

Sink Handle Episode 20 Transcript

Kelly Reynolds

Hello, everyone, and welcome to Episode 20. Today I have a special treat for you. I have a special guest. The topic of the day around here and around a lot of households right now is homeschooling. Everyone across the country has different things going on and trying to work and have a business. This has been a conversation that's happened everywhere. If you have a kid you're talking about this right now. I've been having this conversation with my husband every night, so I thought it would be a fantastic idea to bring him on. So welcome to the Sink Handle , Brian Reynolds.

Brian Reynolds

Hello Sink Handle. This is Brian Reynolds. I'm normally the one messing with the editing of this podcast, not the one in front of the microphone so this is quite a treat for me.

Kelly Reynolds

And just you know, he is the editor for any of you new listeners. So if he sounds smarter than I do, and this next little bit that's why

Brian Reynolds

...it will have been intentional.

Kelly Reynolds

Hello marriage. We wanted to kind of, I guess have the conversations that we've been having privately out in the open on this podcast and that maybe something in here could help one of you out there who are struggling because this is a lot. This whole thing is a lot. Everybody's school has a different program. Everyone has a different thing. Some are going for a little bit, some are going a lot. Then there's "Are we going to get sick?" "who's staying home?" "who's watching the kids?" there's all these variables and and then as soon as you think it might just might be organized, the next day everything changes, and then you have no idea what's happening again, right? Like our whole everything has been keep changing. And we are very, very lucky in the fact that we both work from home. So we can arrange our schedules much more than almost any of our friends right now. Yeah. So we have had these discussions and I also put it out to a lot of our friends to see what they were doing. And try to get some ideas for everyone out there and some tips and what's working what's not kind of just say we're in the same boat... and we feel ya'.

Brian Reynolds

to kind of set that up, we should probably say that we've got a little guy who's going into first grade, we know that a lot of you are gonna, you know, have either no kids or more kids than us. But we're all kind of having this basic struggle. So this was probably a good way to

Kelly Reynolds

just kind of walk through like what our thoughts have been and how we've kind of gotten here.

Brian Reynolds

We took a good look at this months ago started trying to puzzle out what are the the outcomes that we should be preparing for right? We've got a lot of friends who have suddenly enrolled their kids in private schools (parochial schools) just to have some place that would take the kids for five days a week during fairly regular hours. In conversations with them, there's a bunch of these schools that have done superhuman levels of preparation for that but that doesn't necessarily mean that that's a good solution for everybody. It certainly doesn't mean that everybody's prepared to go ahead and lay out the money for it. So that was kind of option one. Option two was this kind of hybrid plan that the, you know, the local school came up with, option three is all virtual. And option four is, you know, really pull him out of the system entirely and go homeschooling we really didn't really see any other options than those four.

Kelly Reynolds

Yeah. So the way our school is doing it at this point is they are doing a split cohort days. My son would go on Thursday and Friday (half day, because we can't have lunch in school). So he would go for a total of eight hours. And then he comes home and he's on virtual all the other times in the afternoon on those two days and then virtual every other day.

And we kind of agreed that this was, for our needs, probably the dumbest way to go about his schooling.

Kelly Reynolds

Yeah. When you're trying to get work done. Schools pretty good, they go there, it's quiet, you get stuff done. But if he's only gonna be there for four hours, two days a week, and then I still am worrying about sharing of masks and bogies and all the other gross things parents deal with, it wasn't worth the risk for us. It was very low reward for the high risk to go into school. So we are picked all virtual, we had that option. It just seemed to make sense. Since we're both home, we can be flexible. I mean, obviously, we're working. But I've adjusted for my very strict boundaries of working just during the day. I'm working at night. Now we're recording this at night, because you know, kids are loud. Trying to figure all that out, was easier if we knew ahead of time that it was just going to be home. And it's so funny. How much this year has changed because if you had said I would even consider homeschooling a year ago I would have been like you are out of your mind

Brian Reynolds

Yeah. Couldn't have paid us all the money in the world.

