



HOMESCHOOLING FROM THE INSIDE OUT

BY REBEKAH SAYLER

Homeschooling from the Inside Out

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To my loving husband and amazing sons,
I never could have done this without your
encouragement and support.
You are the joy of my life...

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Paper Airplanes

When you are confused, frustrated, or ready to quit I'll be there by your side in prayer. I've been there.

I've snuggled my five year old as he sounded out words for the first time, and smiled at my older son as he worked diligently on the computer... only to realize that the 2 year old was "too quiet".

My confidence as a homeschooler shattered when I found out that the toddler painted my bathroom with nail polish and my older son was actually watching cartoons rather than writing that essay.

I've been there.

Actually, I'm still there in the trenches as I write this book over coffee. Homeschool is a living, breathing, messy, beautiful thing.

This book is living as well.

It's meant to be read, scribbled in and on, and dog-eared.

You might read it all at once, or in between putting your toddler to bed or after you finished tutoring your 12-year old in math.

If all else fails, you can turn the pages into some pretty cool paper airplanes!

See you inside the pages.

Bekki =)

Introduction

I never taught **anything but Sunday school** before.

My family began our homeschool journey in a co-op school where parents worked together to teach their kids.

At that school, your "job" was assigned to you by a board of directors.

Honestly, it felt like a game of Yahtzee.

- **I "won" fifth grade teacher**
- My sons (1st and toddler) went to different classes while I tried to find the courage to face a group of 12-year olds.

I trembled as my students stared at me with anticipation. My mouth was dry and beads of sweat formed on my forehead.

Eee Gads! I was in way over my head.

To my surprise, school proceeded just like any other classroom. I planned the lessons and wrote on the whiteboard. The kids did their classwork and turned in their assignments.

Nothing magical; just SCHOOL.
...and then it happened.

I watched God reach the kids' hearts.

After recess one day, the kids were bickering about something.

I pushed aside the afternoon lessons and had all the kids sit on top of their desks.

We talked.

Actually, they talked, **I listened.**

As we chatted about different ways to solve the problem, the Lord impressed a story on my heart.

We grabbed our Bibles and sat **under** our desks.

Pro Tip: When teaching a bunch of 12-year olds, keep them moving.

- Sit in weird places.
- Rearrange the furniture.
- Remove the furniture

It keeps their attention better than anything ***other than food.***

We didn't get to our regular lessons that day.

Instead, **the kids and I** learned a priceless life-lesson.

A child's heart, attitude, and character are the solid gold pillars of homeschooling.

CHARACTER trumps Curriculum.

It was the first of many times I set aside "school" and listened to my kids AND to the Lord.

The magic of listening and focusing on the heart is addicting.

Of course, the moment I got comfortable teaching in a classroom, the Lord **prompted us to pull our kids from the school.**

We were **"real" homeschoolers** now and I was TERRIFIED.

How to Use this eBook

These pages are written with a purpose. To give you HOPE, a direction, a plan, and to help you not feel as terrified as I was.

It's so easy to wander off the main path that the Lord wants us to take in homeschooling. Curriculum, educational goals, and confusing math problems can cause us to be over-stressed and over-emotional.

We need to be reminded of the goal, the end game.

Why do we homeschool our kids?

"I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth."
3 John 1:4

It's God's heart for you, me, and our kids that we all walk in truth; that we focus our hearts, souls, minds and strengths on **loving Him** and those around us.

Homeschooling is just a part of our journey as parents. But it can be overwhelming if we do it on our own. Thank goodness the Lord wrote down a plan for us to follow; a master outline:

From sunup to sundown manage your home and life with your kids by your side, tell them how much I love them and how to walk through life.

He used slightly different language, but that's what it means.

"You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." Deuteronomy 6:7

Education is good. Knowledge is powerful. But those things are not the main focus in homeschooling.

Don't get so distracted by the ABCs and 123s that you need to teach your kids.

"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matthew 16:26

The Lord wants us to learn and grow. He wants us to teach our kids. But all that learning means nothing if our kids don't love Him.

Every January, I do a crazy purge of homeschooling.

We come back to our studies after Christmas and it never fails. Suddenly, I can see how off-track I allowed the kids to get.

Even though I had great intentions, I can see we put too much emphasis on 'this curriculum and that lesson' and neglected to hold on to the joy of learning. I'm convicted that our time seeking the Lord got lost in the shuffle of schoolwork and life and our Bibles became dusty.

Christmas always brings that back into focus for me. Then the New Year rolls around and I cut and trim our "school work" and we get back to the core of what we really want to learn.

This book is like Christmas.

When the holiday dust settles, this will help you realize you've gotten a bit off course and show you how to get back on track.

Recently, my youngest son, Stephen, fidgeted while I taught the boys a science lesson on the whiteboard. He was grumpy and back-talking. Every movement his brother made caught his eye and caused him to flinch. His older brother's voice caused him to glare and snap.

I put the cap on the pen and asked his older brother to clean up the lunch dishes and read while I talked to his little brother.

