



The Relaxed Home Schooler®s Newsletter

Jan/Feb, 2015



Coming Up:

[Here is a link to Pat Wesolowski's recent interview with me.](#)

<http://ultimateradioshow.com/relax-and-enjoy-the-ride/>

Upcoming Engagement:

Mary will be a featured speaker at the "Art of Education" conference on Feb 27-Mar 1, 2015 Westlake Hyatt Hotel, near Thousand Oaks, CA
For info:

<http://www.californiahomeschoolconference.com>

Mary is available to do Relaxed Home

Schooling Workshops, talks on

Common Core, SAT prep workshops

for teens, or workshops or keynote

addresses at homeschool conven-

tions. For info, go to our website

URL:

<http://www.archersforthe lord.org> and

click on the the "speaker's page" or

contact her directly at

mary.e.hood@gmail.com

Welcome to all our new readers! Hope we help you to relax and enjoy life at home!

From Mary:

Hello again!

Welcome to the sixth issue of our e-newsletter. Earlier issues discussed such topics as Charlotte Mason, John Holt, Chris Davis, and Valerie Bendt. If you'd like to read the other issues, you can find them on our website, www.archersforthe lord.org.

In addition to writing this newsletter, I am a regular columnist with The Old Schoolhouse Magazine. We also have a facebook group if you'd like to join...relaxedhomeschoolers-ARCHERS. If you have trouble finding it, friend me and I'll invite you.

If you have an idea or would like to submit something for our spotlight section, email me at mary.e.hood@gmail.com.

So glad you are all here! Please also come and visit us at our website

URL:
<http://archersforthe lord.org>

In this issue, I'm discussing the work of Dr. Raymond Moore, whose books and ideas influenced many of us at the beginning of the homeschooling movement back in the 1980s.

His work is especially important for those of you who have young children, especially boys, who are not really ready for sit-down, school-like work.

In the last issue, I made an editorial mistake when I referred to a book called "Better Late than Early". I said it was written by John Holt, but I was confusing it with the work Holt wrote called "Never Too Late", talking about how he learned to play the cello late in life.

"Better Late than Early" is actually Dr. Moore's best known book, talking about readiness issues. There is more detail inside this newsletter, on both his "integrated maturity level" and on what has become known as the "Moore Formula"...a balance of academics, work, and service.

Finally, I'm including an excerpt from an article I wrote in the Aug 2012 issue of TOS, entitled, "Homeschooling When Money is Tight" You can read the entire article as well as other back issues at their website, www.theoldschoolhouse.com.

Click on "magazine", then on back issues.

Hope you enjoy this issue of our newsletter! Feel free to forward it to friends.

Spotlight On:

Dr. Raymond Moore

In the last newsletter, I discussed the work of John Holt. Another huge influence on the movement during its early days was Dr. Raymond Moore and his wife, Dorothy. Dr. Moore was often called “the father of the modern homeschooling movement”. He actually didn’t care for that distinction, or, at the least, felt he should have been considered the joint father, along with Holt. However, later in his life, he started being called the “grandfather of homeschooling”, and that seemed to tickle him.

I had the pleasure of knowing the Moores personally, and once headlined with Dr. Moore at a conference. At that time, I had the opportunity to spend several hours with him, and I treasured that time. It was near the end of his speaking career, and you could tell he knew that. He actually made the comment that he was turning the baton over to me, which was one of my proudest moments.

Even though I had a doctorate in education and was the co-keynote speaker with her husband, Dorothy treated me like one of her kids! They were both Seventh-Day Adventists and super into nutrition. Dorothy physically removed a chocolate chip cookie from my hands at lunch and gave me a strong lecture about the importance of raw fruits and vegetables!

It is actually questionable whether or not the Moores really homeschooled their own children. The kids were raised before the fledgling movement really took off, and Dr. Moore always said they “received part of their education at home”. When pushed, neither one of them really clarified what that meant. I always suspected that the part of their education they received at home was the part that happened after school!

Nevertheless, they exerted a tremendous influence on the developing movement. Dr. Moore’s own training was in educational psychology. He taught at numerous universities over the course of his career. Dorothy was a master teacher, a reading specialist, who shared in the invention of the felt graph, and was recognized as a pioneer in the unit or project method. Whether or not she actually ever “homeschooled” in the sense that most of us are doing today, she clearly was a major influence in the education and training of her own children.

Dr. Moore’s chief influence in the homeschooling movement stemmed from a research grant he received which enabled him to gather and synthesize research from over 8,000 studies of child development. He and his team pulled together a large volume of research data that supported his basic contention that children lacked readiness for formal schooling before the approximate age of 8 or 9 years old. He termed this the “integrated maturity level”, and began to advocate for homeschooling during the early years.