Kelly Reynolds

No way. And now it's a very serious consideration because Virtual School is all day he's got a log in apparently and see teachers and then log off and do work and then login. It's a... it's... we're gonna see it starts soon. But homeschool, we could kind of make our own schedule and make it work for us. But he would be very isolated. That's the downside of only having one child is there's no one to play with. And we have a business to run just like you know our friends who have to go to work, they have to go

to work, like we have to pay bills and all that. That's the difference with the fall I think then the spring is that spring, there was a panic. There was all this crazy stuff. All the companies were much more flexible. Everyone was like, "Oh, well, it's the apocalypse, we're just going to have to work with everyone." And now that's gotten a little old things are opening again. And you know, we got to make money, we have to pay the mortgage still, right? These things have changed a lot and we don't really know how it's all gonna go.

Brian Reynolds

Let's back up even a step from that. I think that we all really just need to confront reality on this. You gotta confront reality in a real serious way. The virus and how you're going to deal with your kids schedule. The fact of the matter is that for all you small business owners, you have the most control over your business. I mean, if we're honest with one another, you have no control over the virus, you have no control over what your school is doing and a choice of bad options. You have some control over your family and your family might buy in with what you're doing, but nerves fray, people get testy. Things, they've got their own stuff, you've got your most degree of control over your business and everybody that's listening to this sooner or later, when they were you know, on that entrepreneurs journey said, "I want the flexibility that comes along with this."

Kelly Reynolds

"Right! Didn't we all say that?"

Brian Reynolds

Huge amount of responsibility along with it

Kelly Reynolds

We all forget it! But we all said it!

Brian Reynolds

You all said it. So I mean this is the time when you got to exercise that and you should be having that conversation with your family because you should be communicating back to the family: Here's how I'm changing the business and my life so that I can help accommodate all this stuff going on with Jr.

Kelly Reynolds

The first thing we have to accept is that there are no good solutions here.

Brian Reynolds

None.

Kelly Reynolds

...unless you already were homeschooling, and you already had a business and it was already all working while we get before.

Brian Reynolds

Right, if you had that figured out then...

Kelly Reynolds

It's all working for you.

Brian Reynolds

...then God bless you.

Kelly Reynolds

But most people out there I think are not going to be in that situation. I think a lot of people have had to adjust and figure this out, because kids have to be watched. And we have to still work like those are the those are the things that we have to do. Accepting there are no good solutions is number one. As part of this. I have no interest in debating different school plans whether we should be going back or we shouldn't. That's not we're talking about what do we do now? This this is where we are. This is what we've been handed. It will almost certainly change tomorrow. But what are we gonna do now? Accepting there's good solutions; I think that's the only thing everyone's got a consensus on right now.

Brian Reynolds

And for the context of anybody that doesn't know where Reynolds OBM is located, we do business globally, but we're based in New Jersey. It's now just after Labor Day when we're recording this, and it was only Labor Day weekend that they started to partially reopen restaurants.

Kelly Reynolds

Yeah, we've been in lockdown since March.

Brian Reynolds

It's been a very long dry spell for going out and being able to see anybody and because Kelly and I in the family have had the blessing (in a lot of ways) of not having to leave the four walls of the house in order to do business. We've been in this great situation where we've been able to really be protective and conservative about how much exposure we let the family have and it's it's been really taxing.

Kelly Reynolds

Yeah, I mean, it's a luxury.

Brian Reynolds

It's a luxury.

Kelly Reynolds

We have family members who are high risk, we can see them we might not otherwise

Brian Reynolds

Yeah, the little guy hasn't seen grandma in months. Except over facetime calls.

Kelly Reynolds

Yeah.

Brian Reynolds

Back in the whole thing up.

Kelly Reynolds

Yeah.

Brian Reynolds

So much of the conversation that we've been having... you've got to properly defend against the virus, you've got to properly get your kid educated, you've got to run a business and you got to keep the family from wanting to murder one another. At very best, you're going to get to pick three of those...

Kelly Reynolds

Maybe.

Brian Reynolds

... if you really, really communicate strongly with everybody around you, and you've got good help, and a good partner, and family that understand, then maybe you get to hold on to three and a half of those, but it's gonna be incredibly difficult for a couple of months to manage all four. It's just we're not ready for that.

