



GUIDING YOUR FAMILY TO THEIR IDEAL LEARNING FLOW

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At-Home Discovery Packet Preview

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

Thoughts to Consider
from "Class 2: The Science Behind Rhythms"

From My Heart: The Birth of 'rhythm' (and All Those Labor Pains)
from "Class 1: Rhythm-Based Homeschooling Defined"

Exercise: Analyzing Red Flags and Developing Strategies
from "Class 3: The Art Behind Rhythms: Navigating the Focused (but Messy) Learning Journey"

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

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

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THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

Journaling prompts from “Class 2: The Science Behind Rhythms”

Are there habitual practices (or what we’d term “pillars”) currently in place in your home? If so, what are they, and have they been helpful in setting some sort of structure?

If you do have some sort of regular pillars in your home, have you experienced the phenomenon of how pillars are easily knocked over without any boundaries (tangible actions or mental attitudes that support the pillar)? If so, share about that experience.

Have you (and perhaps your spouse) determined what goals you’d like for your homeschooling? Are those goals rooted around a specific reason why your family has chosen the homeschooling path (for example, because you were unhappy with a local school situation; or because you wanted more time at home with your children, etc.)?

FROM MY HEART: THE BIRTH OF RHYTHM (AND ALL THOSE LABOR PAINS)

from “*Class 1: Rhythm-Based Homeschooling Defined*”

Rewind the video about five years. Now focus the camera over that typical American suburb. Zoom in further until you can see that young mom in her backyard. Do you see her—the one crumpled up in a ball and crying? Yeah. That’s me (pleased to meet you).

If it was possible to speak to that sobbing and exhausted woman, she would have told you that she was out of her mind with frustration. That this “homeschooling thing” was not going as she’d planned. Her biggest stressor was that she—an accomplished, creative, former career woman—could not get her then-six-and-four-year-olds to do what she called school.

Well, at least not with any regularity. OK, scratch that: not with *the* regularity she’d deemed necessary.

And therein was this woman’s (or my) problem. Not only was my idea of a strict routine not working, it was clear that something was wrong in my entire approach to homeschool.

Learning had always been fun to me. And as a public school graduate, ordered, scheduled, routine-type learning was the only type of learning I was familiar with. But oh the battles and drama I had with my kids (now granted my kids were also very young, which was also contributing to the problem)!

I also saw that everyday life—the unexpected doctor’s appointments, the car that broke down, the out-of-town guests—were continually throwing us off our school schedule! Each week (often each day!) was different. How did homeschooling moms actually teach in the real world?

I couldn’t be the only one like this, I surmised. My husband, who saw me day after day in this teary state, convinced me to look around for help.

So I asked homeschooling veterans what the secret was. While their advice was valuable—“just relax and let them learn naturally”—it didn’t help me with the day-to-day orchestration of how school was to happen (especially since I was now accountable to a charter school and had to provide evidence of our at-home work).

Had they forgotten what it was like at the beginning of their journey—when homeschooling was not an art form but a huge, scary mystery? They were gracious to share with me, but did they know that those type of answers weren’t the practical wisdom that I so desperately needed?

I began asking other beginning homeschoolers like me if they’d figured out any of this. The more women I met, the more I realized that I was not alone in my scheduling struggles. I heard over and over how nearly impossible it was for them to follow a schedule too! These were smart, driven women who were not afraid of a little hard work. They too felt called to homeschool, but this “running-a-homeschool-day” thing was driving them nuts as well. We commiserated, but I was still left seeking answers.

Then there were books that convinced me that my problem was that my schedule just *wasn’t tight enough*. A lack of discipline and routine was my problem, they said. Although I was already pretty consistent in my routine with the kids, I tightened things down even further... and saw even more tension.

So I went the opposite direction. *Maybe I just needed to lighten up*, I thought.

That’s when I took a long look at unscheduling and saw that these homeschool moms seemed so light, and so happy! They could just let things roll off their backs. They said things like, “Oh, honey. You’re not in

the mood to do math today? OK. You can just do this puzzle instead.” (Statements like that sounded beautiful to me, but were *not* my natural reaction).

I was sold by their piles of quality books, and the lovely artwork and engineering masterpieces that filled their homes. Ten minutes alone with these families and it was clear that these women were on to *something*. There was a peaceful, eager-to-learn atmosphere that I desperately wanted to duplicate. So I read the books, asked tons of questions and changed gears in a major way with my kids.

Oh, I wanted *so badly* for this approach to work. But I just couldn’t kick those nagging questions: When *would* that math get done? Where was the outline that assured that some sort of master learning plan was happening? Even if I did expose them to lots of great things, what if they still never wanted to learn about the Civil War or their multiplication tables or the difference between a direct and indirect object?

