5 Phases of Special-Needs Parenting

with Sandra Peoples, based on her book, *Unexpected Blessings: The Joys and Possibilities of Life in a Special-Needs Family*
I grew up in a special-needs family

When we got James’s autism diagnosis in 2010, I knew where to turn for advice—my own parents.

Based on our experiences, their experiences, and the experiences of those around us, I noticed a pattern in the lives of special-needs families.

That pattern is what I call the 5 Phases of Special-Needs Parenting.
Today I’ll share with you those 5 phases.

Like our family, I hope you can move from a place of pain to finding your purpose.

As we look at each step, think about where you are and where God wants to take you in the future.
The 5 Phases of Special-Needs Parenting

- Phase 1: Recognize Plan B

Based on the book, "Unexpected Blessings: The Joys and Possibilities of Life in a Special-Needs Family"
Phase 1: Recognize Plan B

No matter when you heard a diagnosis for your child, it was a surprise.

The words that best describe phase 1 are confusion, disappointment, anger, and depression. We all react in different ways.

But what we have to realize in phase 1 is that the diagnosis that surprised us did not surprise God.
The 5 Phases of Special Needs Parenting

Phase 1: Recognize Plan B

Phase 2: Recover & Rebuild Rhythms

Phase 3: (Blank)

Phase 4: (Blank)

Phase 5: (Blank)

Based on the book, Unexpected Blessings: The Joys and Possibilities of Life in a Special-Needs Family
Phase 2: Recover & Rebuild Rhythms

One you accept Plan B, you can develop a new normal. In this phase you focus on self care and rebuilding rhythms that work for your family.

• Learn to say no
• Eliminate decision fatigue
• Establish household routines

Jesus reminded His disciples to meet their physical needs and then sent them out on mission. And He will do the same for you as He leads you to restoration after you have suffered.

Sandra Peoples

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The 5 Phases of Special-Needs Parenting

Phase 1: Recognize Plan B
Phase 2: Recover & Rebuild Rhythms
Phase 3: Reinforce Your Faith Foundation
Phase 4: 
Phase 5: 

Based on the book, *Unexpected Blessings: The Joys and Possibilities of Life in a Special-Needs Family*
Phase 3: Reinforce Your Faith Foundation

You need a theology of disability based on Scripture:

- **Psalm 139** – We are all fearfully and wonderfully made
- **Exodus 4:11** – God allows disabilities for His purpose
- **John 9** – Jesus Himself said that disabilities exist so “that the works of God might be displayed ... “
The 5 Phases of Special-Needs Parenting

Phase 1
Recognize Plan B

Phase 2
Recover & Rebuild Rhythms

Phase 3
Reinforce Your Faith Foundation

Phase 4
Renew Relationships

Phase 5

Based on the book, Unexpected Blessings: The Joys and Possibilities of Life in a Special-Needs Family
Phase 4: Renew Relationships

In this phase, you work to strengthen the relationships you have

• With your spouse
• With your typical children
• With extended family and friends
• With your church family

“In times of high stress, we are reminded of what’s most important—relying on God and others.”

—Sandra Peoples, from Unexpected Blessings
#MyUnexpectedBlessings
The 5 Phases of Special-Needs Parenting

Phase 1: Recognize Plan B
Phase 2: Recover & Rebuild Rhythms
Phase 3: Reinforce Your Faith Foundation
Phase 4: Renew Relationships
Phase 5: Reach Out to Others

Based on the book, Unexpected Blessings: The Joys and Possibilities of Life in a Special-Needs Family
Phase 5: Reach Out to Others

Make a positive difference in the life of one other family by using the gifts and knowledge God has given you. And if you feel led, make a difference for another family or for a larger group of families.

Don’t waste your family’s experiences.
You can learn more about the 5 phases and my advice for moving through each one in *Unexpected Blessings: The Joys and Possibilities of Life in a Special-Needs Family*. Order a copy from your favorite retailer.

Visit unexpectedblessingsbook.com for more information!