Kelly Reynolds

Yeah, my business is set up for this, but my son school isn't they, they don't, they are not. All the systems are the crash day one, because everyone's gonna be online and they don't even have that kind of bandwidth. Like that kind of thing. The society isn't built for us to be all virtual and I don't want it to be. I like seeing people I miss going and eating things. Another big thing on this list is getting on the same page as your partner, spouse, co-parent, whatever that is. I mean, how many times the last couple weeks I said, "Thank God we got along"?

Brian Reynolds

Oh my god.

Kelly Reynolds

The times in your marriage where you're happy for like the bad, hard times that you've learned to work together really well. We are not killing each other right now.

Brian Reynolds

Yep.

Kelly Reynolds

That is a huge thing, because it's less stress on all of us. "Calm" (because we're agreeing) is a huge part of this.

Brian Reynolds

Yeah, Sink Handle, whatever your situation is with your fellow parent, if it isn't 100% I think the best thing you can do for yourself right now, if you haven't already is find some way to call an armistice for a little while. This it's going to be incredibly difficult. the logistics of everything in the best scenario.

Kelly Reynolds

Yeah, it's not a time for nitpicking, right? Like let's just keep the common goal in in play. Right?

Brian Reynolds

Right. Again, you got maybe three, three and a half out of four. It's gonna be okay to not have everything that you used to have functioning the same way.

Kelly Reynolds

Oh, yeah, I think that's a big part too is trying to reassess your time organization right now we all know I love a good system. But organization right now is going to be key. Finding out what's happening four minutes before it's supposed to happen is going to be so stressful. Organizing has been a big thing here. We go over our schedules for the week and then for the day, when we were doing this in the spring, we had a big whiteboard, and it said, where we all were just like what we had to do. It also helped my son to know like, he had to check off "brush teeth". He got to check off the things he did. He did the math. He did the science, whatever it was. And then he also knew when he was done. That's a big part of it, too.

Brian Reynolds

Yeah.

Kelly Reynolds

Knowing when you're done because it's a long day. I was on zoom calls all day and that is exhausting. To be six and trying to do this is a lot. Having that place where you're organized, you know what's expected of you and you know when you're done, that's advice I've given all of you before I get up applies here for kids and at the home, Reassessing, not just your time but your work. I've been talking a lot about getting help. And knowing you need help and most of us know we need help, and we don't get it because we're scared. We don't know where to go. We push it, push it, push it until it's too far gone. And then we're scrambling and then kids are home from school. And even if your kids are going to school right now, they could come home in a couple weeks full time, trying to get ahead of that and getting some help. So many people have been furloughed or laid off or have had their hours cut and they're trying to put food on the table like the rest of us getting out there and thinking oh, I don't need anyone... You do. You probably do. If you're thinking about you need help. You probably do it's probably too late. You need that and someone out there could use the cash.

Brian Reynolds

And, it's a mitzvah but don't do it as a charity. Right now is a really great time. And I don't mean this in a in a cynical way. But now's a really really great time to go find quality help. There's a huge amount of really talented people on the sidelines right now is an excellent time for you to be shopping for more talent and of a high caliber.

Kelly Reynolds

Yeah, you get the help you need they get, maybe they're starting their own business. Maybe they're listening to us getting their life together.

Brian Reynolds

And it could be somebody to help you do your books. It could be somebody to help clean (well not clean your house,) it could be somebody to come... I don't know, wash your cars or cut your grass or something like that. You know, like it could be any one of those things that is not business related, but can free up time for you as a business owner.

Kelly Reynolds

I just had a new client come to me because her kids, (she has three kids that are homeschooling) and she's like, I need help running this thing. She doesn't have the time to do all of the things. Get help reevaluate your work. Everything got really busy in the last month, and all of a sudden, I feel like I'm not seeing my kid and I hate that. So I've had to even (forget school), I've had to look at my work schedule so that I can have that life that I want without getting away from me because it's so easy to take on work and just work a little extra and then little extra. And all of a sudden you're barely making dinner. And then you're barely even showing up for dinner. So yeah, I mean, maybe it's just getting up a little bit earlier to be able to accommodate things. But maybe it's pushing off a project to like Q1 into January, because you want to see your kid once in a while, things like that. All of these things, your marriage, those relationships in your family are so important when you were locked in the house with them all the time.