At first, he did not address the issue of continuing homeschooling past the primary years. However, as the movement expanded during the 1980s, and he saw the many benefits that homeschooling provided for older children, he became a proponent of homeschooling all the way through high school.

Through his work with both the Hewitt Research Foundation, and later his own group, the Moore Foundation, Dr. Moore developed what has become known as the “Moore formula” for working with your children at home. According to The Moore Foundation website, (www.MooreFoundation.com), this is the formula:

1. “Study for a few minutes to several hours a day, depending on the child’s maturity ,
2. Manual labor, at least as much as study; and
3. Home and/or community service for an hour or so a day.”

Moore’s ideas are similar in many ways to those of John Holt. He believes in letting the children’s own interests lead the way, and in being role models for the children. The Moore Foundation puts it this way,

“Focus on kid’s interests and needs; be an example in consistency, curiosity and patience. Live with them. Worry less about tests... If you are loving and can read, write, count and speak clearly, you are a master teacher!”

Dr. Moore wrote several books. The research he gathered led him to write “Better Late than Early”, which was designed for parents and helped them to understand how little children, especially boys, do better with a relaxed, natural environment than with a structured school environment. He also wrote “School Can Wait”, which synthesized these research findings for a professional audience. Anyone with young children, especially boys, who are struggling with making homeschooling work, should really read one of these two books!

In addition, his book, “The Successful Homeschool Family Handbook”, (which is a re-write of the book originally called “Home School Burnout”), is one of the best books available for the new homeschooler. It addresses many of the questions that new homeschoolers have, and is available at many public libraries or through the Moore foundation website. Other books include “Home Grown Kids”, “Home Spun Schools”, and “Home Style Teaching”.

Dr. Moore passed on at the age of 91 in 2007. He was predeceased by his wife, Dorothy.

New Year's Resolutions, Goals, & Habits

How Do You Make Them Stick?

This is the time of year when many of us have recently made New Year's Resolutions, and it is also the time of year when we often realize that we're not going to really follow through with them. What makes these resolutions fail so often? Why do we set the same ones year after year with no results to show for them at the next New Year's Eve party? Why do some of us say, "This year I'm REALLY going to lose weight?" "This year is the year I'm REALLY going to get my finances in order, make more money, save more money, get out of debt? Or "This is the year I'm going to relax and enjoy my homeschooling?"

All of the above have several things in common. First, they are all very general. How much weight do you want to lose? How much money do you want to save? Without providing some kind of quantity, they can't really be measured.

Second, there is no means of measurement that has been decided upon. Are you going to weigh yourself every day? Every hour? Every month? Before or after you eat breakfast?

Third, there are no means specified. How are you going to lose that weight? Are you going to cut out ice cream and replace it with low-fat yogurt? Are you going to start a running or dancing program? How are you going to save money? Are you going to get a job of your own? Are you going to manage the money your husband gives you so that there is some left over to save? How are you going to relax and enjoy your homeschooling? Are you going to get rid of certain curriculum materials? Are you going to become emotionally under control through enforced quiet times or Bible studies?

Finally, there is no carefully defined time period, other than "this time next year". How will you know you are on track in May? August? October? The lack of any accountability will almost certainly set you up to have the exact same situation and resolutions by December 31, 2015.

We've all heard this a million times. Part of our problem, of course, is simply lackadaisical motivation, the exact same thing we often accuse our children of having. However, I think a lot of the problem is simply how we view these resolutions, as if they are just a tradition of reminding ourselves how discontented we are with our current lot in life!

Personally, I have learned to focus less on such resolutions and more on clearly defined goals and habits. Goals should be specific and measurable, and there should be a plan for how you are going to proceed and when you are reasonably expecting to have your first successes. In order to have any victories, I've found that the thing to really focus on are your habits.

When you have a wish, and want to turn it into a realizable goal, I think it helps to consider, "What new habits would I need to have in place in order to accomplish this goal? What habits do I need to get rid of?"

In my own life, I almost always have a goal to lose ten pounds. These ten pounds leave me once in awhile, just to reappear on my hips the next year on Dec. 31. The year that I had the best luck at keeping this resolution, I set the following habits in place:

-Every time I wanted to eat something I counted to 10 first and asked myself if this was healthy or not, if I was really hungry or not, or if there was a better alternative.

-Every single morning, I sat down right after my quiet time and did 15 minutes or so of flexibility exercises.

-Every morning in the summer, I went out right after my housework and ran two miles at the state park.

