?

So I've asked, I've said, I know that you were over there the other night, did he do this in front of you? And he said, well, they don't do it in front of me. Really? Why not? Well I don't know but they don't do it in front of me, I guess they know I'm not going to do it. And so I had opportunity one time, I said, Aus let me ask you this, if somebody, if you're off with somebody and they're all indulging in that and you are pretty sure that nobody's gonna get caught, I know you've told me that, that's not something that you're drawn to or that you want to do, do you have the ability, do you have the courage you think to say no? Now I said, you know it's an illegal thing, I mean, you know, you hadn't got to be doing it that if you're there, when everybody gets caught, you're part of it? And I said, that's something that you have to decide. Now see I'm not gonna tell Austin, right then you better get out of there, you have to get out of there. Because I know that I can't make him anyway. So I have to say, you have to decide.

David: I was gonna say, you're teaching him to make wise decisions as well.

Andy: Yeah. And so, in any case, I go back to Julie, I go back to that 7th and 8th grade time. But if you're past that with some of them, obviously it is the relationships and where you were going.

David: And that there's not a magic, clearly, not a magic formula, for every child it's gonna be different. But just the fact that she's seeking and asking questions and wanting to make sure that they're making good decisions on behalf of those kids, I think that is, she's ahead of the game.

Andy: But do not allow what everybody sees as normal to be your guide.

David: That's right. Different. Alright Julie thanks for the great question. Look forward to hearing more questions from those of you who want to jump in on these conversations. You can also email those questions to intheloop@andyandrews.com Also make sure to tell your friends about this, this is a great conversation that we have going, Andy loves hearing questions and getting into the discussions. And we hope that we're providing some great value. We continue to get great feedback from those that are listening so if you know of anyone that will benefit from the content of this podcast, please do share it, like it on Facebook and give us a review on iTunes, those things always help to just increase the notoriety or the visibility of the podcast on iTunes.

Andy: It definitely helps the visibility. If you haven't reviewed it, and you feel inclined to give it a good review, please just do that because it brings it up, they just rank it according to how many people have reviewed it. And so with a podcast, if you would, you know we do this because we want to help other people and so if

you would like to help us help, we would appreciate it and just, the more people that see it, that you pass it to, that would be great.

David: Terrific. Alright Andy we will talk to you next week.

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Would you like to run something by Andy? Contact us and your question might be featured on the show!

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