My husband and I are also big advocates of parent-led (not child-led) households, and this learning style seemed to conflict with that. How could an immature child know what was best for him to learn or not learn in a given situation?

More than anything, however, I felt like this approach wasn’t true to how I’d been made. I am an organizer—someone that makes plans and gets them done. My greatest frustration with this approach was that I’d felt like the wind had been taken out of my sails, and I now had zero control over my homeschool.

But I’m grateful for this foray into unscheduling because it began a major turning point for me. I began to ask, *What if...?*

What if there isn’t one “proper” way to homeschool? What if some approaches work well for some but not others? What if there’s a wonderful middle ground—a place where moms could be “a little bit scheduled” and a “little bit free-form” based on their own personality, and their children’s personalities? And what if that style could be even more flexible to adjust to the ever-changing seasons of a household?

What if grace, respect and routine could all live happily together in one big gray area between the two extremes? What would that look like?

It would look like a whole lot of sanity, I decided. And not just for me—for many, many others that I’d seen that didn’t fit the mold of the “scheduled” and “unscheduled” learning approaches either.

At first it seemed like I was just talking about a loose form of scheduling. But I realized that schedules still seemed too locked into routine and didn’t have enough permission to be as flexible as I was envisioning. No, I needed something that had structure and goals (and tangible supports for that structure and goals) but was grace-filled, respected a child’s interests and moved with the ebb-and-flow of a family.

I needed a rhythm. Rhythm had a pattern (such as the rhythm in a song), but that pattern could change from family to family and also within various seasons for the same family. By definition, rhythm had a defined structure but that structure was easily altered or changed by adding an extra beat here or there.

After some time experimenting with this approach (and finding great freedom and success), I began sharing about it with a few friends. They encouraged me to share about this to a larger audience, and about a year later, *Plan to Be Flexible* was born (which was the impetus for this course).

Today, I can look back and honestly be grateful for those tear-filled early days. Now I can see how those struggles are being redeemed for a greater purpose. As a member of *rhythm*, I pray that you too will share in that greater purpose and be inspired and blessed by what you learn here.

EXERCISE: ANALYZING RED FLAGS AND DEVELOPING STRATEGIES

from “Class 3: The Art Behind Rhythms: Navigating the Messy (but Focused) Learning Journey”

In this exercise we’ll identify a current “red flag” situation in your home and determine the root cause behind the “red flag.” Then we’ll make the assessment as to whether or not this “red flag” is something we want to prevent (and if it is, then to brainstorm some prevention strategies); or if it’s better to develop some “going with the flow”-type mental shifts, phrases or body language so as to encourage either a smooth transition to the new rhythm or a continued pace on the current rhythm. Remember that a “red flag” isn’t necessarily a bad thing—it simply means that a potential change to the expected rhythm may be ahead. In fact, “red flags” often lead to a healthy change in rhythm.

This process may feel cumbersome and awkward at first, but its purpose is to equip you with personalized strategies that can encourage a peaceful homeschooling atmosphere. Over time, this kind of progression will become a quick mental exercise. I encourage you to walk through this exercise with as many “red flags” as you see in your homeschool.

“Red Flag” _____

Step 1: Understanding the “Red Flag”

WHO typically is the root cause of the “red flag”?

(Is it the child? Is it you? Is it both of you? Or is it an outside person or situation? Explain.)

WHAT is the motivation behind the “red flag”?

(child gets bored easily, sibling acts out, etc)

WHERE does the “red flag” tend to pop up most?

(A certain location in the house? Outside? Only when around certain siblings/friends?)

WHEN is the “red flag” most often seen?

(Morning? Right after lunch? During a certain subject?)

HOW has it been handled in the past? Were these strategies successful?

Step 2: Decision: Prevent or Go With the Flow?

Is this “red flag” something that we want to try to prevent (for example, behavior issues); or is it a natural part of a child’s changing learning path (for example, topic too difficult or material not clear) and thus it’s a healthy sign for change?

If this “red flag” is one that we want to prevent, complete the following “Step 3: Strategies for Prevention” chart. If not, skip to the “Step 3: Going With the Flow” chart.

Step 3: Strategies for Prevention (optional—see above)

If the “red flag” is one we want to prevent, first, what are some negative actions (mental attitudes, specific phrases or body language) that both you and the child may exhibit when the “red flag” appears? Second, brainstorm some positive actions that you’d like to encourage (mental attitudes, specific phrases or body language) for both you and the child when you see this “red flag” popping up.

Negative Actions Exhibited:		Positive Actions to Be Encouraged:	
Mental Attitudes:		Mental Attitudes:	
Phrases:		Phrases:	
Body Language :		Body Language:	