



A Journey to Joy (and Sanity) for Homeschooling Moms

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At-Home Discovery Packet Preview

Here's just a sample of the great resources in store for you as a "bloom" participant!

Thoughts to Consider

from Class 1: "The Big Fat Lies (and the Truths that Set Us Free)"

Experiment Chart: What Does Your Rest Pillar Look Like?

from Class 3: "Steps to Simple (and Rest-Filled) Days"

From My Heart: Death By A Thousand Toothpicks

from Class 6: "Homeschooling Joy Stealers: Part 3: The Anger Monster"

Inspiration vs. Comparison

from Class 5: "Homeschooling Joy Stealers: Part 2: The Comparison Leech"

This “At-Home Discovery Packet Preview” is intended to introduce potential class participants to the types of activities and exercises present in the seven At-Home Discovery Packets.

To become a “bloom” participant and receive access to eight video class modules, the “bloom” private Facebook group and the eight At-Home Discovery Packets in their entirety, please visit YourVibrantFamily.com

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THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

Journaling prompts from Class 1: “The Big Fat Lies (and the Truths that Set Us Free)”

Did any of the lies mentioned in class strike a chord in your heart? If so, delve deeper and explore the topic a little by writing down some thoughts that come to mind.

Are there other lies that you have told yourself about homeschooling or about your work as a teacher overall?

How have these lies tainted or shaded your view about homeschooling?

Do you find that, on the surface, you see these as a lie but your actions perhaps demonstrate that you’ve not fully expelled the lie from your thinking? Explain.

Can you think of a specific instance when you allowed the lie to permeate your thoughts and/or affect your view of a particular situation?

EXPERIMENT CHART: WHAT DOES YOUR REST PILLAR LOOK LIKE?

from Class 3: "Steps to Simple (and Rest-Filled) Days"

The following exercise helps you get close and personal with your rest pillar. Specifically we'll look at WHAT types of rest and WHEN rest is necessary for your unique needs. Then we'll examine what NEXT STEPS are needed, and catalog the RESULTS of those steps. Each item is spelled out more clearly below.

WHAT: Brainstorm several ideas that can potentially build your rest pillar. Consider activities like reading a book, conversation with a friend, etc.; but also consider atmospheric conditions (such as having certain areas of your home well-organized and maintained; or having silence) and patterns in a day (such as doing school inside for part of the day, and outside for another). What recharges you and builds up your pillar of rest? What brings beauty to your days (looking at art? watching the sunset? doing something crafty? These can be big things (like a weekend away) or small things (like a five minute break for you between breakfast and that first subject of the day). Experiment with these ideas if you haven't already and write down why this particular activity, change in atmospheric condition or change in daily pattern bring rest. Don't be afraid to be unique here! We are all formulated differently and what is restful to one may not be restful to another.

WHEN: In terms of *everyday* rest, consider open times in your day where you feel especially depleted. For example, I have a rest time before the kids wake up, and in the early afternoon after our school is done (before I start dinner). Resist the urge, however, to give these rest times a specific start and end time if at all possible because this tends to create a rigid "schedule-type" mindset. These are rest times that occur at the same segment of each day (they are pillars), but are not given a specific time so as to be locked in stone. In terms of longer periods of rest, consider if there are days of the week or even points in the month/year where you can make rest a priority.

NEXT STEPS: This is where you take one or maybe two of the WHEN rest segments you came up with and experiment this week by trying out some of the WHATS during those times.

RESULTS: Write down what happened. Did the activity bring some rest and relief during that time? If not, is there a better segment of the day where the activity would be more beneficial, or is the activity just not a good fit for you?

WHAT	

WHEN	
EVERYDAY REST SEGMENTS	
ONE DAY A WEEK	
OTHER POINTS IN MONTH OR YEAR	

NEXT STEPS	RESULTS

Note: If it's been a while since you've experienced true, soul-replenishing rest, your "WHAT" may be much higher for this season than normal. That's alright. If you recognize yourself to be in this critical, depleted state, go through the exercise now and experiment with the findings. Once you feel that your core rest needs have stabilized and returned to normal, I would encourage you to go through this assessment again.

FROM MY HEART: DEATH BY A THOUSAND TOOTHPICKS

from Class 6: “Homeschooling Joy Stealers: The Anger Monster”

I don’t have one anger trigger that brings me to overwhelm—it’s the thousand other ones that when added up make my blood boil.

It’s kind of like one little prick of a toothpick is tolerable, but thousands of them all at once? Yeah. Now that would be an excruciating way to die.

Death by a thousand toothpicks sounds funny. But I’m guessing that, as a homeschooler, you too regularly experience this slowly building anger wave caused by a day’s worth of tiny frustrations. And it’s far from humorous, right?

For me, this gradual build-up of anger has become so routine that I can predict the time of day when my stress levels are their highest: early afternoon. By this point in the day I have been actively working with my kids since at least 8:00 am and I am feeling my “nice mom” spirit starting to break apart.

The anger cues start showing up: a sigh here... an annoyed comment there... and yep, I know that it must be about 1:30 or 2:00 p.m.

You’re entering the danger zone, I tell myself. You need to finish up those last school tasks, get the baby down for a nap and start the afternoon quiet time for everyone—before you blow.

Most days I’m able to keep it together for that last hour or so and finish strong. I rally the troops to finish their work and then scoot us off to quiet time, giving me about one hour of no-kid-time (usually).

