

**Session 1 - Movers and Shakers**

We are talking about flexibility and your willingness to make changes. You can not change a problem you have not identified. Often we know why are left feeling drained, but emotions involved keep us from moving forward. Are you ready to ask yourself some gut honest questions to identify roadblocks that are ruining your productivity and stealing your joy?

**Task 1** - How do you really feel about change? Looking at your most recent 3 months of homeschooling and identify where you need to make changes. Are you...

- using a product you are unhappy with
- constantly going over-budget
- feeling stuck because of obligations

**Task 2** - When we consider change, we give a lot of weight to the negative consequences. That can keep us stuck. Lets throw them off for a minute and consider what would you change about your homeschool if you were free of negative consequences.

**Task 3** - Are you involved in a group that you/your children no longer enjoy? Sometimes, permission to be honest with ourselves is all it takes for us to see that our needs are not being met and it is time to make changes. Do you need to make changes

**Task 4** - Create a list as an evaluation tool by asking the following questions.

**NOTE:** For the sake of brutal honesty make this on a piece of paper you can burn in a ceremonial fire. You can tuck it in the pages of a confusing and difficult to follow workbook. If you are like me, you quit using the book, but it was \$9, so it is still blank, taking up shelf space. It was created for such a time as this.

- List all the things you did not enjoy in the last 3 months.
- What makes the flow of your day difficult?
- What distracts you from completing tasks?
- What are major changes you are considering?

Look at these obstacles without the emotions attached to personalities and dollar values. Can you see where changes need to happen. An objective list can help us see patterns that we can alter to help us have a more successful school day.

**Wrap up** - Use this list as a tool to help you identify changes that need to be made. You knew a few of them before you wrote them down, but I hope seeing them on paper in black and white, helps you to start making adjustments with confidence.

## Session 2 - How to Avoid getting Swept Away

Erosion is a sneaky force of nature because it happens so gradually that it goes unnoticed, often until major damage has already occurred. Don't let this happen in your homeschool. In Session 2, we talked about identifying what waves are crashing through your day and sweeping away your joy. We will use "hinge points" to plan segments of our day and essentially erect breakers to slow down or eliminate your schedule wreckers.

**Task 1** - My phone was a schedule wrecker, a distraction from instead of a tool for school. My lack of a solid plan would make it difficult for me to tell my husband that we were busy when he had the day free. I needed to erect barriers to protect school time, so I set hours. We school from 10-2, straight through. I use these barriers to be hold myself accountable. The kids clearly know their boundaries which help us to be more productive.

What is eroding your joy in your homeschool day?

What factors played a part in the change?

It what way have you helped play a part? (these are the hardest to admit, but the easiest to fix)

**Task 2** - Lets look closer at your schedule. What does your typical day look like. Write it out.

Do you tend to over schedule your day? (Is there always more list than daylight)

Do you tend to leave much of your day unstructured, but are frustrated by lack of progress?

**Task 3** - Let's look at your everyday constants and create Hinge Points in your day.

Look at your schedule and identify items that happen 4-5 times a week. These are good candidates for hinge points.

What tasks can you cluster around those hinge points?

*Example: We have a list of morning chores that hinge on our 10:00 start time for school. This gives everyone a clear end time. We have a hinge point after lunch before we transition to play time, lessons or sports, because later in the day kids might not be home. The key is finding your most steady constants. A good hinge point is food. The kids might skip spelling or fail to brush their teeth, but no one is going to let me skip making lunch. Can I get an Amen!*

**Wrap Up** - Don't let your schedule sweep your productivity or your joy out to sea. Getting the truth out on paper can be helpful in allowing you to see the changes that you need to make. If it is not working, it is NOT working. Use flexibility as a tool to create a schedule that serves you. Just as an ocean barrier breaks up the waves before they hit the beach. Let your schedule break up overwhelming tasks before they disrupt your day and sweep away your productivity and joy.

**Session 3 - Don't Let the Blueberry Girl Breathe Down Your Neck**

Life is full of pressures. I am sorry to say, but I have discovered that life does not get easier, on the contrary, it seems to get harder the more you try to do right in life. But take heart, we have a partner who we may go to at any time in prayer. One of the greatest things we can do when we are feeling pressure about an important decision is take time to pray and ask God to lead you in wisdom. Flexibility is knowing when to stop forward momentum. Especially when we see that we are headed to the wrong destination. Don't allow pressure to head you off in the wrong direction or keep you there.

**Task 1** - When we are under pressure we tend to make mistakes. Remember *I Love Lucy* and the classic chocolate factory scene, added pressure makes for funny TV, but messy living. Identifying how you respond to pressure can be a tool to help you identify trouble before you blow up and have to be carried off by the little orange guys.

How do you typically respond to the urgent?

What do you do when you really want something but can not have it?

Frustration, anxiety, moodiness, reasoning and bargaining are some responses that are less than healthful. Do you identify with any of these? It might be easier to think of the responses of your small children, who act nothing like you or I. Though some of my behaviors are ugly to identify, keeping them would be worse. Being aware of how we respond allows us to choose our behavior instead of falling into ingrained, less constructive habits.

**Task 2** - This week I want to discuss how people find peace when making stressful decisions.

Brain storm as a family, talk to your spouse, ask your friends or bible study. Get personal with people and gather some good stories of finding peace in the storms of life.

Write out a time you successfully navigated stressful situation. What tools did you use to help you?

**Task 3** - Flexibility is admitting that we don't have all of the answers. We are surrounded by people for a purpose.

How open are you to the advice of others?

Are you willing to ask others for help or do you tend to shoulder the loads alone?

I encourage you to seek out support from others that you know have success in areas you might be weak in. I knew that going into teaching High-school I was going to get a lot more opposition from my kids and a more demanding work load. I started making friendships with others that had successfully graduated children from their own homeschools. I gathered supporters before I needed them because I did not want to give up. If you learn your weaknesses you can gather strength from others around you. Let them lend you their strength where you don't have it and in turn you can do the same for them.

### **Session 4 - Conclusion**

Using what you have learned over the last three sessions, take time to reevaluate your homeschool.

Make changes to your curriculum and activities with confidence, knowing there is nothing more valuable than your peace and success as a homeschool family.

Set hinge points in your schedule and attach tasks to those times to set you up for a successful school day.

Identify areas where you need personal growth and encouragement and support. Make those a priority in your personal time.

My greatest hope is that you never quit homeschooling for lack of encouragement and support. You deserve a foot rub and a gold star. I offer my community to you as well. Please feel free to message me on the blog and let me know what you thought of the *In Due Season* series of any other post.

Thanks for doing the work and being flexible to make changes. Your best semester is always ahead of you.

Blessings,  
Amber