Kelly Reynolds

Right?

Brian Reynolds

Absolutely.

Kelly Reynolds

If you needed permission to cut something out, rearrange something, go hire something I'm giving you permission right now. So that you can build the business you want to build, not the one you think you have to build. Like Brian was saying, you have the most control of your business. Now, I think that you're all (not all of you, some of you know I'm right) some of you are also going to argue with me and say I don't have control over this. It's an apocalypse. We all have some control, we could just shut it down. This is your business. This is the thing you get to choose, what do you want it to be in this world? Not what it should be what we should be doing? What is this right now? What do I want my family to see? What do I want? What do you want your life to be like?

Brian Reynolds

Yeah, I keep coming back in my head to the thing that we talked about earlier, which was, you didn't opt in on this. But the reality is that you, you don't have a lot of choice, you're going to have to come out of this living a better life. It's not going to be an easier life. But you're going to have to come out of this thing (if you want to come out of it successfully), living a better life; having a greater degree of control

over your own behaviors and your own actions. And being more communicative with your family and more communicative with your business partners and your clients. You know, upstream and downstream and sideways from you. You're gonna have to run a tighter ship. There's just no other way around. It. This isn't a podcast about parenting. This isn't a podcast about philosophy and attitude. This is a business podcast. And you'll notice that we haven't talked a lot about making choices about who's doing the schooling with your kids. But that's because it's all contingent on all this other stuff. You're going to have to come out of this running a tighter ship.

Kelly Reynolds

Yeah.

Brian Reynolds

There's just no other way to do it. Because if you don't, you're not going to be able to fit any of that stuff in.

Kelly Reynolds

It's like when in March, whenever when locked down, we all got a lot of wine, (in my case) and then we thought it'd be really fun to just stay home because where were we going to go anyway? And we could have drinks at 10am I didn't do that, of course.

Brian Reynolds

Not till after noon.

Kelly Reynolds

At least lunch.

Brian Reynolds

At least lunch

Kelly Reynolds

It was fun to be in the craziness part of it where we were all like, it doesn't matter. We're all home. Let's eat crappy food. let's bake way too much bread. I don't know where that all came from. Why do we make bread? but it ran its course and then we get to May and you can't just keep drinking and making bread because

Brian Reynolds

God bless you if you lost weight during pandemic.

Kelly Reynolds

I don't know anyone who did.

Brian Reynolds

I don't know how anybody loses weight in a pandemic.

Kelly Reynolds

If you just keep doing this and running and running and running for six months, you can't keep going like that. You end up crashing. And that's the same thing here. It's fun for a little bit to not have any rules. But then you got to get your life together. We're in this now it's been a while we thought it was going to be two weeks at home. And now it's been six months.

Brian Reynolds

Yeah.

Kelly Reynolds

Business needs to be more efficient to keep going right? This is a marathon, not a sprint. All the things we've been talking about and these first 20 episodes all apply here. All of the things the basics of finance, getting your systems getting help, all those things, your mindset, especially they all come due here.

Brian Reynolds

Yeah. Corona isn't changing things. It's speeding them up. A lot.

Kelly Reynolds

You said this me though, that I thought that was great. I mean, everything's happening right now. Right now. Yeah, everything's happening right now.

Brian Reynolds

Some smart people who I listened to... you know, there's a quote that, Corona is just yanking the future forward much quicker than it would have gotten here anyway. And you've got to be prepared to adjust to that. Because if you don't get your system straight, if you don't stick to your mission and your values and your vision, if you don't do these things, you're going to make some poor choices and you're going to be in real trouble because corona is an accelerant. It's going to get you to the end result of bad choices faster, or it's going to make you more productive quicker by you doing the right thing,

Kelly Reynolds

Good choices. Making those good choices.

Brian Reynolds

You're not gonna wind up with the extra time you need to compensate for the fact that the schools just aren't what you wanted them to be. If you don't take care of everything else.

