



Episode #209

Blake Boles Asks Why Are You Still Sending Your Kids to School?

May 19, 2020

Debbie: Hello, Blake, welcome back to the podcast.

Blake: Thanks for having me, Debbie. Good to be back.

Debbie: I'm happy to have you here for a very timely conversation. So actually, when we scheduled this conversation, initially the sole focus was going to be on your new book, which is called *Why Are You Still Sending Your Kids to School*, the case for helping them leave chart their own paths and prepare for adulthood at their own pace, and we are going to talk about that today. But now we're also recording this in the days of COVID-19. And there's so much to talk about when it comes to unschooling and what's happening in families. So does that all sound like a good plan to get into that?

Blake: Let's dive into the murky waters.

Debbie: The murky waters indeed. As a way to get started, I've read your bio in the introduction and again, I encourage listeners if you haven't, and you're sparked by this conversation, definitely go back and listen to the first interview that I did with Blake. I'll have that in the show notes pages. But could you start by defining unschooling as a concept for those who aren't familiar with it?

Blake: Sure, I think of unschooling as full time self-directed learning. And so most homeschooling parents will start by thinking, Okay, there's some things that my kid absolutely has to learn math or foreign language or social studies, whatever it is, and then they can have some self directed time after they do that mandatory stuff. And unschooling is about making the self directed stuff paramount and making that first priority. And saying, once my kid realizes that they need math, or they need foreign language, I'm putting faith in them that they will figure out how to gain those skills, how to learn that content, how to jump through the necessary hoops, but the most important thing is that they learn how to be self directed... they learn how to be intrinsically motivated, and that will solve most of their problems in life.

Debbie: Yeah, and this is what I love about this concept so much. And we also have talked about Ned Johnson and Bill Stixrud and their book, *The Self-Driven Child*, I know that you're a fan, I know that I'm a fan. My listeners are like, okay, Debbie enough with this book, because I talk about it all the time. But there is a lot of research, right, that backs up this idea that given a chance to explore and learn in a way that taps into their intrinsic motivation that these kids even differently wired kids can be very successful?

Blake: I agree. And I would like to reinforce your obsession with that book, because *The Self-Driven Child* was excellent. And Bill and Ned did a much better job of speaking to a wide audience of parents, parents who are firmly in the conventional school system than I have ever done in my books. And I had Ned on my podcast and I said, Hey, your book essentially implicates conventional

schooling at every turn. You don't say it explicitly, but it's there. And he said, yeah, we couldn't publish the book if we were going to be so inflammatory. So I agree with you, but we couldn't write those words in the book. And so I think all of us are of a like mind here.

Debbie: So there's so many things I want to talk with you about today. So I want to have the conversation flow in a way that makes sense for listeners, but even just to talk about specifically what's happening right now, because, again, as we're recording this, kids are really across the board, home learning, or they're in some sort of a home education environment, whether they're doing virtual school, whether their schools are saying you're on your own, whether parents are saying my kid is not doing what you're asking and we're going to do things on our own. Can you talk about what's happening right now? How would you define what parents are experiencing in terms of this kind of new model that we've been thrown into?

Blake: The best definition I've come across is remote schooling. That's what's happening. It's not fair to use the term homeschooling like we see in many big, you know, media articles. Because homeschoolers are not homeschooling right now. Unschoolers are not allowed to go to the parks, the libraries, the museums to hang out with the homeschool co-ops. Their lives are severely restricted. And so this is not a grand experiment in homeschooling, even though kids are spending lots of time at home. And so I'm sort of an agnostic on how this is going to turn out for homeschooling in general, Debbie, because if a lot of people associate what's happening now with the term homeschooling, that will actually be quite a negative association. But I do feel optimistic that there will be some sliver of families for whom this turns out to have positive effects and when school reopens, let's say in the fall, they're going to say, do we have to go back to that? What are other options here that they will have received a chance to rethink the normal approach and that will be a beneficial thing in the long run.

