

things. I felt like I could never get a break because my husband was (thankfully) still working full time. I felt like I could only get time alone by staying awake until 2 or 3:00 in the morning after my husband went to bed. Then I would be woken by the kids coming in at 7:00, I was barely getting enough sleep to function, which only exacerbated the issues.

It wasn't until I finally had a day to myself that I realized what was happening. I was *grieving*! Grieving my old life. Grieving the loss of what could have been. Grieving the loss of my identity as a working mom. I came to realize that I was not alone in these feelings as well. I believe we have all gone through grieving of some kind during this pandemic. Life will never be back to "normal" as we hoped.

I gave myself some grace and reminded myself that I cannot change the entire world on my own and that I had to find a way to move forward. I started making my health a priority again. I started giving myself just a few hours a day to work on my business while the kids played on their own or watched a movie so that I could create some balance.

After a few weeks, I started to enjoy my kids again! I realized that having the ability to be home was such a blessing right now. I couldn't imagine what it would have been like if I was forced to find a full-time job and send my kids to daycare in a new city during a pandemic. I have been blessed with the opportunity to provide a safe and familiar environment for my children during a time that has so many other families struggling to find a sense of normalcy.

It was then that the idea of homeschooling resurfaced. But I had a lot of questions! Can I actually make this work? Can I build my business AND homeschool at the same time? Do I really want my kids to reenter the public school system with so much uncertainty? Will my kids' education suffer if I am working? Will my business suffer if it doesn't have my full attention? What if we don't like homeschooling? These were all questions that swirled in my mind.

I began researching what homeschool looked like and what our options were. I discovered that there are a LOT of other moms who work or own businesses AND homeschool too. My research led me to Homeschool Iowa and the Virtual 101 pop-up group on Facebook. Both the Homeschool Iowa website and the Virtual 101 group have been invaluable resources as I dug through the legal options, learned about different curricula, and found a whole community of veteran homeschoolers to support me, and the many other moms just like me who are jumping into this homeschool thing unexpectedly as we start our homeschool journey.

So here we are. Doing it messy. Trying our best to figure it out as we go. I don't have all the answers, but I am excited to see what this journey brings. I still have all of the same questions, but am confident that God has this in His plan, and we will learn so much as we follow this new path He has laid out before us.

I have a God-given passion to help others discover balance through wellness, wholesome meals, and healthy behaviors. I invite you to join me on this journey! Follow along with my new blog at TheFunLifeGuide.com and also on Facebook @TheFunLifeGuide.

BLESSED ARE THE
FLEXIBLE
FOR THEY SHALL
NOT BE BROKEN



The Evolution of a Homeschool Mom

BY JAMIE NOSALEK

"Blessed are the flexible for they shall not be broken." My husband jokingly repeated this quote many times over in the early years of our relationship. Flexibility was not my strength. I have never been a fan of change, although my life has seemed to be marked by it every step of the way.

I grew up moving often. I lived in 13 houses from kindergarten through 12th grade, many of which were in smaller Iowa towns. Moving around as a child made school difficult for me to enjoy. I was never the best student and always was behind in a new school. As a result, I crave stability as an adult. I find comfort in planning and knowing what to expect. That has not been the case with my homeschooling journey. Oh, I plan, and I try to have stability from day to day and year to year. Life just always seems to throw us a curveball.

My husband and I were married 20 years ago this year. A year later, our first daughter was born. Almost immediately, my husband started talking about homeschooling our children. I was not on board. I had not enjoyed school at all and was not sure I could manage. We lived in Chicago at the time, and things were happening in the school system that were a bit unsettling for us. It was hard to grasp how this beautiful child God has blessed us with would thrive in what we felt was a hostile environment.

Fast forward four years. I faced having a parent who needed help, a job change, and a cross country move later. We found ourselves in Los Angeles. The school systems in our area were not the safest. Our niece, Katie, would bring her homework over to our house, and my husband would sit at the table and help her. Our oldest daughter would see this and would ask to do homework too. So, I thought, here's my chance. If I try out this homeschooling thing now, I can homeschool her for a year of preschool. If it doesn't work out, I could just put her in school no time lost. I fully expected to be putting her in school the following year. That is not what happened. She soaked up every book, every craft, and every activity we did. She wanted to learn, and loved it. I felt like a rock star mom!

Next came daughter #2. She loves art. She has a passion for it, actually. She loves to be creative. When she was learning to write her numbers, her eights would be drawn lying down and would become little couches for the other numbers to sit on. Phonics brought on tears, and with her tears, flowed my doubts.