

# Podcast 18 – Study Groups and Flame Retardant Pajamas



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Today we look at the heart of Joette's mission, which is to make homeopathy very usable and accessible to moms and families.

In this podcast, we talk about Joette's brand new system she is launching called, *A Gateway to Homeopathy: A Guided Study Book Curriculum*

If you're new to JoetteCalabrese.com or even if you've been with us for a while but haven't known how to get started, this episode is pretty exciting because it's your launch pad into the world of homeopathy.

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If you are on the fence and just can't decide if this is what you should do...listen and hear what motivated Joette and so you can make an informed decision for you and your family.

**Joette:** And it was just coming to light how dangerous antibiotics were. We really, truly don't want these drugs in our kids' precious little bodies. It falls onto our shoulders.

**Paola:** Yes.

**Joette:** And I love when someone comes pre-skeptical, already skeptical, "Ah, really. You're going to have to prove it to me because really, homeopathy? If it was so important, why isn't my doctor using it or how come I've never heard about it?" I embrace it. I loved it. I have this vision of mothers linking arms across the globe. It is transformational.

**Paola:** We've got a great episode today and we really look at

the heart of Joette's mission which is to make homeopathy very usable and accessible to moms and families. In this podcast, we talk about Joette's brand new system she is launching called Study Groups, A Gateway to Homeopathy. If you're new to JoetteCalabrese.com or even if you've been with us for a while but haven't known how to get started, this episode is pretty exciting because it's your launch pad into the world of homeopathy. So let's talk Study Groups.

Hi. I'm here with Joette Calabrese. How are you, Joette?

**Joette:** I'm doing well. Hi Paola. This is really fun. We're going to do this to make this really extemporaneous, right?

**Paola:** Yes, we are just going to talk like we're in my kitchen right now.

**Joette:** Right.

**Paola:** I'm excited about this topic on Study Groups. It's near and dear to my heart and I know it's near and dear to your heart.

**Joette:** It is.

**Paola:** So tell us about Study Groups, what with homeopathy. Tell us about why you started your first homeopathy study group?

## The origin

**Joette:** Well, I started my first study group back in the 80s, when of course, there was no internet. It was very hard to find books on homeopathy. Most of them were from England and Germany and they had to be translated and all of that kind of stuff. I'd found a homeopath who I liked very much and she was helping me with conditions that my children might come up with here and there. And then, I asked her if she would teach a group of us.

So we got a group together and I got my friends together. Many of them didn't know what homeopathy was. They thought it meant home remedies, that kind of thing. I had to do a little bit of selling but not much because around that time, it seemed to be a big interest, at least in my neck of the woods in New York State with the problems with drugs in children. It was just coming to light how dangerous antibiotics were. It still didn't get out into the general public but it was just coming to light if you're paying attention.

So I got this group together and we met in my living room every Thursday night for four years. It was a blast. And at the time, I had only one child. I wasn't working outside of the home. I wanted to be home with him and I didn't have time outside of the home. My whole life was our home, my parents, my child, my husband, my family. It was all about family and it was really nice to have kind of a night out. Well, it wasn't really a night out because it was in my living room. But then after a while, we started to go to other places.

**Paola:** I don't think any group would meet for four years every Thursday night.

**Joette:** Right, every Thursday night. I know. Exactly.

**Paola:** If they didn't love it.

**Joette:** Right, right.

**Paola:** If it wasn't.

**Joette:** Oh, we absolutely loved it. And sometimes, we actually veered off and said, "Maybe not homeopathy for the next month or two. Let's come up with some recipes that we know are inexpensive, very wholesome, and easily made." So we shared that kind of stuff. Every once in a while we take a little break. But the true focus was we, mothers all wanted to learn how to take care of our children without being dependent upon pharmaceuticals. That was the bottom line. That's really

what it was all about. So for those who came to the group, I'm going to go on and on. I'm sorry, Paola. I just – you only asked me one simple little question.

**Paola:** I love it. You're fine.

**Joette:** Yes. For those who had children who were prone to ear infections, those mothers really studied the ear infection remedies. They wanted to know those, well they should. They wanted to know that handful of homeopathic medicines, what potency to use, how frequently to use it, what the indications were, what the differentials were between this homeopathic and that one. Those who had kids who were more prone to skin conditions, those mothers really made a point of learning all the skin remedies that were based on those particular conditions, of course. So we all became experts in our own little areas based on the maladies that were happening in our families.