Debbie: Yeah, I agree with you about the potential backlash. And I've seen this come up a lot in just the Facebook groups that I participate in, whether it's my Tilt Together group or some homeschooling, unschooling Facebook groups that I'm in, that everyone's saying, to be clear, what you are experiencing is not homeschooling. And I do have a concern about perpetuating misunderstanding about how homeschoolers and unschoolers actually, you know, do school.

Blake: I completely agree. And it's sort of the worst version of homeschooling that's being forced upon everyone right now, because parents have little control. Kids have little control. Parents are being thrust into this position of having to enforce school deadlines, and rules and goals, while at the same time having to adjust to their own career shifts and having to work from home or not working. And so it's just a really hard situation for absolutely everyone. It's a weird time.

Debbie: It is a weird time. And I'm also hearing this is definitely the minority of my audience. But there are families out there whose kids may not be on Zoom all day or trying to replicate school in a virtual way and are instead doing more of what would look like unschooling in the way that you've defined it. And they're

noticing that their kids' anxiety levels are dropping, and that they're actually thriving more than they did in a school setting. And now they're thinking, Hmm, I don't know that we're going to return to school. Have you noticed that and what are your thoughts on that?

Blake: I have, and I admire the parents who say, I'm not putting up with this bs anymore. I'm not going to play this role that you're asking me to play in response to the school stuff. And they essentially say, School's out for the rest of the school year. And so do whatever you want, relax, do stuff that interests you just, you know, don't create chaos in the house. And this is essentially the deschooling process in action. And I think some of those families are the ones who are going to think, more seriously about self-directed learning about unschooling, or even conventional homeschooling when school returns in the fall.

Debbie: You mentioned the word deschooling, can you define that for us?

Blake: Yeah, it's sort of like a hard reset on your kid's motivational system. If they've spent a lot of time being pushed and pulled around by extrinsic motivators, grades tests, gold stars, threats of detention, it takes a while to remember what intrinsic motivation feels like. And there's this rule of thumb in the unschooling community, that for every year that a kid has been in school, give them one month of totally hands off de-school in which you as a parent do not make any hard demands of how they spend their time. Again, assuming that they're being nice, respectful human beings. This is not a call for anarchy in the house.

Debbie: That's a good clarification. So, okay, I would love to address this article that we were discussing earlier before I actually hit record. This is an article that's been shared widely in groups that I'm in, it was in *Harvard Magazine*, and it was about the "risks of homeschooling." You know, and I'm using air quotes when I say risks, but it was a very anti-homeschooling article. Can you kind of summarize the point of view of the article and the conference that was supposed to happen surrounding this conversation?

Blake: Sure, the article was not new or surprising. It's the same thing that we've seen for decades where someone who feels concerned about the welfare of children says, Hey, homeschooling laws in the United States are so relaxed that they can be used and they have been used to cover up cases of child abuse of hardcore neglect of hardcore sheltering and attempted indoctrination. And the author of the article cites the book *Educated* by Tara Westover, which, when I read that book, it's a fantastic memoir. But the first thing I thought was, Oh, my gosh, this is what people are going to associate with homeschooling. And that is what came out of this. This Harvard article, essentially, this professor said, homeschooling is just a big cover up for abusive parents. And then the homeschooling universe online immediately pushed back and said, You don't know what you're talking about. And of course, they're correct. But this Harvard professor also has part of the truth, too, because there are documented cases of terrible things happening because there was no set of eyes on this kid outside of their own immediate family. And so it's, it's a really contentious conversation. And it's, I don't think that there are any easy answers here. People who say you should definitely

highly regulate homeschooling almost to the point of making it impossible, to me, those people are clearly wrong. And they're not looking at the evidence of successful homeschooling in the United States and in other countries over the past many decades. But on the other , people who say homeschooling is 100% a family's right and there should be zero oversight, and that's an illegitimate function of the government. I don't think those people have all the truth either, because when we point to some of these really horrible things that have happened that are often associated with more hardcore religious families, we have to address Is that reality, we can't just brush it away. Because the people who are organizing this conference, for example, they're concerned about child welfare in, in a very universal sense. They want to make sure no kid is allowed to be horribly abused. And that's where they're coming from. It's a positive motivation. And we just need to make sure that they don't go too overboard with unintended consequences.