Stephen and I went into his room and closed the door.

“What’s going on buddy?”

He responded with a clenched mouth and glaring eyes.

“It’s ok. We’ll sit here and I’ll wait until you are ready to tell me.”

The ticking of the clock got louder and louder.

Minutes turned into an hour as I simply moved my fingers over the carpet and waited. Finally, he exhaled and spilled his guts. He was struggling...

Mama, if I had just pushed through and completed the science lesson, I wouldn’t have discovered that his heart was broken and he was confused.

I don’t always get this right.

I can be quite militant as I push my kids through the filter of my to-do list. But times like this remind me that their heart condition is the true goal. As silly as it sounds, every year I re-read my goals and writing about homeschooling my kids’ hearts. I need the reminder.

My prayer for you to see this book as a friend who is sitting across the table from you with a cup of coffee and lovingly reminding you that it’s going to be okay. You really CAN push academics aside when necessary to reach your kids.

The academics take care of themselves over time as long as you have long term goals and keep moving forward each week/month/year. Just don’t teach the lessons and miss the heart.

Don’t get lose your kids in the weeds of curriculum, lesson plans, and academic achievement.

When you realize that you’ve lost sight of their hearts back up, slow down and refocus.

My kids need me to stop, sit, and play with the carpet long enough for them to exhale. So do yours... ©Rebekah Sayler 2018

Homeschool Notebook Set Up

Everyone organizes their homeschool materials differently.

I recommend you find a system that works for you and your family. I personally like to create a master homeschooling notebook (or filing system).

Master Homeschooling Notebook Materials:

- 3 ring binder
- Folder tabs

Sections

- Menu
- Weekly Planner
- Chores
- Inside out Homeschooling**
- Homeschool Mindset
- Homeschool Goals
- Babies and Toddlers
- Planners and Calendars {Printable}
- Unit Studies
- Bible {Activities}
- Math {Activities}
- Reading {Activities}
- Writing {Activities}
- History {Activities}
- Science {Activities}
- Art {Activities}
- Inspiration
- Journal {For Mom}
- Questions
- Other

As you gather information, resources, and materials, simply file them for easy access later.

It all begins with prayer and tacos



When our friend Gabby came back from a mission trip to China, she confessed that she struggled with how the Lord used her during her time overseas. Everyone else got to do the visible work: Handing out scripture, meeting new people, gathering supplies, running from the authorities. All she got to do was pray. All she got to do...

She was almost embarrassed as she told us that in her time overseas, the Lord taught her a very valuable thing. Prayer is not just something we do before we eat a meal, it is our primary work on earth.

Our family LOVES the movie *War Room*. My personal favorite character from the film is Miss Clara. She is an elderly Christian woman who spends the bulk of her life in her prayer closet executing her battle plan of prayer. She uses in-depth targeted scripture covered words to pray over the people in her life.

Her closet is empty, save a chair and notes pinned all over the walls, but her life is rich. Miss Clara is so full of hope, peace, and joy that she is not moved or shaken by anything that life throws at her.. My favorite scene is when she takes a woman and her daughter out for ice cream and they are almost mugged.

As the police take statements, Clara is happily eating her ice cream cone as if nothing bad happened. I love that. Unshakeable faith.

It reminds me of another story.

Two pastor's wives were sitting together mending their husband's pants and talking. They enjoyed the afternoon with chit-chat, coffee, and chores. As they picked up their husband's trousers, they laughed that they were in need of constant repair.

One was sewing patches on the knees while the other was sewing patches on the seat.

Which pastor did the greatest work for the Lord?

Our husbands, children, and family all need us to wear out our knees in prayer. But so does the Lord.

When Mary and Martha had Jesus over for tacos and tea, Martha got ticked off that Mary wasn't helping shred the lettuce and clean up the kitchen.

Ok, the details are slightly different. I encourage you to read the actual story in **Luke 10:38-42**

Both sisters were hosting Jesus for the afternoon. Both served him but only one focused on His heart.

What did Jesus say?

*“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. **Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.**”*

Our Lord wants to join us for tacos and tea. He wants to be with us as we shred lettuce and set the table, and yet He will always be found sitting and enjoying the company of anyone who is seeking Him.

Prayer.

It's wonderful, inspiring, encouraging... and hard.

The Enemy doesn't want you to sit at the Lord's feet. He wants you to get up and shred the lettuce.

Homeschooling is like making tacos.

Our kids need to eat lunch and learn to prepare meals for company. They need to learn to read, write, and solve math problems. However, they also need to learn to sit at the Lord's feet. They need to know that THIS is what matters most.

But we can't just tell our kids that they need to trust God and pray. We need to do it first.

The laundry can wait. The tacos can wait. Jesus shouldn't have to wait.

Prayer is the core of Homeschooling From the Inside Out.

Spending time with the Lord, interceding for our kids, listening to what He tells us to do... it's hard work.

So be ready. But, be forewarned.

Everytime you dedicate yourself to sit at the Lord's feet someone will holler and complain that you're not shredding the lettuce.