**Paola:** That's exactly what I like about this because busy moms don't have time to know deeply all those conditions necessarily.

**Joette:** Right.

**Paola:** But when you have a little band of mothers who all know a piece of the puzzle; if he has an ear infection, call the ear infection mom.

**Joette:** Exactly. So what it did is it broadened our understanding because we were sharing information. So even though my children, my child, I only had one at the time, was not prone to ear infections, he was prone to croup so I learned the croup remedies. I mean, I just said I better learn this. I better know cough remedies. But he did get an ear infection once. I went to a friend who did ear, who was our little ear infection specialist.

**Paula:** Right. Well, I have a girlfriend whose son, every time

he gets a cough, it becomes a very asthmatic cough. She came to me super stressed out, "What do I do, homeopathy?" And I told her, "Honestly, I don't know but call my friend Bessie." She is my asthma.

**Joette:** Bessie is the cough, yes, the cough person, right?

**Paola:** And Bessie is off in some other state, far away but my friend here calls her, "Hi. Sorry. Paula said I could call." And they went for that.

**Joette:** Right, right, right. It is mothering at its finest. It's integrating mothering and community and like-mindedness. I have this vision of mothers linking arms across the globe learning how to use homeopathy but not just mothers, grandmothers and fathers can be involved too. But it's usually mothers and grandmothers. I have this little vision of actually seeing women linking across the whole globe because homeopathy is ubiquitous except in North America. People don't know about it here. But it's all over Europe and Asia, India, South America. You're from South America. It's from South America, too.

**Paola:** That's the thing. If you live in those countries, maybe moms don't need to be as versed because they can go to the neighborhood homeopath down the street. But out here, we don't have an option.

**Joette:** Right, right. So it comes down to our, it falls onto our shoulders.

**Paola:** Right. It does.

**Joette:** If we really take this seriously, if we really, truly don't want these drugs in our kids' precious little bodies.

# Being prepared

**Paola:** So if you're a mom listening to this and you're thinking but why, why do I want to learn all of these? Why can't I just wait until my kid gets sick and then learn it? Then you just need to read Joette's blogs and listen to her podcast on antibiotics because you want to be prepared if someone gets sick.

**Joette:** You do not want to scramble at two in the morning when your child wakes up with a screaming ear infection or a strep throat or something, you don't want to say, "Ah, what do I do now and where do I get these medicines?" No, no, no. You want to be prepared.

**Paola:** I hate getting the phone calls from friends who've heard from a friend that I do homeopathy and they're calling in the middle of a crisis. I hate that because now, then I spend an hour going through things, selecting a remedy with them. And then next thing I know the kid's on antibiotics because the mom didn't even know what homeopathy was and was scared to use it. They think maybe the antibiotics are safer. [08:08]. This is safer. That just drives me crazy. That's my study group is it gives you the forum to get a leg up on this before it happens.

**Joette:** Right, exactly, exactly.

**Paola:** So my next question to you, Joette is what you guys talked about in your study group meeting. I mean, you just said at the beginning of the interview that some of the textbooks were pretty complicated, I think especially back then the homeopathy books to learn from were not easy. They were medical.

**Joette:** Yes, they were medical books and they were books to learn classical homeopathy. So we got, I don't even remember which book it was but we got a simple little book. It taught

us how to use homeopathy for acutes, for those strep throats and ear infections and conjunctivitis and bee stings and that kind of thing. Then the more we learned about that, we realized well wait a minute. There's more to learn here. What about the chronics? What about the eczema? What about the food intolerances? What about the allergies? And that's all stuff that has to be learned, too.

What's great about this is that – and I'm sure mothers will understand when I say that it seems like when I first had my first baby, I had my baby a little later in life. I was in my mid-thirties. Up until that time, I had a career. I wasn't married and I've gotten married then suddenly I wanted to have children immediately. So my life was much different than a young mother's life. When I had my baby, it seemed like it was one bodily function after another. It was the pregnancy and gaining weight and swelling and then the milk coming in and then the birth and the placenta and then the baby spitting up and the diapers. It was just one bodily function after another.

