

# Preventing Homeschool Burnout

By: Donna Vail

**USUALLY** when I meet someone for the first time and they learn that I'm a homeschooling mother of six children they often say something like, "Oh, I could never do that with my two children, I don't know how you do it all with six children." This is before they find out I also work from home helping families across the world homeschool. I can see where it would be overwhelming, especially if your concept of education is simply recreating a school model at home. This common misperception holds many families back from the rewards of homeschooling.

Like many parents starting out homeschooling, I began recreating a school in my home. I was standing in front of my children teaching, requiring piles of worksheets and involving my kids in as many outside social activities as possible. I was constantly buying curriculum and books, going to meetings and book fairs to learn more, buy more and do more. We were plowing through tons of material. The only problem was that we were on the fast track to burnout. I had no idea what was coming until in our third year when we crashed and burned.

In 1995 when the Internet was in its infancy, search giants like Google didn't exist. Finding information required a lot of footwork. Now, it's completely opposite. We have access to too much information, leaving many parents overwhelmed before they even begin the greatest responsibility of all,

raising and educating the next generation. Raising kids is no time to experiment or worse, wait twelve years to find out you were wrong. The time is now while you're creating a legacy with each day of loving, living and learning together.

The three causes of homeschool burnout are

- 1) Fatigue
- 2) Artificial Learning Environment and
- 3) Unrealistic Expectations or Lack of Goals. So let's dive in and zap homeschool burnout once and for all, creating the life you truly want to live with your family each and every day.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."  
—Benjamin Franklin

## Fatigue

This is number one on the list of burnout for good reason. You cannot care for others if you're allowing yourself to be drained of all your energies. Getting enough rest and caring for yourself will make everything 90% more possible.

If your day is filled to the point that you have to schedule your sleep then by all means, do it. I know this is a hard one for most moms (including myself at times) because there's always something else or someone else to care for before us often going without rest to get it all done.

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Sleep is where health begins. To neglect sleep is to neglect the self and teaches our children to do the same. Honor yourself if you're a morning person and get up early, experience quiet time before the house wakes. This can set the tone for the day rather than hitting the floor running. And if you're a night owl and function better then, respect yourself by taking some time after everyone is in bed. Just keep in mind again that sleep is the beginning of health so be sure you're not staying up too late and you're getting the rest you need to fulfill the needs of the day. You'll be amazed how much better your day will flow with regular sleep.

Taking care of your health will give you the fuel you need to function. Be sure to practice these simple tips, many of which I'm sure you're familiar with, but we can always use a reminder:

- Drink plenty of water.
- Walk daily. Take a 30-minute walk in the morning and 30-minute walk in the evening, preferably after supper.
- Step out into the sunshine daily.
- Be sure you're getting all your vitamins and minerals along with nutrient dense food.



Another way to prevent fatigue is to streamline tasks and have systems in place for homeschooling, household cleaning, meals, and schedules. Work smarter, not harder.

## Artificial Learning Environment

An artificial learning environment is created in the home when parents create a full-time job on top of all the demands of everyday by recreating school at home. Standing in front of your children, teaching lessons and handing out assignments is not a natural learning process. When you align with the natural laws and work with the flow you eliminate most of your struggle and stress.

Instead of teaching and creating a public school model at home, create an inspiring environment for self-education and mentor your children by providing, guiding and stepping aside. Be sure you're providing your child with the tools to support self-education, guide him in the way he should go and step aside allowing the child to do the work in the way that is best for him.

While the child is working on his self-education you will be modeling by doing your own deskwork, reading or writing. We must be conscious at all times what we're modeling because our children learn what they live, they are constantly watching us. By partnering with them, walking beside them

rather than ruling over them, you will be supporting them to grow and learn to their greatest potential.

## Unrealistic Expectations or Lack of Goals

Realize that being involved whole-heartedly in the raising of children is not only physically demanding but emotionally draining as well. This is why you need regular sleep and quiet time. It's important to remain in a place of gratitude and able to let go of expectations in order to truly care for your family's needs. On occasion you will have to let go of academics to tend to other family needs such as the demands of an infant, character issues, when organized plans fall apart, illness or family issues.

Be comfortable with knowing your limitations. Remember, when you come to a point of feeling limited it's an invitation to grow. None of us can be 100% all of the time. Give yourself permission to work through it. Set yourself up for everyday success with a plan and reachable goals. Remember to leave room for flexibility. Parents and kids need the space to grow, explore and work it all out.

Parents Inspired to Action:

If you do experience burnout don't throw in the towel. Take a break and regroup. A week off from homeschooling, gaining a new perspective, seeking help from a mentor are all wonderful ways to make the necessary changes in your life to prevent the three primary causes of burnout and make sure you get extra sleep as well as relax with your feet up.

Build on your relationships while you're taking care of yourself by setting up time everyday to just play with your children and be fully present in their world.

Create an inspiring learning environment and a lifestyle of learning. Foster partnerships with your children and as you live in respect to all of life you will find the flow to carry you to reach your goals and an ease of living you desire. 📌



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