Debbie: Yeah, people have been reaching out to me and asking if I formally responded or written about it. Have you played a role in the counter argument to this dialogue that's happening right now?

Blake: No, and I think that there's been enough of a flood of counter arguments already that my voice is not necessarily needed here, nor would it be that useful. Homeschooling is very popular. If anyone actually tried to change the laws in the US, there would be a lot of grassroots resistance to that. I don't actually feel that this conference that's being organized at Harvard is that threatening. It's like a small group of academics that are coming together to discuss what they see as potential overreaches of homeschooling. And that's all it is. It's like this tiny little conference. As far as I understand it, this is not some policymaking summit to radically restrict the rights of homeschoolers all over the US. Of course, theoretically, it could turn into that, but I just don't see it there. And the co-organizer of this conference, Jim Dwyer, is a law professor who I had on my podcast and in that episode came out surprisingly, at almost exactly the same time as the Harvard article. And the book that Jim co authored, called Homeschooling, it's sort of an academic book that came out in 2019 is a really fair and even handed look at all of the different needs and conflicting issues that happened in the homeschooling world. And honestly, this is a lot of stuff that super enthusiastic homeschooling advocates are not aware of and don't like to think about or discuss. And so I for one, welcome Jim's voice in this discussion. I think it's an important and necessary one.

Debbie: Well, it's interesting it to think that, Yeah, maybe one of the reasons why this has gotten such attention is just the association with *Harvard Magazine* that instantly makes us think, oh, gosh, this is something we need to pay attention to. But it's nice to put it in context to this. These aren't policymakers. This is a potentially small conversation.

Blake: It is. And that *Harvard Magazine* piece was just one article by one professor who clearly is biased against homeschooling. It could have appeared as an opinion piece in *The New York Times* or *The Wall Street Journal*. There's many places where someone is allowed to express their radical opinion. That's why I don't

feel that threatened Yes, because it has the imprimatur of Harvard on it, people think it's more special. It's more impressive. But it's not like Harvard University came out in, in defense of the make homeschooling illegal everywhere position. That's not how I interpreted at least

Debbie: Yeah, no, that's really helpful. So all right, I want to pivot and talk about your book and I want to hear more about the impetus for writing it. Since having you on the show, I follow your work and I backed your Kickstarter campaign for this book. So I really believe in your message. You've written a number of books -- *The Art of Self-Directed Learning*, *Better Than College*, *College Without High School*. Tell us about this book and what message you felt was so important to share.

Blake: Most of my previous books were written for young people, either teenagers or college age people as the audience, and eventually I realized that my audience is really parents and honestly, it's mostly moms, and they're the ones that find my books and they hand them to their kids or to other people in their lives. And so one part of this book was me finally accepting who my audience is. And so I said, I'm gonna write a book for parents, and I finally feel ready for this. There was one part of me that didn't feel ready for a long time. And that's the part that says, like, you're not allowed to write a book for parents, because you are not yet a parent. And I finally accepted that after working with teenagers for 15 years, over 20,000 contact hours, through my own programs, through summer camps and other people's programs, that I probably have enough experience working with other people's kids to have some sort of informed viewpoint and perhaps a more objective viewpoint just because I've worked with so many different teenagers that I said, I'm going to write this book, and there are some overlaps with my previous books. There are a lot of points that I've made about how kids get into college if they don't go to school, about what they can do in the college years if they think that Higher Education is not the right fit at this moment. But there was a lot of other stuff that I really wanted to put out there. For example, there is a lot of nuance in the research, the academic research that's been done in the alternative education world, especially in the homeschooling and the unschooling world. And some of it is kind of surprising in the sense that it's, it's highly flawed research. Some of the most popularized research comes ultimately from the HSLDA, the Home School Legal Defense Association, and they don't do a very good job historically, of comparing homeschoolers to their socioeconomic peers. When they're saying homeschoolers do better in college, homeschoolers do better on standardized tests. None of that is true as far as I've seen, but there is some truth that I think is reassuring, which is that the best research shows that homeschooling will neither hurt nor help your kid when it comes to traditional academic indicators or getting into college or performing in college or getting into whatever career path a young person wants to get into. It simply does not make a significant difference one way or the other. So that's something I really wanted to share in this book. Also, I've been reviewing the work of Peter Grey, his arguments that are based on anthropology and the idea that hunter gatherers or what other anthropologists call foragers, societies, the fact that they let their kids play all day. That's an argument that I pick up and explain and refine in my book, because I think this idea of work versus play is, is very interesting and