Homeopathy for me was like my intellectual nourishment. It was so smart and so intelligent and so much fun to learn. It countered all of the physical bodily functions that I was dealing with on a day to day basis. It was the perfect counterbalance to it. It then allowed me to feel free to spend money, for example, on buying homeopathic medicines because I wasn't buying shoes and jewelry for myself or getting a great new hairstyle. I was buying and investing in my family's health. I could justify it so that my intellectual pursuit was focused 100% on the care of my family. It felt not only justified, it felt lofty. It felt great.

I love opera. I love Italian opera and I've always said one day I'm going to really study it. I mean, really. I mean, I know some but I want to really take a deep, several courses on it. I actually thought when I was pregnant with my first baby, that oh maybe I'll do that. Maybe this is the time to do that;

kind of an intellectual pursuit when I'm going to be so physically involved in my baby. Then it hit me that I didn't want antibiotics, et cetera in my baby's body. I said, "No, no, no, no. This is going to be my intellectual pursuit, this homeopathy." It was very satisfying. To this day, it's satisfying. It's been 30 some years, still satisfying to me.

**Paola:** Well, there is nothing like curing your own kid by yourself. I remember my son had an asthmatic cough that just developed out of nowhere. He never had it before. We moved to a new state. The allergies in that state were terrible. He started coughing and just [wheezing sound] and I remember I sat for a night. I picked the remedy. I gave it to him. Within two or three days, it was gone. I just felt like king of the world for those [12:03 crosstalk].

**Joette:** Yes. Oh, yes. It's the ultimate experience to be able to cure your own child.

**Paola:** It is. It's almost like, it brings giving birth to the next level.

**Joette:** Yes.

**Paola:** Not only have I given him his life but I'm maintaining his life to the best of my ability.

**Joette:** Well put, Paola. Well put.

**Paola:** Well and that's why homeopathy is so exciting to study. It feeds that intellectual side.

**Joette:** Right, right, right, right. It satisfies the mothering side, of course.

**Paola:** It is. It is. Something I love about you, Joette is that you are always – everything you produce, every educational material you put out has mom in mind because you're trying to simplify it and make it useable and ready to go. So tell us about study groups that you're getting out

there.

## A little history

**Joette:** Well, let me just step back for a moment because there's a little history to that moms, the focus on moms. Because I started out as a mother and I found it very frustrating in that I could not learn how to treat my family, my children for chronic conditions like a food intolerance or an allergy or something unless I was willing to devote many years and a lot of money, tens of thousands of dollars going to homeopathy school, a lofty pursuit, no doubt about it, but nonetheless something that I actually did it. But I felt as though I was being cheated out of something that I thought could be taught to mothers in a simpler way.

Then I became a tutor at an international homeopathic school. As these students came in, I recognized them, as time and again, they were mothers. I know what they wanted. They wanted what I had wanted. They wanted to be able to treat their families. They had no idea what they were getting into. They did not realize that homeopathy is extremely in-depth, extremely complex. It is medicine. You often need to know anatomy, physiology, pathology in order to go to homeopathy school. So, I found that many of these mothers who joined this school who I worked with closely as their tutor never graduated. They never completed their studies. And I know why. It's because they thought they were going to learn how to treat their families. They didn't realize they were being trained to become homeopaths out in the world and become a professional homeopath. That's not what they wanted at all. So I found it irritating and frustrating that that was not made clear to them. Perhaps it was and they just dismissed it and believed no, no, no, it's got to be easy. It's got to be like essential oils because essential oils is really very easy. It's got to be like herbs. Herbs are pretty easy.

**Paola:** Right.

**Joette:** But homeopathy is not. In my travels, so to speak, in my professional travels, I've been digging and searching for these 30 years for homeopathic medicines that are specific to the condition not necessarily to the person. Classical homeopathy which is what people learned to use when they are being trained as a homeopath in homeopathy school (it's actually medical school of sorts) does not teach this. And so, I ferreted it out until I found a lot of them. Then I started to utilize these practical methods. Then I learned. I went to the Banerji's in India and studied with them. They have an entire system around practical homeopathy. So to me, it's important that mothers have this information.