Pray anyway.

They need it and you need it too.

Oh, and never be consumed and distracted by the lettuce.

Lettuce is a watery plant with little or no nutritional value. It's a great filler and provides wonderful bulk to your diet. In homeschooling, the lettuce is anything that doesn't really add educational or life value to your kids. Worksheets, quizzes, and tests are some of the varieties of lettuce.

If you have to cut things out of homeschool, begin with the "lettuce".

What to Pray



Years ago, my pastor's wife was the guest speaker at our church's women's retreat.

With dignity that only comes from having been carried by the Lord through a terrible storm, she shared how she had survived after her oldest son committed suicide the year before.

This wasn't a random stranger sharing her story. I know this woman. We'd worshiped together and studied God's word together. My husband and I ate at their home.

When the phone rang, we knew something was wrong. No one calls after midnight with good news. We found out that her son had killed himself in her garage just an hour before.

The whole year flashed through my mind as she began to share how the Lord had carried her through the valley of the shadow of death and with quietness, she declared that "God is still good." As she wrapped up her teaching, she passed out a piece of paper with a few dozen Bible verses listed. Not the whole verse, just the address (like John 10:3).

"The Lord used these verses to remind me that my entire identity is in Him. When my son died, I lost my identity. As I searched the word, over and over the Lord reminded me that I am His. I challenge you to simply fold this paper and place it in your Bible. When Life gets hard, and it will, pull this paper out and look up a few verses and write down your identity in Christ according to scripture."

And I did.

It took me years to go through the list the first time, but the Lord met me every single time. You can use these same verses to pray over your kids. Pray that the Lord will show them who they are as His children, that they will find their identity in Christ.

Praying Scripture verses over your kids is powerful.

Matthew 5:13 says,

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

You can pray... Lord, help my son realize that he is the salt of the earth. Help him hold fast to You and Your word so that he never loses his flavor, his ability to impact the world around him...

The Lord will meet you as you draw near and ask Him how to pray for your kids. He will show you what areas He wants to work in their lives.

Where to begin?

Every child is different. Here are some prayer focuses that we have used over our kids:

- Honesty
- Love
- Forgiveness
- Peace
- Joy
- Faithfulness
- Memory (what does God want us to remember)
- Abide
- Trust

The following pages contain the *Who Am I in Christ Jesus* verses my pastor's wife gave me years ago.

Bible verses that declare Who Am I in Christ Jesus

Matthew 5:13	2 Corinthians 5:17	1 Samuel 2:30
Matthew 5:14	2 Corinthians 5:18-19	Psalms 2:3
John 3:16	2 Corinthians 5:20	Psalms 3:5
John 8:31-32	Galatians 2:20	Psalms 17:8
John 10:3	Galatians 3:26	Psalms 32:7
John 15:5	Ephesians 1:7	Psalms 32:10
John 15:11	Ephesians 2:10	Proverbs 30:5
John 15:16	Colossians 1:22	Isaiah 43:1-4
John 17:17	Colossians 2:10	Isaiah 49: 15-16
Acts 1:8	2 Thessalonians 2:17	Isaiah 61:10
Romans 6:11	Hebrews 3:1	Zephaniah 3:17
Romans 8:16-17	Hebrews 6:4	1 Samuel 2:30
Romans 8:30	Hebrews 12:10	Psalms 2:3
Romans 8:37	1 Peter 2:5	Psalms 3:5
Romans 9:25	1 Peter 2:9	Psalms 17:8
1 Corinthians 1:2	1 Peter 5:7	Psalms 32:7
1 Corinthians 6:19	2 Peter 1:4	Psalms 32:10
2 Corinthians 12:27	1 John 1:9	Proverbs 30:5
2 Corinthians 1:4	1 John 3:2	1 Samuel 2:30
2 Corinthians 4:7	1 John 5:4-5	

See the future



What if by the time you finish teaching your kids...

- They are **kind**.
- They are **confident**.
- They look people in the eye when spoken to.
- They **befriend** the new kids.
- They put down their phone when others are in the room.
- They are *strong and hard working*.
- They **know** how to cook, chop wood and change the oil on a car.
- They are compassionate and caring.
- They **LOVE to read** and devour the written word.
- They never text and drive
- They hunt down information when their interests are piqued.
- They can balance their checkbook and manage a budget.
- They can break down a project into a workable timeline.
- They can manage a calendar.
- They can create powerpoint presentations and present their ideas to a group.
- They know **how to receive** instruction.
- They can add, subtract, multiply, and divide whole numbers, fractions, and decimals.
- They can measure accurately using various tools.
- They can take a disappointment in stride.