Quiet time is my most effective offensive weapon for these moments. After about an hour of being able to check email, blog and even read, I’m calmed down and ready for the rest of the afternoon and evening routine.

But some days... some days I ignore the signs and for whatever reason I put off (or disregard) quiet time. Those are the days when I’m easy prey for the anger monster.

And that’s when it happens. The day continues on... I think I’m able to handle the anger just fine and then *boom*—that final toothpick stabs me and before I know it, I’m putty in his hands. The issue itself might not be a big deal, but it’s the combination of all the tiny “toothpick stabs” that have been building all day that pushes me over the edge.

I used to beat myself up about these “breaking down” moments. I thought that the remedy was to simply work harder at being nice and to pray for more patience and perseverance to get me through.



While I still regularly pray for perseverance and I know that there are times when God gives me supernatural abilities to respond calmly in a situation, I have also made a huge realization that's made all the difference: I am human and I have limits.

I have limits to my patience. Limits to how long I could be "nice cheery mom." Limits to how long I can live under the onslaught of anger triggers without taking a break to refuel myself.

I've also admitted that these limits are *reasonable* and *expected*.

Sometimes I've looked back at a situation and thought, *Well, no wonder there were anger issues today. In my quest to get that "one last thing" in, I pushed them (and me) way beyond what I should have!*

There was nothing wrong with the feelings that the kids and I had experienced (of course, if our anger had caused damage, we needed to fix that). But in terms of having the anger emotions, my kids and I were just being human, and we'd been pushed too far.

It finally dawned on me (after another "why won't you give me more patience here, God?!"-type prayers) that in order to thwart the anger monster's power, I needed to notice the cues that lead me to this natural breaking point and accept them as part of being "me."

In fact, I realized that one of the ways that God wanted to help me keep my anger under control was by giving me the ability to detect anger cues!

I've begun helping the kids detect their anger cues as well, and that's been extremely helpful for them.

Overall I'm learning that we're each given different "breaking points" or limits regarding patience and anger. Instead of beating myself (or the kids) up, I'm learning to accept my (and their) limits.

I still strive for growth in these areas, of course. But instead of putting myself in impossible situations and asking God to rescue me, I'm asking God for wisdom in how to work *with myself*. I'm asking for self-insight so that I know how to best work with the unique way I was designed.

For example, I've noticed that noise plays a *huge* factor in awakening anger inside me. When there is a lot of commotion around me (people talking, music blaring, kids crying, lots of different projects happening at once) it's like someone turns on the highest setting of the flame under me. I can't endure under that heavy flame for long without boiling over. This seems to have gotten more prominent as I've gotten older and had more kids.

So, when I notice this type of situation swirling around me (and begin to feel my anger soar) I recognize this as one of my especially volatile triggers and immediately combat it.

Silence is the antidote that works best for me. When I'm in these types of situations, I often will set a 5 minute timer and ask everyone and everything to be completely silent. Or, if that's not possible, then I physically remove myself from the noise to another room and let the silence calm me down.

The "toothpicks" are going to come in our day. We can do our best to keep them from bothering us, but also it's important to admit that they do add up and that we all have a breaking point.

After all, "death by toothpicks" isn't a pleasant experience. Even if its those fancy hors d'oeuvres toothpicks, it's still a painful way to spend the day.

INSPIRATION VS. COMPARISON... WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

from Class 5: "Homeschooling Joy Stealers: Part 2: The Comparison Leech"

INSPIRATION:	COMPARISON:
Is able to take an idea from someone else and put their family's unique spin on it.	Is prone to "copy and paste" other's ideas, convinced that this is the right method for all.
Understands that no idea is perfect and that no homeschool family is perfect.	Believes (subconsciously or consciously) that other families have it figured out and that by implementing this one idea they'd have it figured out too.
Allows us to freely glean ideas from others without feeling pressure to implement those ideas right away, if at all.	Ideas are gleaned with a pressure to compete, to "be more like" another.
Positively challenges us to set goals.	Links self-confidence and self-identity to whether or not goals are met.
Encourages us to be the best version of ourselves.	Encourages us to keep up with the Joneses, even if those activities aren't what's best for our homeschool.
Is picky about which ideas might work; careful to implement major change.	Rushes into change; eager to make things feel "normal"
Breeds a spirit of mutual encouragement and togetherness.	Breeds competition and isolation.
Rooted in confidence.	Rooted in insecurity.
Comfortable with family ideosyncracies and uniqueness.	Uncomfortable with being different. Change rooted in wanting to be just like everyone else and to fit in.
"Iron sharpens iron" mentality.	Friends seen as competition and as a threat.
Change based on internal motivation and pleasing God.	Change based on wanting to look good to others and to maintain a facade.
Understands that change takes time and that sometimes we have to "try on" several ideas before finding one that's the right fit.	Instant change desired. Beats itself up when a seemingly "perfect" idea doesn't work out.
Free to share ideas; encourages others with a quiet example.	Doesn't want to share ideas; threatened by peers; brags about accomplishments.
Energized by life's possibilities; able to happily live within the tension of striving for the best and being content with the present.	Emotional energies drained by chasing the "next" thing. Unfulfilled, restless and discontent by the continual need to be "as good" as someone else.
INSPIRATION SAYS:	COMPARISON SAYS (subconsciously or consciously):
"Let's try it and see."	"We have to make this work because we need to look like that other family, and we need to make sure that we have it all together."
"We are all learning and growing together, and its good to encourage each other in that growth, even if it means being vulnerable about our own failures."	"How are we doing in this area? Are we doing better than they are?"