**Paola:** I understand why doctors do it the way they do because it's so easy. Have a diagnosis and then a protocol.

**Joette:** Right, exactly.

**Paola:** Drugs. But I can understand what you were grabbing at so go on.

**Joette:** Yes. So I wanted the same thing not only for myself but later on I recognized that I wasn't the only one who wanted this. This is what all mothers want. If the child has a strep throat, what's the remedy? Don't tell me I've got to crack open a medical book and go digging around and find, sift through 30 homeopathic medicines and depending upon the position that the child is sleeping in, et cetera, et cetera. Give me the remedy. What is the remedy? Now it doesn't mean to see only one but give me the one that's going to work in most cases. I'll hedge my bet and that's what I teach. That's what I use in my practice. That's what I teach in my classes. That's what we want to teach in these study groups. This is what we teach in the study groups. It's what I teach on my blog. It's simple. It's fast. You can teach anyone to use these protocols. Anyone can learn this.

**Paola:** Well, and that's the thing. I think today, you're right, anyone can learn this. But I do feel that today, I mean, I can't compare. I don't know what it was like to be a mom in the 80s. I know what it was like to be kid in the 80s. But I see my friends today and I see these moms dealing with so much more. Most homes now are dual income so usually mom and dad are both working.

**Joette:** Right.

**Paola:** And then you've got kids who almost all have chronic illnesses. My kids were watching this TV show or movie I think, something Monsters or whatever. This grandpa was babysitting the kid and the mom on her way out the door said, "Don't forget to give him the nebulizer before he goes to bed and his breathing treatments." I mean for this to put that in a cartoon shows you how mainstream and common chronic illness is.

**Joette:** It is mainstream, I know.

**Paola:** Today, chronic illness is normal. It is so stressful to be a mom nowadays to juggle the chronic illness plus the work plus all those other responsibilities.

**Joette:** Right.

**Paola:** And so you're right. We need practical homeopathy that's straightforward and to the hearty of it right away.

**Joette:** Right. It's all about speed and efficacy and then of course, I hope it goes without saying that it is also about no side effects. That's what, of course, homeopathy is noted for. Of course when I say efficacy, I mean cure. I want to see cure. I don't want to see that we're postponing this problem for some time in the future when it's going to come back only this time with a vengeance. No, I want it uprooted. That's the whole idea.

**Paola:** Call it the end of it.

**Joette:** Right. Okay. So, Paola, you ran our pilot program, actually two pilot programs for the study groups. One in Virginia and then you ran the other one in Texas where you are now. I mean, what motivated you to do this? I mean, I know what motivated me. Tell me what your experience was and what your motivations were.

## **The importance and content of the study group**

**Paola:** Well actually, you motivated me, Joette. Any mom who has friends and that's everyone, right, if you don't figure out on your own, you go to your girlfriends when your kid has a problem, right? You go to them first before you go to a doctor. You always talk about it to your girlfriends. So I'm very drawn to this group setting learning because I really appreciate the wisdom that other moms give. I love the camaraderie we have in raising our kids. I don't care if you're 45 or 25, if you both have a one-year old baby, you're instant friends and you instantly have something to share with each other.

Then I remember you mentioning that you did a homeopathy study group and I thought that's what I want because let me tell you my whole family came down with strep throat that you've mentioned and I had diarrhea the entire time. I was so stressed out. I remember thinking who can I call, who can I talk to that's been through this, that can hold my hand and say you're going to be fine, you're going to get through this, I treated my kid with strep last month. Do you know what I mean?

**Joette:** Yes.

**Paola:** I didn't have that. I was utterly alone and I hated

it. Now my husband is very supportive. But I even have girlfriends whose husbands are not very supportive of this. And then you're left to yourself, I couldn't imagine.

**Joette:** Right.

**Paola:** That's why I want my own study group. I want my own little group of moms who are in the know that can back me up and I don't want to be alone anymore.

**Joette:** Well yes and it's not only for those events that are trying such as that but it also makes it easier when someone says I can't find this particular remedy in the US but you know, I found this great place in England and you can buy it online or it's like the same thing with the whole organic food movement. I love when my friends started to get involved in that with me because then I knew that I was going to have more organic foods available to me. There'll be more resources, more brains involved, more brawn moving it along. Obviously, team work makes a big difference.