What if

- ❑ They lose with dignity and **win with humility**.
- ❑ They pass on compliments (... "my dad taught me that")
- ❑ They can manage their own small business, like lawn care.
- ❑ They put things back where they found them.
- ❑ They acknowledge that a great team is worth its weight in gold.
- ❑ They master the art of harmony- working together blending talents and abilities for the greater good.
- ❑ They are **self-sacrificing** of their time.
- ❑ They are dependable in a time of need.
- ❑ They do not whine: when folding laundry, going on a million errands, or picking up dog poop.
- ❑ They are experts at something: art, music, design, gardening, physical fitness, writing, programming, etc.
- ❑ They can write legibly.
- ❑ They visit people in real life, talk to them in person on the phone, and text only when necessary.
- ❑ They value life and place the highest value on loving God and others.
- ❑ They are informed and involved in their community.
- ❑ They open doors for ladies, stand in the presence of their elders, and play with small children.
- ❑ They rejoice when **others** succeed.
- ❑ They run to do the right thing, even though they might be afraid.
- ❑ They know that there are only two kinds of information: things they already know and things they can learn.

What if...

- ❑ They are not afraid of learning hard things.
- ❑ They know the difference between needs and wants.
- ❑ They refuse to live in debt, but instead work hard and save.
- ❑ They are the first to volunteer and the last to leave when work needs to be done.
- ❑ They still love Jesus

Homeschooling from the Inside out requires some daydreaming.

- What do you imagine when you think about your kids as adults?
- What kind of people are they?
- How much do they love God and others?

These are the golden lessons. If you need to focus really hard on educating your kids, let your energy be spent here.

Perfection is your enemy



The pain blinded me.

All I did was step out of bed and, "Poof!"

My back was toast.

Frozen in agony. I pleaded with my husband to stay home.

"Honey, I am in charge of a huge project at work and can't afford to miss today's meeting, so work. I called Jeanne to come help you and watch the boys."

Jeanne?

I panicked. This woman had never been to my home before, but **today** she was coming to take care of me and watch over my boys.

Great.

My heart sank when I heard my husband open the front door and welcome Jeanne and her four kids into my messy home. And just like that, he lovingly left me in the hands of a stranger.

Have you ever been "stuck" where you had **no choice other than relying** on someone you barely know?

As I laid there in bed all day, I **learned more about parenting** while listening to Jeanne's sing-songy voice, than I had ever gleaned from any of the dusty parenting books on my bookshelves.

How could a woman be so happy, so joyful, so patient while caring for 7 children (her 4 plus my 3), playing nursemaid to a relative stranger, and cleaning a strange home like mine?

I was amazed by her joy.

Jeanne is a gold medal parent.

In addition to caring for me, cleaning my house, taking my kids outside to play and making our family a home-cooked meal, she folded my laundry.

At one point in the day, she dumped a clean load of laundry in the living room and called all the kids in to help.

I heard her say to my sons, "Why don't you boys fold the socks and we will take care of the rest?"

My boys yelled, "NO!" and ran off.

I swear I almost died of a heart attack. I learned a lot about parenting lying on my back **listening to my snarky, disobedient kids** that week.

First of all, your kids will **not magically become obedient angels** just because you are stuck in bed. I learned this the hard way.

Your kids are not perfect.

Neither are mine.

You are not perfect. Nope, me either.

But God is perfect.

The Lord can be trusted with your kids, your marriage, your life, their hearts.

Let the world around you fade away.

Perfection is your enemy. So is comparison.

The great finish line in homeschooling is not straight “A’s” or a full ride scholarship, but rather that our kids make it out from under our roof with a living, loving, trusting, true relationship with the Lord.

That’s the only thing that really matters.

How to Homeschool from the Inside Out

Focus on their character and heart.

Every few months, **spend time listening** and watching for positive and negative behavior in your kids. Study their body language and words. Let yourself look at them with fresh eyes.

- Where are they succeeding?
- Where are they failing?
- What do they need to practice?

After they are tucked in bed, grab your journal, and a cup of something wonderful. I prefer leaning back at ease with one of those mugs that allow your fingers to give it a hug.



What you put in the cup is up to you.

If you have a household full of kids, like me, you will want to spend a few minutes focusing on each child. If you have a lot of kids, you will have to give yourself more time. It comes with the larger family territory, just like waiting 4x longer for a table at a restaurant because you have a "party of seven".

What did you observe?

Positives such as:

- Attentiveness
- Steady Eye Contact
- Trying Again After Failing
- Joyfulness
- Helping Someone In Need
- Volunteering For Work/Chores
- Taking Care Of A Younger Sibling
- Kind Words
- Complimenting Others
- Exercising Self-control
- Being Patient
- Accepting A Loss With Graciousness- Congratulating The Winner
- Inviting A New Child To Play
- Helping Cook A Meal
- Cleaning Up After Playing
- Having A Thankful Attitude

A place to doodle

Negatives like:

- Snapping At Others
- Making Excuses
- Refusing To Help Someone In Need
- Disrespecting Someone's Belongings
- Trying To Be The Center Of Attention At The Expense Of Others
- Whining & Complaining
- Sarcasm & Cruel Words
- Rolling Eyes When Someone Was Talking
- Shouting & Interrupting
- Giving More Attention To A Screen Than People
- Body Odor, Sloppiness, an overall lack of personal hygiene
- Inappropriate Humor
- Ignoring Correction
- Fidgeting
- Fighting
- Being A Poor Sport

Doodling helps relax the mind

When I watch and listen, what do I notice?

