

Dear Burned-Out Homeschool Mom

Dear homeschool mom, are you hanging by a thread? Do you feel like you're in a fog that seems so dense you can't even see your hand in front of your face?

Overwhelm has settled in ...

Voices of your loudest critics haunt you. For some of us, it's family or close friends, making it even more difficult. You can see their faces and hear their voices loud and clear – even above the ninja sword fight and championship wrestling tournament unfolding in your living room.

"I've always known you couldn't homeschool. I thought you'd put the kids in *real* school after kindergarten...they'd be much better off. Your 2nd grader isn't reading yet...If she was in public school, she'd have been reading for 2 yrs. now. She'd know her multiplication tables and that there's no "ee" in "pink."

And the list goes on

and on

and on

Sound familiar? **You're not alone.**

You feel like a failure and that irreparable damage has been done to your children. I know...it FEELS that way. There may even be some temporary delay in learning but I can tell you from experience that **if God has called you to the task, He will equip you to complete it.** There's nothing that should've been learned in the 2nd grade that can't be learned even faster in the 3rd and beyond. This is a phenomenon I've experienced over and over from homeschooling our 7 children and always feeling "behind."

Homeschooling is so intertwined with our lives that it's

difficult to go through challenging times without it affecting our school – having new babies, taking care of my mom with stage 4 breast cancer for 6 yrs., adjusting to life after our house was hit by a tornado that required 4 moves in 2 yrs. as well as the usual emotional ups and downs that are a part of life – financial pressures, death of parents, graduation of first child, etc...

When I hit complete overwhelm with homeschooling, here's what I've found to be helpful:

1. I pinpoint exactly what is causing me to be overwhelmed.

After living awhile like a zombie with all of the negative talk blaring in my head however long it takes, at some point, I decide to take positive action. Pinpointing the root cause is easier said than done many times. I'm such a holistic thinker and a spider-webber that everything seems to be connected. Trying to untangle the web can be a huge challenge for me. Even finding the time to think rationally about it or anything else can be a huge challenge. I require large blocks of quiet time to focus and think...that's a huge time challenge for any mom. When I can pinpoint the exact issues that are causing the stress and overwhelm, then I can begin to figure out a gameplan to deal with it.

2. I ask for help from my husband (and others) to think more objectively.

My husband is always the voice of reason I need to get me grounded again, but not until I'm ready. I've learned that I don't tell him that anything is broken unless I want him to immediately fix it ☐ When I'm ready to be "fixed", then I let him in. He talks me down from the cliff better than anyone else in my life and I'm so thankful for him. He helps me see things as they are and not only how I perceive them to be...good or bad. Together, we come up with an action plan based on facts and reality – not emotion.

Because I've pinpointed the precise problem, I can also ask

others how they've dealt with a similar issue. This always open my eyes to new ways of creatively working toward a possible solution. Getting input from others is vital...as it usually ends up to be an encouragement session as well ☐

3. I reconnect with my "why I want to homeschool."

Our decision to homeschool was actually a series of events over several years and my desire to do so was "kept in the closet" initially. Along our journey there were 2 books that played a huge role. First, the Bible. Deuteronomy talks about "teaching your children as you walk along the road and as you lie down." I really couldn't imagine how I'd have enough time for discipling my kids and doing life with them if they were away at school all day. I was a middle school teacher at the time and fully aware of the homework load they'd carry as well...I wondered when I would find time for teaching them the most important lessons of scripture.

Initially, "*The Well-Trained Mind*" played a huge role as to how I could practically pull this whole homeschool thing off. It was a road map...suggestions and ideas about how to teach every subject at every level. I strayed somewhat from the classical philosophy when I met my true love – Charlotte Mason. When I need to reconnect with my "why," I Reconnecting with what truly motivated me in the beginning helps me realign my focus.

Overwhelm/burnout is a difficult place to be...for everyone. Sometimes, all I need is a date night with my hubs, but for prolonged overwhelm, the tips above have pulled me through. Maybe you're going through a challenging time right now ... or maybe you've just come out of one. I'd love to encourage you or hear how you battle burnout ... leave a comment below!

Thanks for stopping by ~

becky ☐