

Joy! June 2000 Home schooling – Home schoolers need support.

MARTIE DU PLESSIS

“A perfect home school? No. A good place to learn and grow? Yes. An unchanging formula? Never. Principles used in growing healthy, productive children? Absolutely!”

These are the words of Diana Waring, 17 year veteran home school mom from South Dakota, America.

Because home schooling is a relatively new educational option in South Africa, most parents choosing this route don't do sufficient “homework” at the outset. Many soon become discouraged when their expectations do not transform into the rosy picture they may have envisaged. Unfulfilled expectations may often result in a lack of motivation and frustration in both the parents and the learner.

But, help is at hand for those parents who are not too proud to admit they are having problems turning expectations into reality. A big obstacle to overcome before parents admit their need of assistance, may be that they don't realise it's alright to change their approach, including the curriculum they are currently using. At this stage, there are so few veteran home schooling parents in South Africa to assist fledgling families – and even then, most of them are only equipped to share from their own experience.

From the many phone calls and letters I receive daily, asking for assistance, and the situations I encounter as I travel the country, it is clear that we, the home schooling parents, are in need of practical contributions from people who have been home schooling for a number of years. We also need to look at the results of research done locally concerning the current educational situation.

I recently discovered a wonderful book consisting of testimonies and practical advice by 50 veteran home schooling couples – some of them who have been home schooling for more than 20 years. The book has been compiled by Bill and Diana Waring of the U.S.A. and is recommended for parents who want to learn from other parents' experiences.

Coming from pioneers and leaders in the home schooling community, *Things we wish we'd known* will become an indispensable guide and inspiration for your own journey.

Read what some of the contributors had to say!

Steve and Jane Claire Lambert (20 years of home schooling): “The two most important concepts we wish we had known at the beginning are that home school is not ‘school at home’ and that real education is a marathon – not a sprint.”

Michael and Susan Card (song writer, doing home school for 6 years): “We discovered together that the best teacher was the experience of life itself.”

Katherine von Duyke: (Home school mom for 13 years): “Freelance teaching is a bit like freelance cooking. When I first married, I was enslaved to all the prepacked foods at the grocery store because of my poor cooking skills. As I grew in skill, I began to notice that recipes I had memorised did not seem half as difficult to prepare as those I had to look up. It is like that with teaching... That is why tutoring is the most effective way to teach.”

She goes on... "Character is the person, academics a tool. I want to develop the character that will wield the tool, the character is too weak to properly wield it, if only on the character, I have not equipped him with tools. The Scripture clearly teaches that both character and equipping are best developed within relationships, the first being with parents."