Awesome, Positive, Praise-worthy 	Embarrassing, Negative, Needs some work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> attentiveness<input type="checkbox"/> steady eye contact<input type="checkbox"/> trying again after failing<input type="checkbox"/> joyfulness<input type="checkbox"/> helping someone in need<input type="checkbox"/> volunteering for work/chores<input type="checkbox"/> taking care of a younger sibling<input type="checkbox"/> kind words<input type="checkbox"/> complimenting others<input type="checkbox"/> exercising self-control<input type="checkbox"/> being patient<input type="checkbox"/> accepting a loss with graciousness- congratulating the winner<input type="checkbox"/> inviting a new child to play<input type="checkbox"/> helping cook a meal<input type="checkbox"/> cleaning up after playing<input type="checkbox"/> having a thankful attitude<input type="checkbox"/> contentment<input type="checkbox"/> quiet spirit<input type="checkbox"/> kind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> snapping at others<input type="checkbox"/> making excuses<input type="checkbox"/> refusing to help someone in need<input type="checkbox"/> disrespecting someone's belongings<input type="checkbox"/> Trying to be the center of attention at the expense of others<input type="checkbox"/> Whining & complaining<input type="checkbox"/> Sarcasm & cruel words<input type="checkbox"/> rolling eyes shouting<input type="checkbox"/> storming away<input type="checkbox"/> interrupting<input type="checkbox"/> giving more attention to a screen than people<input type="checkbox"/> body odor, sloppiness<input type="checkbox"/> inappropriate humor<input type="checkbox"/> ignoring correction<input type="checkbox"/> fidgeting<input type="checkbox"/> fighting<input type="checkbox"/> Being a poor sport

I observed my kids. Now What?

Chose one positive and negative quality and then focus on prayer.

Then create, design, or set up ways to practice. And make it fun!

My kids were the kings of pitching a fit when play time was over. The “negative” I observed was ***being able to cheerfully switch gears.***

I remember **sitting in a parenting class** and hearing the answer to the problem. The solution felt like being struck by lightning.

The teacher was sharing about his day job as a firefighter.

He was in charge of prison inmates who had earned the right to leave the jail to go do community service clearing fire roads for the fire department.

“It was manual labor, but it was also a day outside working with your hands and adding value to the community and those men loved it. When it came time for a break, they would slump down and enjoy a cold drink and relax. It was great. Until it was time to get back to work. Every day, these grown men would grumble and complain that **break time was over** and they'd kick at the dirt in protest.

I decided to try a parenting tactic on the men, and it worked like a charm.”

Do you want your kids to

- Come to you when you call?
- Say thank you, even when you know they don't like the gift?
- Wait for you to finish your sentence before interrupting you?
- Stop immediately when safety requires?
- Leave a park, friends house or activity cheerfully?

What is this secret formula?

1. Enter the moment
2. Acknowledge what they are doing
3. Give a 2-minute warning

How does this look?

"Isn't this a great day? You guys are doing great work!"

...pause and enjoy their company for a second...

"Just a heads up, in 2 minutes we will need to clean up and get back to work."

Wait.

Can it be that easy?

As your kids are getting ready to play, **let them know you'll give them a 2-minute warning** before it's time to clean up or leave.

Then tell them what you expect at the warning and when time is up.

Get their full attention.

"Guys, you can play for 37 minutes. **I promise I'll give you a 2-minute warning** before it's time to clean up."

Have them acknowledge they heard you by saying, "okay" or "yes, mom."

Then let them play.

When it's time for their 2-minute warning... Quietly enter their world.

Pause for a moment and soak in what they're doing. "Wow! You guys have been busy! What are you building?"

(Really listen to their response)

"That's amazing! Hey, it's almost time to clean up. This is your 2-minute warning. When the timer goes off, it'll be time to clean up (or get going)... OK?"

(Wait for a response)

"Great!"

Then set a timer. I always stay close by so the kids hear the timer.

"That's the timer... time to clean up! Yes, Mom?"

This 2-minute warning combined with entering whatever they are doing just for a few seconds does a few things.

- It shows your child that you CARE about what they are doing.
- It protects their desire to control a little bit of their life
- Gives them a warning, allowing them to "descend the plane" from wherever their playtime has taken them.

Protip: Do a few practice sessions whenever you are working on a new behavior. In a time of non-conflict, "hey, we're going to practice how to come when I call you. GO run and pretend you're playing in your room..."

Practice 1-3 times and move on with your day.

Role play and Practice

- How to come when called
- How to end a play session
- How to leave a playdate
- What to say when receiving a gift (especially one they don't want)
- What to do when a math problem seems impossible
- How to "do over" when they say something disrespectful, mean, unkind, etc
- How to close a door
- What to do when someone falls in front of them
- How to respond when someone hurts their feelings
- How to give a sincere apology
- Where to place a cell phone: in the car, at dinner, when people are over
- How to listen
- _____

Joining the terrible parent club

In general, parents today let their kids float. Through life, school, everything. stink at that. My kids don't float. They work. 'm so thankful for my husband's lead and example.