Kelly Reynolds

Yeah. So I mean, really taking a look at where you are, what you need to fix, and how do you get there, this isn't going away.

Brian Reynolds

This isn't going away.

Kelly Reynolds

And I know that's a sad thought, because we all just want it to be over. But I think we all know at this point, it's not just going to be over in a magic -POOF!

There's some talk about who's gonna have access to a vaccine and how quickly and whether or not you believe any of those people, there have been a great series of articles that, you know, if you're the average person, don't expect to get anything before the end of the year. Because just the logistics of making enough vaccine... Odds are small business owner, you're not getting it, and it's going to go to doctors, it's going to go to the aged, it's going to go to frontline workers, it's going to go to essential workers, and you know, the small business owner, you don't qualify as any of those unless you're up there in years. So the reality is you shouldn't be thinking that you're going to be front of the line on this stuff. You need to be prepared to keep adjusting with it for the next couple of months, at least, on that depressing note, let's talk about

Kelly Reynolds

what, uh, what everyone's doing.

Brian Reynolds

Yeah.

Kelly Reynolds

So I asked around to a lot of our friends because this is obviously the topic of conversation for everyone, not just for small businesses, but everyone is going to kid. Everyone's talking about it. And there was a wide range, I gotta tell you, I didn't expect that much of a wide range of options of what people have decided to do. So like we said, we picked all virtual, at least he's so too isolated. With the idea of homeschooling in the background. If none of this works, some of our friends have gone to private school. Around here, a lot of the private and parochial schools are five day full day in person. I find that hard to believe that's going to last forever. But it is an option especially for people who have to, they've got to work full time. They don't have a choice. We have friends who their teachers. They are expected to show up and teach other people's kids and they can't be teaching their kids at the same time. Because they're on video that is made things very complicated. What do we do with our kids? Because some people have grandparents or other people helping, they brought in a nanny, a college student, something like that. But that also brings into the question like how many people you bring into the house and what your level of quarantining still is?

Brian Reynolds

Yeah.

Kelly Reynolds

We are bringing very, very, very few people. A handful of people have been in our house since March.

Brian Reynolds

Yeah.

Kelly Reynolds

Because I don't want to get sick. And we have high risk people around and it's not worth it. Right. And then we have other people who (a lot of my work peers) like other business owners that I know and I'm friends with, they are homeschoolers. And I think that they knew this ahead of time. Like they've been homeschooling for years. And I think it's because of that flexibility of being able to kind of write your own curriculum and saying, Tuesday we have this and Wednesday we have that and, and it's not as structured you can go out into the world and learn about science and not just have to be in a class or on a screen. Yeah. So that's, that was the funny thing that most of the people, the business people, were already homeschooling.

Brian Reynolds

And for those of you and we've done a little bit of looking into this at this point, it wasn't what we prefer to do. But I think the reality is that if you're coming to the idea of homeschooling now, just be mindful that there's a tremendous amount of resources out there to keep kids active and in contact with other homeschool kids. And at the same time, a lot of those resources are gone right now too.

Brian Reynolds

...or at least, you know, you're you're going to have to make a concession to reduced protection from the pandemic, if you opt to take that in your own hands in a way that you wouldn't be able to if you were going to the local public school. So again, it's got that...

Kelly Reynolds

Yeah.

Kelly Reynolds

But that also means that someone has to be home to do it too...

Kelly Reynolds

...you know. I feel like every one of these things is a very specific case, right? Like we have family members who they both work full time. It's not a nine to five job. They're there in restaurants. So they have three kids. And they are both switching days off so that one can work one day and the other one can teach. And then they swap. So they are taking half the week and half the week. So they're kind of on this, like ships passing in the night schedule with each other, just so everybody can be covered. And that's got to be exhausting as well.

Brian Reynolds

...exactly...

Brian Reynolds

And if there weren't three kids who were all of an age, whether they're starting to have some independence. I just don't know how you

Kelly Reynolds

Yeah, three kindergarteners or...Yeah, that'd be...

Brian Reynolds

The nightmare scenario right now. It's got to be... four year old triplets or something like that.

