

THE HOW OF HOMESCHOOLING

BEGINNERS CONFERENCE

by Jennifer Georgia

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TRUE PRINCIPLE #1:

Individuals need freedom in order to “become.”

Recommendation: Give your child as much freedom as he can handle within the limits of what is acceptable in your home.

"It is, in fact, nothing short of a miracle that the modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry...which stands mainly in need of freedom... It is a very grave mistake to think that the enjoyment of seeing and searching can be promoted by means of coercion and a sense of duty." Albert Einstein (*Ideas and Opinions*)

“Children are born passionately eager to make as much sense as they can of things around them. Children observe... they speculate, they make theories, and then they test their theories by asking questions, or by further observations or experiments or reading. This is what is called in grown-up life the Scientific Method. If we attempt to control, manipulate, or divert this process, we disturb it. If we continue this long enough, the process stops. The independent scientist in the child disappears.” John Holt (*Learning All the Time*, 95)

TRUE PRINCIPLE #2:

Lead by example, as the Savior did.

Recommendation: Model the behaviors you want your child to acquire. Teach your child WHY he needs to know something, and show him that skill in action in real life (balancing a checkbook, writing a talk). Help him understand the connection between the skills and knowledge we attain in this life and what we’ll need in the eternities (D&C 130: 18-19)

“Probably the most impressive lesson I have learned as a father is that my children are nourished as much or more on what I *am* than on what I *try* to teach.” Neil J. Flinder (*Ensign*, July 1976)

“The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior more quickly than a study of behavior will change behavior.” Elder Boyd K. Packer (*Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 17)

TRUE PRINCIPLE #3:

Individuals have unique strengths and weaknesses, and are motivated by different things.

Recommendation: Find out what motivates your child. Work with him where he is, instead of just wishing he were different and pretending that he is. The beauty and strength of homeschooling is that it is individualized and specific to each child’s needs.

“Follow the child.” Maria Montessori
“A person’s a person, no matter how small.” Dr. Seuss

TRUE PRINCIPLE #4:

Relationships first; academics second.

Recommendation: If pushing the academics is becoming detrimental to the relationship, do something different. Be flexible. Discover new ways to teach the same subjects, or take a break from academics for a while and go have an adventure. Whenever you are interacting with your child, you are teaching.

“In the functional family, relationships are of supreme importance. It is a good idea to regularly

examine the condition of *each* relationship in the family. You never know when there might be a specific unmet need that for some reason your children have not shared with you. By listening carefully and being sensitive to the Spirit, you will be more likely to discern how your children are doing and what their needs are.” James D. MacArthur, Ph.D. (*Ensign*, Feb. 2009, 14-17)

**TRUE PRINCIPLE #5:
Attitudes are contagious.**

Recommendation: Get excited about learning. Talk about things that you’re curious about, and share with the kids what you find out about them. Let them see that you love learning, and chances are they will learn to love learning too.

“Education is not the filling of a vessel, but the kindling of a flame.” Socrates

**TRUE PRINCIPLE #6:
TJEd – Enrich the Environment. But what NOT to have available for your children is just as important as what TO have available.**

Recommendation: We fill our homes with good things, but sometimes the good things face too much competition from the mediocre things, which so easily draw children in with flashy visual and auditory stimulation. We may need to eliminate the mediocre, and give the quality things a boost (pull a great book off a shelf and start reading it to a child).

"Parents, work at the matter of creating an exciting atmosphere in your homes. Let your children be exposed to great minds, great ideas, everlasting truth, and those things which will build and motivate for good." President Gordon B. Hinckley (*Ensign*, June 1985, 3)

**TRUE PRINCIPLE #7:
Each family has different expectations for their children and different ways of educating – and that’s fine.**

Recommendation: Read, read, read! Talk to different people about how they homeschool, and what works with their children’s personalities and learning styles. Pray for guidance. Then make a plan, implement it, and continue to evaluate and tweak it as your homeschool evolves.

Resources

Parenting

The Power of Positive Parenting, and *Parenting with Love*, by Glen Latham www.parentrx.com

Teaching Self-Government, by Nicholeen Peck www.teachingselfgovernment.com

Teaching Children Joy, by Linda and Richard Eyre www.valuesparenting.com

General Teaching/Homeschooling

Better Late Than Early: A New Approach to Your Child’s Education, Home-Style Teaching, and *The Successful Homeschool Family Handbook*, by Dr. Raymond and Dorothy Moore www.moorefoundation.com

You CAN Teach Your Child Successfully, by Ruth Beechick

How Children Fail, How Children Learn, Learning All the Time, and *Teach Your Own*, by John Holt www.holtgws.com

Einstein Didn’t Use Flashcards, by Eyer, Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff

Discover Your Child’s Learning Style, by Mariaemma Willis and Victoria Kindle Hodson