Homeschooling from the Inside Out means we need to fail at a few parenting things. My list is focused on boys because I have five sons. If you have daughters, you'll have to tweak this a bit.

Letting boys be boys.

I have five of them. Trust me, they do not need help being boys. They need help being **future men**.

We are training up the future men of this world, and we take that seriously. Our boys are clean, clean cut, and hard working... Whether they like it or not.

Letting kids sit around all day.

My "Mommy Sense" (similar to Spider-Man's 'Spidey Sense') kicks into overdrive when I see my boys sitting on the sofa for more than 45 minutes during the day. I immediately start asking, *Did you do this? Did you do that?*

Sorry. Boys should not sit unless they are on the toilet.

Letting my boys have their own style of dress and hair.

Future men worthy of serving God, loving their wives, running their businesses, etc should be *others* centered. If they grow their hair to their tush, drop their pants to reveal undies, and pierce anything they can, then they will cause "grandma" to feel uncomfortable and cross the street to avoid contact with them. Not acceptable.

While I'm all for freedom of expression, my boys express themselves in a boring way physically and that gives them an edge.

Expecting teenage years to be Easy.

We expect the teenage years to be hard because we will make them hard.

- Hard to disrespect us.
- Hard to disobey the house rules
- Hard to live in our house and break our rules,
- Hard to break things like curfews,
- Hard to be a glutton.

Yep. Teenage Years will be hard.

Moms and dads, join us at failing to raise them to be wimpy, lazy, and self centered. It's okay to fail.

Breathe & Enjoy

I bet you are running around trying to do too much while your children are hoping you will sit and play, read, or simply snuggle.

Stop.

The eternal things require your full attention. *Your laundry can wait until you've snuggled with that baby, or read-aloud to that 11-year old, or watched a movie with your teen.*

Rest.

Kids need to see their parents at rest and they need time to rest themselves.

Focus.

One of the best things we can do for our children to raise them to be excellent readers, learners, and people is to enjoy their company, include them joyfully in everything we do, and to read to them every day.

Enjoy.

Do an experiment. For the next week or two, put all "school work" aside and enjoy your kids. Get up, make meals together, go for walks, snuggle, and read to them every single day. You may need to go to the library together to grab a stack of books to read, but that's a good thing.

Believe.

- You are not a failure.
- You were hand chosen to be the mama.
- There isn't a better mom on the planet for your kids.

What kind of homeschooler are you today?

The type of homeschooler you are today is profoundly affected by what you and your family are facing today.

Is everything carved out in stone and your kids are excited to learn?

Then you may be "controlled".

Did you stumble upon a "we must do that art project" on Pinterest that caused you to hide their math books and **dig out glitter**?

Then today you are freestyle, flexible, and fun.

Maybe on your way to your first cup of coffee, you stepped on a Lego® and fell face first into a pile of dirty laundry that is the size of Mt. Everest. So instead of a cup of coffee, you grabbed your whistle.

Congratulations, today you are a drill sergeant!

Don't get stuck in a rut, believing that you need to have it all figured out. Just because something didn't work last week, doesn't mean it's destined to fail today. On the contrary. Today may be the very day your brilliant idea takes wings and flies.

I think it's important to **adopt the "today"** mentality. Yes, it helps to identify what kind of homeschooler you are.

That is an important filter for you to look through when you think about each of your kids, your home, your life, and yes, their schooling.

But it's not all set in stone.

If you are dedicated, determined, and resolute, you may need to take a step back and mix in a little fun.

If you are frazzled, stressed, and exhausted, you may need to mix in a little organization and structure.

Our culture likes neatly labeled little boxes.

We are taught early on to group and classify everything: our cans are set in a different place than our frozen vegetables, our clothing is sorted by color, our kids group themselves by favorite hobbies and activities, and **we, homeschoolers, group ourselves** by type.

Let's group ourselves by our goals instead:

- We want our kids to grow up loving the learning process, addicted to books, and with the ability to count to 20 without removing their shoes.
- We want our kids to be confident, determined and have some grit.

So today is your day. What kind of homeschooler are you today?

If the word you'd choose has a negative feeling, you may need to borrow an adjective from the positive side.

It's funny how empowering it is to look at the list of homeschooling adjectives.

Homeschool Mindset Self Check

Positive Mindset

Negative Mindset

empowered	relieved	worried	frustrated
peaceful	excited	confused	disappointed
grateful	confident	sad	annoyed
reassured	Amazed	powerless	envious
proud	Optimistic	guilty	regretful
hopeful	intrigued	ashamed	disgusted
playful	curious	afraid	angry
delighted	joyful	anxious	fearful

Master Homeschool Goals

I remember the first time I shot a bow and arrow.

Archery wasn't a hobby I chose by myself.

I have five sons.

If I didn't pick up a bow, I was going to miss out on a whole bunch of fun.