Kelly Reynolds

Oh my God...

Brian Reynolds

(laughing)

Kelly Reynolds

Can you imagine that?

Brian Reynolds

No.

Kelly Reynolds

I can't imagine that anytime.

Brian Reynolds

No.

Kelly Reynolds

We have an only child and he's pretty self sufficient. I can't imagine any of it. And I think the last the last thing that I've heard is one parent quitting their job. And there's been a lot of articles I've read about that is mostly female, but I'm hearing actually the opposite of my circles because there's a lot of female business owners, and the husband has quit, he's going to be teaching. And then the woman is the one with the business who is rocking out, which I think is awesome. So I asked around, and there's a couple other things that people have recommended people who had already been doing this well, or trying to do it well, or things that had worked. And one of the big ones was calling your internet provider and asking them to boost your internet, saying that it was an educational issue, the bandwidth issues, they were having a problem with school. Apparently, a lot of the internet companies are little to no cost but boosting it for that. I don't know if it'll work by you, but it's worth giving it a shot. Right? Then a big one was planning your day so there's recreation in there. There's some mental space, lots of recommendations of going and having lunch together. Like everyone takes a break and they eat lunch together. Go outside, go somewhere, having things to look forward to That was a big thing, right? Like every Friday have ice cream or whatever the thing is, you go to the park, something fun to look forward to. Because like I've said this whole, like six months is felt like one big run on sense.

Brian Reynolds

You've got to take care of your relationships, your physical health, your mental health, and you know, just structuring things is going to be part of it. And you got to give yourself permission to run a weird schedule as long as you're getting... if you're getting 80 to 90% of the important stuff done. That that's

like you're in the best boat with the best people because nobody's getting 100% of everything done right now.

Kelly Reynolds

No way. There's no way I think that that I think that's my final tip is give yourself a break. I think I said this a bunch of times already on this podcast, give yourself a break. All of us want to do all the things I want to do all the things NOW. You can totally attest to that. How annoying I am...

Brian Reynolds

Never heard that before.

Kelly Reynolds

All right now So, having too many things on my to do list, I always feel like how my kid doesn't see his mom, all that kind of stuff. Really giving yourself a break on this. And I think the final thing is more of a business owner tip than a kid/family tip. As a business owner right now, so many other business owners are in a jam trying to figure out what the hell's happened. They don't know what to do, they are overwhelmed. And if you have a solution, I'm not saying go and be salesy and jerky. But if you have a solution that can help them like you really can help take the time or the stress off of them, like, offer that solution. And if you're just starting out and you have that kind of solution, if you can offer help, and go and try to help people

Brian Reynolds

...and not just that, but you know, go and have these conversations with your partners, find out what solutions they're looking for, you know, there's going to be any number of things that they have on a wish list that you don't do and you can't help with, but the seventh or the eighth person that you're working with, they're going to give you an idea for something that can solve their problem (if you're direct with them) and now maybe you've got a new product or another direction that you can take your company, or a new offering of some variety. This is how those things pop up is people listening intently to the businesses in their circle that they already work with, in times like these.

Kelly Reynolds

...and that kind of networking, right? Like asking people, like, "Look, we're all in a jam right now maybe? What can I help with? Or what do you need? Maybe I know someone who can help you." So I hope our rambling has helped someone out there

Brian Reynolds

Family rambling... family therapy week here on the Sink Handle podcast.

Kelly Reynolds

This is a normal Tuesday night at the Reynolds household. So I hope this has helped in some way. I want to thank Brian for being here.

Brian Reynolds

Delighted to be here.

Kelly Reynolds

All of you out there. I am with you. I know this is hard. I know this is confusing and crazy and scary. My outlook lately has been trying not to worry too much. If you're worried about all the crazy things that are gonna happen at school- they'll change it before you even get there. So don't worry too much about any one thing. Just kind of try to ride it out. Right.

Brian Reynolds

Like the Marines right now. You know, we don't plan we improvise.

Kelly Reynolds

That's really what a lot of this is really just in the moment figured it out. But I know you guys can do it. We'll see you next week.