**Paola:** Right. So I think that that first pilot that we did came together organically. We really started looking out what did moms need to know to get started with homeopathy. What are the basics, the ABCs and that's what the first half of the study group ended up being that Joette wrote. Then the second half of these study groups really looked at chronic illness. So the first half, the ABCs, we looked at acutes and then the second half, we looked at chronic.

I have to say that when I gathered these friends over to my house the first time, I was begging them. There's this thing called [21:25 crosstalk]. It's really awesome. I really like you. I want you to love this, too. My friend calls me a homeopathy missionary. [21:35 crosstalk].

**Joette:** You drew a lot of your friends from your church, right? I mean, this was all through your church.

**Paola:** Yes. Well, mostly in that.

**Joette:** Well then they saw you every Sunday so they had no choice, the poor kids.

**Paola:** I know. Not all of them. A lot of them were interested, too and some from my home school group. Then I felt like I had something to prove to them that this really is awesome and I crossed my fingers. I hope someone gets sick.

**Joette:** You're a cruel woman.

**Paola:** Then by the end of study group, by the end of the eight weeks, it's eight classes and so we divided them weekly but you could do them twice a week or whatever. By the end of the eight classes, these moms, I mean there was this transformation. It was amazing. I loved to see that transformation and that's when I told Joette, I said, "Joette, we need to document this in videos. We need to document this transformation, what has happened in a matter of eight classes to these moms." And so we did. We have seven little videos of these moms talking about that transformation to them.

**Joette:** That's the word. It is transformational.

**Paola:** It is. And we're not exaggerating one iota.

**Joette:** Yes. And I love when someone comes pre-skeptical, already skeptical, "Ah, really. You're going to have to prove it to me because really, homeopathy? If it was so important, why isn't my doctor using it or how come I've never heard about it?" I embrace it. I loved it. I like a nice, a good, solid discussion on those kinds of subjects or on that subject, I should say.

**Paola:** Right.

**Joette:** I know that in that group I think you had a couple of skeptics.

**Paola:** Oh, I sure did. I've actually done three study groups now. I'm done with the two pilot studies that we've carefully watched and took records and even statistics. But I love it now. Before, it used to intimidate me, that skepticism.

**Joette:** Yes.

**Paola:** Now I feel like I just say whatever you say. I say, "You know what? That's okay. You don't have to believe in this. It will still work if we pick the right remedy."

**Joette:** Right.

**Paola:** I just love being that confident and it does. It just keeps working and working. By the end of my second study group, I had one mom who was on fibromyalgia drugs for I think four years now and she's completely off of them, completely off of them. Another one has all of this physical pain like fibromyalgia but different and she is tons better.

**Joette:** Well and the gut people. There are all the gut people with the food intolerances. That's so big today, so big.

**Paola:** So it's getting to the point now where I feel like my telephone, my email, and my door is being beaten down. "I heard about your group. When are you going to have another one?" I'm like, "We just had one. For heaven's sakes, it was eight weeks and I'm exhausted." So I mean this study group curriculum is wonderful because it's going to hand it off to everybody else.

**Joette:** Oh and the other part of this, Paola is for you. I found this for myself too when I taught homeopathy in different venues. Just like anything, you think you understand it. You think you have a good understanding of it. Then someone throws you a curved ball and you say, "Wow! I don't know. I don't know the answer to that question." It forces you to research it and find the answer. So it forces you to learn your craft, so to speak, even better.

By taking on this course, these classes, you're not actually on teaching level, you did do a lot of teaching. It's unnecessary because we have the curriculum now, right? I mean, you wouldn't say that you have to actually be teaching. But being a part of it and organizing, you're putting, you're bringing your friends in, in a way, you're still teaching on some level or another because you're going to offer your experiences. It rounds out your understanding. It fleshes it out in such a more in-depth way. It's not boring if you already know all of this stuff. Well first of all, it's not boring because you're teaching all this and that's exciting. But it's also not boring because we're using protocols that no one else knows about. Really these protocols that we use are pretty much unknown in the Western world so there's always something new to learn.