My husband took me into our sunny yard and walked me through the process of gripping the bow with my left hand, "nocking" an arrow onto the string, and aiming at the target.

I confess archery is a pretty sexy sport.

I felt like a goddess... until I sent the arrow sailing over the target, past the fence, and into the brush.

Can you imagine how foolish it would be to shoot an arrow in a random direction?

Without the target, I would never know whether I succeeded or failed.

Watching my sons hop the fence to "retrieve mom's arrow" was a clear sign of my failure.

Homeschooling is like Archery.

We need targets and goals so we know where to aim.

When I began teaching my sons, the only goal I had was to survive each day.

Sure, the "turn the page and do the next lesson" gave us something to do each day, but I had no idea what to expect out of each day, month or school year.

The Key to Success in Homeschooling

You need a target. *A Simple One.*

Without core homeschooling goals, all you'll be able to see is:

- Page numbers
- Assignments
- Worksheets

Those Aren't Goals. Those are "To-Do's".

My husband and I got busy. Sitting in the sun with a steaming cup of coffee, we prayed and asked God to show us what our master goals should be. Then we talked and talked and talked.

Have you ever dove deep to the bottom of the pool and stayed under the water for a few seconds too long? As your lungs begin to burn, you frantically swim toward the surface. You're not thinking about anything but getting a breath of air.

Establishing your core homeschool goals will feel like bursting through the surface and inhaling precious air.

My husband and I boiled our goals down to 4 simple targets.

1. **Share our faith** with our children and wrap our beliefs into their education.
2. Require that each child learns their **basic math facts** inside and out (add, subtract, multiply and divide), and other basics like time, money, and measuring.
3. **Marinate** our kids in excellent literature and instill a love for the written word. It's not enough that they can read, they need to LOVE to read.
4. Train our sons to be clear and **excellent communicators**: both in the written and oral word.

Breathe.

Once you know that your target in math is to "learn basic math facts" you are set free. I mean gasp for breath, lay back, and float on your back free. Your mind will be able to see how hopscotch math is the very thing your son needs today or memorizing songs like Three is the Magic Number is exactly how your two-year-old will master her multiplication tables **long before** she can write her name.

Once you identify that loving to read is the goal, then you can cozy up and read with your daughter, or playfully close your favorite read aloud at an exciting part because it's fun to leave kids hanging in a story. (It's actually the secret to helping them grow their appetite for reading).

Goals give you clarity.

Goals help you look at curriculum, schedules, and activities **with fresh eyes.**

When you know exactly what you are aiming for curriculum, and activities fade into the background. You become empowered to customize lessons, books, experiences, and activities to meet those goals.

You won't need to have a curriculum bonfire. It will simply lose its power over you.

In module 3 of my masterclass, Inside Out Homeschooling: The Heart of Homeschooling God's Way, there is a whole section on establishing your master homeschool goals.

Goals are so important. Do you have your master homeschool goals established? I'd love for you to share them with me at abetterwaytohomeschool@gmail.com. Something magic happens happens when we share.

Keep Experts in Your Back Pocket

Magicians have tricks up their sleeves, chefs have secret ingredients to their signature recipes, and I have experts in my back pocket.

Pretty early in my homeschool career, I realized I didn't know how to do stuff.

- Declutter my house
- Whistle
- Solve percentages in all the different format
- Grade writing objectively
- Run a homeschool blog
- Shoot a bow and arrow
- Shop for clothing without crying

And shopping. Man, oh man!

I get the willies just thinking about having to find a new outfit for myself.

One of my biggest homeschooling lessons came in the form of a \$500 spending spree. I know. That's a lot of money to spend on clothes for myself. I had just *found my body again* after baby number 4 and my husband wanted to bless me.

He gave a card to my friend Laury with \$500 inside. "Please take Bekki clothes shopping and help her revamp her wardrobe."

My friend squealed with delight as I fell to my knees and cried.

She told me not to worry.

A few days later, I found myself in a dressing room trying on clothes.

“Nope. No. No way!” Laury shook her head. “We need to go upstairs. You need some new bras first.”

Dear Lord, kill me now, I thought.

Laury was right.

Not only had I neglected my outer clothes, but my undergarments were in worse shape. Without a good bra, nothing was going to look right. Ta-da! Now we could shop with success.

Shopping with Laury taught me that I needed help. Not because I am helpless, but I simply lacked the skills to navigate the stores and find clothing that made me look and feel like a million bucks.

Laury was gifted in this department.

To this day, when I need a new outfit, I walk right up to a sales person and tell them I need their help.

Homeschooling has been the same kind of experience.

I’ve learned to collect experts along the way. I’m kidding myself if I believe I can do it all without help. The internet is great, I usually need help faster than a Google search that brings up 7 million choices for how to solve a percentage word problem.

I caught Jamie as she walked on her way to teach a math class.

“Hey, Jamie! Can I set up an appointment with you so you can show me how to teach percentages to my boys?”

She hit the brakes on her sneakers and grabbed a napkin.