fairly deeply, deeply ingrained. And we think that yes, it's okay for young kids to play. But as kids get older, just playing all day is no longer an acceptable thing. And to me, there is a good amount of truth to that, but it's not because of our societal mores. It's because adolescents want to contribute. They want to become part of adult society. And historically, we have enabled them to be part of adult society and to contribute. A 14 year old 100 years ago, probably had real responsibilities and real freedoms and felt like they were progressing towards adulthood in a meaningful way. And today, adolescents are in this weird limbo stage where they are either legally prohibited from working, or they are simply not able to do the more complex knowledge work that our society is increasingly demanding. And we've put them in this holding chamber we call school, give them a bunch of make work, act like it's really important. But really, it's a big signaling game. They have to jump through all these hoops to prove that they are conscientious, slightly conformist workers. School is more about... it makes it easy for employers to sort potential applicants. That is what I've determined and what I explained in the book to be a big function of the conventional school system, in addition to it merely being a child care service, and also a social welfare service provider. So there's all this stuff that I wanted to share with the world that I think fills in a lot of the gaps and the doubts that parents have when they hear about alternative options when they hear about homeschooling, unschooling radical alternative schools, they say, okay, that will work for some kids, but I don't think it's a safe route for my kid. And so I just brought together all of the best arguments from the domains of parenting, anthropology, higher education studies, and I just threw it all into one place. And I said, Here are all the reasons why if your kid is not doing well, in conventional school, you should stop forcing them to go to conventional school.

Debbie: So good, so good. And I love this idea of it's almost like the sorting hat, you know that we're kind of creating these slots for kids to fall into so that schools and employers know how to select and make decisions. But as a part of what we're experiencing now, and maybe I'm jumping ahead to some of my bigger theoretical questions, but one of the things I'm thinking so much about is that we're not going to go back to the way things were. You know, I've just been hearing more and more schools saying they are either not going to grade this year, or they'll do pass/ fail, you know, their schools are going to come up with new systems for assessing students competency and mastery in certain areas. But isn't this kind of a big wake up call overall, that we need to look at individuals differently and not through these narrow metrics that we've used for so many years that as you said, we're really forms of babysitting or welfare, you know, these social structures that don't really have purpose in today's society in the same way.

Blake: I would like to believe that Debbie, but I am really skeptical about that. I think that the institution of conventional schooling, especially public schools, is really powerful. It's something that all of us want to believe in, we want to believe we can make it work. And also, it has that really important practical function of just taking care of kids and keeping them safe and warm, and, you know, hopefully not abused during the day while their parents are working. And that's not going to go away. And so I am actually quite skeptical about whether this will lead to