**Paola:** You're right when you say that you don't have to be the teacher and know this. Think about my first study group, I knew very, very little about homeopathy. I knew very basic stuff. So between the first, the second and then by my third time that I did study group, I mean there's a lot of information. So what we did is we constructed a study group booklet that has everything that I wish I had had. They say from soup to nuts. It has a chapter reading that gives you the background information and then it has a guided discussion guide. Number one, say this to the group and they just read it and say it. Then it just hand walks me through it and that would be, that would have been so nice because I can read, I can follow step by step instructions.

**Joette:** Well, especially as a home schooling mother. As you know, there are a lot of times when you're home schooling your kids and you don't know the subject. But if you read it the night before, in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king.

**Paola:** Yes.

**Joette:** Even if you're just one step ahead.

**Paola:** Another, that's exactly how I keep my sense in Math curriculum.

**Joette:** Yes. That's how I did it with my kids, too.

**Paola:** No, I hate Math. I hate Math.

**Joette:** Yes. You learn it the night before and you present it the next day. Now it's yours. Now you get it.

**Paola:** Yes or even, I'm not going to lie, the morning I would sit down, okay, open the book, hammana, hammana, okay. Here we go.

**Joette:** Right, hammana, hammana, exactly. Oh, Paola.

**Paola:** Yes and I love that. I love that about this curriculum. I love that you always have moms and regular people in mind.

**Joette:** Yes.

**Paola:** So I am, I'm really excited about these study groups. I feel like we've been working on it for a really long time. I just, I really think it's going to bless a lot of lives.

**Joette:** I agree.

**Paola:** We have to have that moxie.

**Joette:** The moxie? Gut?

**Paola:** Yes.

**Joette:** Spunk and moxie.

## **Motherhood**

That's what it's about. But that's what it takes to be a

mother anyway. You really can't be too flexible. I mean, flexible certainly with mothering and understanding your children. But you have to have a posture when you raise your kids in disciplining them, in what you're going to serve for their foods, what kinds of education, what their spiritual life is going to be, how you're going to carry this all out. You really have to have some pretty definitive ways of looking at life. If you haven't gotten that far before mothering or just as you're mothering, then it's really time to start muscling up and figuring it all out.

**Paola:** I mean, nowadays you do. I feel like everything in the world today is so extreme. The morals are so extreme. The medicine especially is so extreme, it's not you know. When I was a kid, "All right, just let the cough wear off, it'll be fine." Now you can get in trouble if you haven't taken them to the doctor, you haven't gotten your vaccines. Everything is so, so extreme.

**Joette:** Number one, there's a lot of paranoia about health in children and illness in children. Interestingly, there was a study, there have been many studies done showing that really the danger in children's lives are not childhood illnesses but accidents. That's where the true danger lies. It doesn't happen very often particularly if you're living in North America or Europe and in countries where there's good sanitation and decent food and families that can care for their children well.

But it takes a certain amount of flexing. I think it comes naturally for women for the most part. Once we have a baby, obviously there's no turning back and you become the best that you can be. You become the mother lioness and you flex your muscles, you flex your mothering muscles and your intellect. You put that together and make it the best mothering. I call it becoming a mighty mom.

**Paola:** Yes.

**Joette:** We really want to make this act of mothering more than something quiet and serene, although that's good, too. We want it to be powerful. We even want it to be a political statement of sorts. We, mothers can change the world if we decide it. We really have the power. We've the buying power. We have the resources. At least in North America, women are I believe, the most privileged group ever known in society. We have everything at our fingertips. We have the ability to become and do whatever we want and if we've chosen motherhood as our chosen vocation, we should be great at it and why not? Mighty moms.

**Paola:** I love it. Well thank you, Joette.

If you're listening to this and you're thinking about wanting to get that mightiness that Joette is talking about, study groups is your gateway. It'll get you right in there and it'll get you started. I'm really excited to send this out to the world. It's been a very meaningful project for me and I know it's been for you, Joette. And it is. It's your gateway to be a mom, a mighty mom. I love it.

**Joette:** Well Paola, I'd have to thank you too for putting this all together and making this happen from a distance, from state to state. It's really great. So thank you too, Paola.

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