“You don’t need an appointment, I can teach you a trick in less than 2 minutes.”

She grabbed a napkin off the closest table and gave me her “secret decoder ring for solving percentages.”

I went right home and recorded a video so I would never forget.

She called it “is over of” and it turned into the single greatest math trick of all time in my home.

No matter what we are struggling with, there is an expert out there willing to help.

Got a messy, cluttered home? Sarah swoops in with her Step by Step to Decluttering Guide.

Need a mathematician? There are a few in Our Lives as Homeschool Moms Facebook Group ready to help!

Desiring to homeschool your kids from the inside-out? This is me raising my hand and squealing as I jump up and down with the same excitement Laury showed when she got to take me shopping.

Become a collector of experts. You gain a tremendous boost in your homeschool confidence when you know help is riding in your back pocket.

Subject	Expert	Contact information
Parenting		
Cleaning		
Organizing		
Budgeting		
Organizing		
Health		
Prayer		
Homeschooling		
Character Training		
Math		
Science		
Writing		
History		
Art		

Final Thoughts

Teaching our kids from the inside out is the adventure of a lifetime.

The moment we think, “I’ve got this,” the kids will fight over who gets to say goodnight to the puppy last turning into an all out brawl.

Wait, that’s my house!

When life gets messy, kids fight more, my husband and I argue more, and life gets ugly.

Oh, I'd love to pretend that I'm perfect and that I *always have that smiling face* you see on Facebook in my videos and pictures.

But the Lord has called me to be real... as scary as that is. He has called me and my husband to **homeschool within a sinner filled, broken, emotional family**. And we're all in that boat.

Not one of us is perfect and has it all together.

- Some of us are fighting HUGE battles right now.
- Some of us have broken marriages, unclean environments, and **prodigal kids**.
- Some of us have a negative balance in the checkbook and empty cupboards.
- Some of us have sick and pain riddled bodies.
- Most of us are sleep-deprived.
- Many of us are trying to balance too many things all at the same time.
- None of us can hold it all together all the time.

So we need to press in and pray.

We need to remember God's Promises of peace and remind each other that HE is Good, even and especially when life is hard.

With homeschooling, we focus on the eternal things first.
Heart, attitude, and character.

What about Math, English, History and the rest?

Academics are important. They're just not the most important piece of the homeschooling puzzle. When you focus on the heart, attitude, and character of your children as you teach them to read, write and work with numbers they will earn more than a high school diploma.

They will earn confidence.

In our Inside Out Homeschooling masterclass we cover each subject in depth and give you all the references needed to help you give your kids a solid education. It's important to remember that no two homeschool kids are the same, no families are the same. There is no such thing as one size fits all homeschooling.

By focusing on the inner qualities as a priority, you prepare your child to receive instruction in all the traditional schooling arenas. Build the solid foundation of their education from the Inside Out and you'll not only set them up for future success in their learning but also in their life!

About the author



Bekki Sayler is the mother of five sons, wife to Craig for almost 30 years and a homeschooler with over 20 years of experience teaching kids from the Inside Out.

She is the founder of [A Better Way to Homeschool](https://abetterwaytohomeschool.com/), where she writes about homeschooling, parenting and life as a Christian homeschool mom.

Her heart's desire is to help moms learn to homeschool their kids with the holy trinity of Inside Out Homeschooling: heart, attitude and character.

Bekki can be found in several places:

Website: <https://abetterwaytohomeschool.com/>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/way2homeschool/>

Facebook

A Better Way to Homeschool

<https://www.facebook.com/ABetterWayToHomeschool/>

Our Lives as Homeschool Moms

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CharacterFirstHomeschooling/>

Heart of Homeschooling God's Way

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/HomeschoolingGodsWay/>

A Better Way to Homeschool Academy and Shop

<https://a-better-way-to-homeschool.teachable.com/>

If you'd like to know when she is running a sale, or has a new product to tell you about, you can subscribe to her mailing list here: <https://bit.ly/2KWLRAP>

All the Resources in One Place

Free Homeschooling with Confidence Class

<https://a-better-way-to-homeschool.teachable.com/p/homeschool-confidence>

Inside Out Homeschooling: a masterclass

<https://a-better-way-to-homeschool.teachable.com/p/teaching-your-kids-diligently-in-the-way-they-should-go/>

As a thank you for purchasing this book, I created you a special code. You can get this class at 20% with the promo code: **HEART20** (please do not share this code with anyone. It's just for those who purchase this eBook)

Step by Step Decluttering

<https://transactions.sendowl.com/stores/6856/46608>

Solving Percentages

<https://youtu.be/PkkKyTI6RkQ>

Facebook Groups:

A Better Way to Homeschool

<https://www.facebook.com/ABetterWayToHomeschool/>

Our Lives as Homeschool Moms

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CharacterFirstHomeschooling/>

Heart of Homeschooling God's Way

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/HomeschoolingGodsWay/>

A Better Way to Homeschool Academy and Shop

<https://a-better-way-to-homeschool.teachable.com/>