Notice that all of these are tied into another action...flexibility after quiet time, running after housework, thinking before eating. All summer long, I was consistent in these habits. Then fall came. The days grew shorter, the weather was colder, and the running stopped. Finally, as I saw the pounds beginning to inch back, I realized I needed a new "trigger" for my habit of exercising. Just saying, "sometime today when I have time" wasn't working. Therefore, I changed it to, "after one hour of writing in the early afternoon" (I will go out for a brisk walk.) That fixed it, and I was back on track.

Once the habits are in place you need to have some kind of a tracking system. When my kids were little I used a card system. On one side I put any external appointments we had. Then on the other, under several categories (such as schoolwork, housework, personal) I put the one or two most important tasks. I did this every morning and rarely failed to accomplish those. When I did it was because I made a conscious decision to change it...like when it was a nice day and we decided to go to the zoo instead of having a science experiment indoors.

Nowadays, I have a checklist for every day, that includes all the things that are important to me to complete...that includes two exercise times (flexibility and aerobic), Bible study, piano practice, writing, administrative work for ARCHERS, and studying German. I'm studying German in preparation for a trip to Germany next summer, and piano I'm just doing for the fun of it! Not all of your goals have to be "meaningful"...except to you!

I hope that one of your goals will be simply to enjoy your children and your life with them at home. Ask anyone my age and then will tell you that those days were the best parts of their lives, and they go by way too fast!

From the Archives: “Homeschooling When Money is Tight (Part I. Birth to age 12)”

Excerpted from Mary’s Column, “The Ordinary Homeschooler”
In The Old Schoolhouse Magazine, August, 2012

The first thing you have to do is get over your fear of operating without a set curriculum. Stop saying that you can’t, because that will be a hindrance as you try to help your children develop a healthy level of confidence in their own abilities.

Second, you have to lose the assumptions you are carrying around from public school. Yes, you will “miss something” once in awhile. That’s okay! No, your children will not have horrible consequences if they aren’t exactly on “grade level”. Focus on developing lifelong learners with skills to continue learning as they become adults. ...Set some worthwhile goals, and get busy having some relaxed, joyful learning experiences.

Next, without believing you have to do things just like the schools do, identify the basic subjects that you want your children to learn. Then plan some free or inexpensive ways to help children reach the goals you have set for them.

In reading, simply use the public library. When your children are small, read to them. Learn about good authors, and above all, don’t kill off their love of reading. When something isn’t working, back off before damage is done.

If your children are still in the throes of learning to read, remember that not everyone learns at the same speed or in the same manner. Do phonics work? Get some cheap workbooks from the grocery store or make up your own phonics games. Is one of your children unable to hear the phonics? Relax. Be flexible. Keep reading to them until they are able to do it themselves, and then...keep reading to them!

Abraham Lincoln didn’t use a grammar book and managed to write the Gettysburg Address! Reading will lead to writing. You don’t need to purchase an entire language arts curriculum. Have them write about their own experiences, edit a little at a time with common sense, and watch the literacy build!

Before the age of 12, math should focus on building their understanding and learning the basic skills. Many of these can be taught through everyday life. Time, measurement, and money can be taught as real life skills. Practice adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing. working with fractions, and using decimals in real life situations. Use manipulatives when the children are little. These can be cheerios and m&ms and popsickle sticks....not necessarily expensive pieces of plastic.

Fractions can be taught with pizza and apples and a few little workbooks.

Science and social studies can be taught through relaxed unit studies. If you need ideas, look at curriculum materials and make a list of topics. Pick one or two in each area, and focus on them for a month. For example, in science, you can study natural things, such as insects, snakes, birds, the weather, or dinosaurs. Follow your children’s curiosity to learn about things they encounter in everyday life.

Get some good non-fiction books from the library and set up a learning center with an aquarium, terrarium, binoculars, and a bird feeder. Use a combination of books, real-life experiences, and educational videos. Do the same for social studies. Pick a topic, such as a particular country or time period in U. S History, and go in search of interesting materials or field trips. It will be so much more fun than using dry textbooks.

Don’t forget the fine arts. Set up a learning center for art. Get books about artists, and include music and theatre in your children’s lives.

Do some physical activities each day. Hike, play tennis, and climb trees together. Yes, you!

Focus, above all, on developing their character and the values and habits you are helping them appreciate and acquire. Start the day with Bible stories, end with prayer, and spend some time on your knees planning for the next day. One day at a time! You don’t need a lot of expensive materials to homeschool during the early years.



All of Mary’s talks are now also available as MP3s!