any large scale changes or large scale reassessment of how we're doing schooling or we need to make it more individualized. Maybe this will mean that there's going to be more blended learning as we move forward, because a lot of people have seen the power of online distance learning, but I don't think that's a big paradigm shift in education. It's just a different way to do the same thing. So I wish I could be a bit more optimistic here. At this point, I am hoping that there will be some slice of families who are doing the remote schooling thing right now, who say, Wow, my kid's mental health is improving. They're doing stuff that they're interested in. The baggage of school is no longer weighing on them. Maybe these parents get a little taste of what school is actually like, because they get to peek into their kids' classrooms right now because it's happening in their living room. And maybe some of the mystique of school has worn off. You know, no adults choose to go back to K through 12. School, once they've left. It's a place none of us want to return to. Maybe we'll go to a reunion where there's free drinks served, but we don't want to go back and relive our days in school because it's a place where we are often quite powerless. And that doesn't inspire us, right? So I think that those families who do see that their kids are thriving a bit more naturally in the traditional classroom, and who are a bit disillusioned by the taste of school that they've seen during the pandemic time, I think those families might opt for something different. And even if it's 2%, or 3% of all the families who are doing remote schooling right now, that'll be a huge number of people. And that could be a big influx into the world of alternative and self directed education.

Debbie: Yeah, I'm thinking there are lots of parents who are noticing maybe that yes, my child is less anxious or seems to be engaging more, especially kids who are maybe older kids who are using this opportunity to to do other areas of interest and focus on some other things. And I'm seeing this kind of question, right. So parents, it feels so big to make a decision like this because there's so much fear wrapped up in it. The unknown about what this looks like if this is a new concept for, for families, you know, I was just thinking of the movie speed and it's like, stay on or get off, stay on or get off. You know, and I think a lot of parents are at that place. But the fear is real, right? The fear of getting off the freeway and deciding to forge your own path is real for so many people, especially if this is something they've never considered before. So do you have thoughts on things parents could be considering are ways to kind of question the assumptions that they've had? Or is that really what they'll find within your book?

Blake: They'll definitely find it within the book. I think that the fear is real, it's powerful. In the chapter I have about parenting I described what sociologists called the phenomenon of intensive parenting, which is this new norm, this new dogma, in which parents are considered to be almost godlike in their powers to shape the destinies of their children. Both for better and for worse, and that puts parents into a very anxious position. It's like they have all this responsibility. And I cite a lot of research in the book saying that is not true. You don't have as much control as you think. That's the title of chapter four. And so I do push back against that anxiety and that fear in one way. But another way that I like to push back against it is, yes, there will always be a risk if you take your kid off the standard educational path, not arguing that. But we have to look at the other risks too. And

I say that there's three good metrics when you're considering whether school works for your kid or not. And those are engagement, boredom and stress. If your kid goes to school and they are engaged for most of the day, they're happy to be there. Wonderful, great. If they don't experience that much boredom, or it's not a very negative form of boredom, then that's a good thing. And finally, if they have tolerable levels of stress, if the stress is mostly of the positive variety, for example, students who sign up for band and they have this big performance coming up, and they're stressed about that, that's a good form of stress. That's a form of stress. We want to invite into our lives and learn how to navigate. But if your kid is experiencing toxic levels of stress as Ned Johnson and Bill Stixrud describe it in *The Self-Driven Child*, when they are completely overwhelmed by the demands of school and it could come from the teachers, it could come from their peers, if they are not able to cope on a day to day basis. If the boredom is overwhelming, if they are really seldom engaged, then it's a huge, huge risk to consider continuing to do that year after year. That is putting your kid into the meat grinder and, and every time they stick their head up for air you're pushing it back down. That's what it means to keep sending your kid to school in a conventional school environment that's not working for them. And so yes, there are risks to leaving the standard path. And there are also risks to staying on the standard path. And so this is why parents are the only people who are highly qualified to make this assessment. They know their kids better than anyone else, hopefully. And they can determine whether those levels of engagement, boredom and stress are manageable or even healthy, or if they're not.

Debbie: So good. And yes, that idea of us having less control than we think is so important. And that is a theme that comes up all the time when I'm talking with groups of parents is this idea that we need to, you know, make our child do X, Y, and Z or you know, there's a lot of homework monitoring going on a lot of screen monitoring going on. And really, and we talked about this in our first conversation, our job is to help our kids you become self actualized. And that part of that is separating ourselves and realizing they're on their own journey. Their creative, resourceful and whole, even Yes, when they have neurodifferences, they are still on their own journey. And our job is not to control that, but to support them and becoming who they can best be right.

Blake: 100% agreed.

Debbie: Can you talk a little bit about screen time because this is something I know you talked about in your book, this idea and maybe this is more so with with older kids, I know that for my son, I have a 15 year old and he spends a lot of time on his computer, but he's, he's I don't even know what he's doing. But sometimes he's playing games. Sometimes he's watching YouTube, but often he's like teaching himself Python coding language or trying crazy modeling things and you know, in blender and you know, really going deep and really getting immersed in his projects. And so can you talk about parents who might be leaning towards more of an unschooling approach, but are really concerned about what does it look like in terms of their kids gaming or screen time habits?

Blake: Sure, I don't actually dwell on screen time, per se, very much in the book. I do spend a lot of time discussing gaming.

Debbie: Yeah, sorry. That's what I meant.

Blake: Sure. I mean, they're often one in the same. And I discussed video games and computer games, specifically, I loved video games and computer games, and arcade games, and role playing games. I was a huge gamer growing up, and I would finish my homework as quickly as I could. And then I would spend hours and hours in front of the TV or in front of the computer screen. And I kind of share this funny history in the book of all these games that I fell in love with. And the theme that was consistent with all of these games is that as soon as any one of these games became easy, I was no longer interested in playing it. And I think there's a real lesson to be learned there. Because it's the exact same situation today with some of the most popular games Minecraft, Fortnite, the Sims, I'm probably missing a bunch of newer ones and probably dating myself here. But when a young person is engaged with the game, the reward for let's say, completing the level in the game, it's not the end of the game. It's a more challenging level. That's what happens in World of Warcraft, when you complete a quest, you are rewarded with a more difficult quest. And what's happening here is young people are learning to voluntarily take on big challenges. Of course, it doesn't look like a challenge from the outside. If you as a parent have never played Fortnite or World of Warcraft or the Sims before, it just seems like a frivolous waste of time. And so it's very easy to judge it as a noneducational activity. But if we're looking at education from the perspective of self directed learning and intrinsic motivation, rather than the perspective of checking off all of the boxes in the traditional K through 12 curriculum, then gaming turns into often actually quite a productive activity. And one that we should often encourage kids to do well, while getting to know the games that they are engaged with, because yes, there are some bad games out there. I'm not really standing up in defense of Candy Crush here. That is not a very complex game. That's not a multiplayer game. I'm thinking more of games like Fortnite, where it's a highly social activity. And a really important aspect of games like Fortnite is that it is a place where kids go to be with each other and to be away from mom or from dad. And this is what maybe roller skating rinks were in the 70s or malls were in the 80s and 90s. It's a place for young people to be social, develop their social skills. It's their own social network right there. A lot of parents don't really understand Twitch, they don't understand Discord, all these platforms that are really quite new. And where young people have mastery and they have control. Young people need to feel a sense of control in their lives just like we adults too. And so they will gravitate towards those places where they can feel like they have some control, where they can develop some mastery where they have autonomy. I mean, those are the ingredients of intrinsic motivation, right there. And so, my favorite book that I talk about a lot in my book is reality is broken by Jane McGonigal and she is a game designer, you only have to read the first third of the book. She says, This is why kids love games from the perspective of positive psychology. And it totally convinced me that there's a lot of value to be had there. She does not make the argument for unlimited screen time or unlimited games. Her research sets at about 20 hours a week, which is about three hours a day is

like the perhaps ideal amount of gaming once you get up to 40 hours or more than that, then she says the negative effects of gaming will outweigh the positive effects.

Debbie: You know, super interesting, I want to check out that book I live with two gamers, my husband and my son. So, you know, I'll just say to that, I think there are a lot of ideas among the non gamers in the world that it is a valueless activity, right? Or it's just, it's a waste of time or it's not productive. And I have certainly come around to a different way of thinking just from what I've seen and witnessed in my house. But it is something that I think if parents are having a knee jerk reaction around it to just kind of question some of those ideas or maybe biases that you might have around gaming.

Blake: Yes, please.

Debbie: So, as a way to wrap up, I would love if you have any words of wisdom to share for parents who are listening to this, whose curiosity is piqued, and maybe again, what they're seeing during this strange time of distance learning remote schooling, what's happening in the world and they're thinking, this might actually be a good fit for my child, and whether school starts up in the fall again or not, maybe we won't be going back and maybe we'll explore unschooling more, what would be any first steps that you would suggest a parent take to assess if this is really right for their child and their family?

Blake: Well, definitely grab a copy of my book, *Why Are You Still Sending Your Kids to School*. That'll start you off in the right direction. I think that there's already a lot of evidence in most people's lives for the power of self directed learning, and take a look at what your kids already do in a naturally engaged way. And look at that and say, Can I imagine myself feeling comfortable letting my kid do that incrementally more, it doesn't have to be 100% of the time in the beginning. One of my favorite definitions of unschooling, I'll paraphrase, is giving your kids as much freedom as you can comfortably bear you, the parent. And so I believe that came from John Holt. And that's important to comfortably bear apart. Because if you have this sort of dogmatic idea that the only way for your kid to become a self directed learner is to completely let them do whatever they want all the time. I think the most likely outcome of that situation is that the pendulum will swing in the other direction, you will freak out and clamp down and say, okay, we tried this self directed learning thing, it didn't work. So start with baby step, say, okay, the stuff that my kid is really into is horseback riding and knitting. Can I imagine those things going from extracurriculars that are done after school into something that my kid is really diving into and that I'm going to support my kid in doing at a higher level. If you can imagine that. Then I think you are definitely a candidate for doing something that's more self-directed, more unschooling, again, it doesn't have to be all or nothing, you can take baby steps in that direction. And what I explained in my book and what countless numbers of homeschoolers and alternative school students have shown is that you really can help your kid leave conventional school and you are not dooming them to some sort of life of economic deprivation, they can still go to college, they can still get jobs, they still become functional adults, all the evidence, both research and

anecdotal points in that direction. And so have faith in that and do what engages your kid.

Debbie: Wonderful, wonderful summary. So and you mentioned your book again, can you let listeners know where they can connect with you and learn more about that book and your other work, your blog, your podcast?

Blake: Sure, it's easy. Just go to blakeboles.com. And that's where you can find my podcasts, my books, my monthly newsletter, everything that I put out is there.

Debbie: Awesome listeners. As always, I will have links in the show notes page. But I am a fan of Blake's podcast. It's called Off Trail Learning. So if this conversation is sparking you definitely go check that out as well. Always very thoughtful conversations that always get me thinking about things differently. So, Blake, thank you so much. Congratulations on the book. I am excited to get my hard copy, my tangible copy and hold it in my hot little hands, but the work you're doing is so important and I really appreciate this perspective and you sharing with us today.

Blake: Thank you so much...that means a lot to me.

RESOURCES MENTIONED:

- Blake's website
- *Why Are You Still Sending Your Kids to School? The Case for Helping Them Leave, Chart Their Own Paths, and Prepare for Adulthood at Their Own Pace* by Blake Boles
- *The Art of Self-Directed Learning: 23 Tips for Giving Yourself an Unconventional Education* by Blake Boles
- *Better Than College: How to Build a Successful Life Without a Four-Year Degree* by Blake Boles
- *College Without High School: A Teenager's Guide to Skipping High School and Going to College* by Blake Boles
- Blake Boles on Facebook
- The Self-Driven Child with Dr. William Stixrud and Ned Johnson (Tilt podcast interview):
- Harvard Magazine article "The Risks of Homeschooling"
- *Homeschooling: The History and Philosophy of a Controversial Practice* by James Dwyer
- Blake Boles on the Gift of Unschooling (Tilt podcast interview)