

## What Then Shall We Do?

### How to spend your days during the deschooling phase.

Deschooling is a leap of faith. It is an uncomfortable thought, at best, to put the formal academics on hold. If we are not pursuing formal academics during the deschooling phase, what then shall we do?

It takes faith to believe that there is much learning to be done in the context of everyday life—and then to act on it. Take your children by the hand, get to know each other again, work on loving discipline and first-time obedience, give them what you know in the context of living life together, and just enjoy pursuing your interests together. In time, your child will re-discover his/her joy of learning and will begin to desire his/her own education. However, these ideals will remain out of reach until you seriously consider the following two actions:

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#### 1. Unplug!

“I will set no worthless thing before my eyes;  
I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not fasten its grip on me” (Psalm 101:3).

What has fastened its grip on you and your family? In the light of eternity, is the way you spend your time pleasing to God? If you measured the time you spent on each activity throughout the day, what would it say about you and who/what you worship? Is your life filled with countless little distractions that will make it difficult for you and your children to devote much of your day to learning and pursuing education? Is your home filled with so many fast passed entertainments that reading seems dull and tedious in comparison?

**Turn off the TV—and the cell phone, the video games, and the computer.**

Allow your children to be bored. An environment void of distractions with an abundance of boredom creates the right kind of vacuum. Fill that vacuum with the freedom to choose worth-while endeavors and a joy and love of learning will emerge. But it doesn't work unless you set parameters on how your children may spend their time (and how they may not spend their time), and then give them the freedom, space and occasion to make their own educational choices.

For some kids it isn't much of a stretch to imagine. Depending on your lifestyle and your child's draw to technology, unplugging the gadgets and setting parameters for how they may spend their days will be enough. For others, you must consider packing it up and storing it at an offsite location, maybe even selling it altogether. Some may test your resolve, moan, and fight. They may experience a period of listlessness, apathy, and even anger. If you set the example and are consistent and firm, they will eventually get bored enough to desire their own education and will fall in love with learning again.

**Your child cannot be free to choose his own education while in bondage to technology.**

Dad and Mom: If you are addicted to technology, or just distracted by too much of a good thing, you must set the example and make this transition with your child. You will be a better family for it. Take your extra time to read [Endangered Minds: Why Children Don't Think and What We Can Do About It](#) by Dr. Jane M. Healey (or

especially for Dads, read: [On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society](#) by Lt. Col. Dave Grossman).

## 2. Slow Down!

“All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable.  
All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything” (1 Corinthians 6:12).

Avoid the temptation to spend your new found time running: sports, dance, library, zoo, pool, etc. Outings can be a nice break in routine, promote family bonding, and be academically beneficial; but resist the desire to overbook your weeks and avoid “hit and run” activities. Look with suspicion at any activity that separates the family the moment you step in the door. Take the time to bond as a family, live purposefully, and do everyday life better.

“Well-schooled kids have a low threshold for boredom; help your own to develop an inner life so that they’ll never be bored. . . . Challenge your kids with plenty of solitude so that they can learn to enjoy their own company, to conduct inner dialogues. Well-schooled people are conditioned to dread being alone; they seek constant companionship through the TV, the computer, the cell phone, and through shallow friendships quickly acquired, quickly abandoned. Your children should have a more important life and they can.” John Taylor Gatto, [Weapons of Mass Instruction](#)

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### Following is a list of technology-free, education pursuits to incorporate in your deschooling phase:

- If you have not already done so, get into the Bible and figure out what you believe and why you believe it.
- Teach your children what you know. You have a life-time of experience and knowledge: take them by the hand and bring them alongside of you, and pass it on to your children.
- Dad: start family worship at home. Read and study the Bible together, serve together, sing together, pray together, learn to play the hymns, memorize scripture. Read: [Family Drive Faith](#) and [Family Shepherds](#) by Voddie Baucham
- Mom: read aloud to your babies (of all ages) from enjoyable books of good quality literature. Snuggle up in bed together and read! Institute “DEAR” time (Drop Everything And Read).
- Allow the child to read for fun as he desires.
- Invest in construction toys (legos, K’nex, marble runs, etc.)
- Develop hobbies and special talents.
- Play board games and cards (have the kids add up the score).
- Stock your house with art supplies and library books. Allow time for boredom and see what happens. Do not allow them to fill the time with technology.
- Research curriculum. Consider your teaching style and personality, not just your child’s learning style; the curricula will have to work for both of you, meet your goals, support your worldview, as well as educate and challenge your student. If you think you might prefer a packaged curricula, try one subject of an inexpensive, no frills option to see if you and your family like working with a curriculum. Reading suggestions: [100 Top Picks for Homeschool Curriculum](#) by Cathy Duffy; [The Successful Homeschool Family Handbook](#) by Dorothy Moore
- Keep a daily journal that chronicles everyday life; things you’ve been doing, activities the kids enjoy, books they read, what you chat about, interesting comments, the rhythm of your days and weeks, etc. Include a

list of scripture and quotes that inspire you. This resource will provide valuable insight while choosing our educational method and planning daily routines. It will also be a record of all the learning and growth you will experience during the decchooling phase.

- Keep a running list of your reasons for homeschooling, benefits you expect to gain, and the goals you'd like to accomplish.
- Make lists of what you'd like to do as a family. Include academics, service/mission projects, hobbies, etc. Talk about your goals and ambitions and interests. Day dream together.
- Get your physical house in order. The way the family uses the house will change. The children will not be away from the house for hours each day while you take care of the cleaning, laundry, shopping, meal planning and preparation. As such, the housework can quickly get overwhelming. Don't forget, God has given you helpers, put them to work! Life-skills training is an entire curriculum unto itself.
  - Establish routines for household chores, meal preparation, laundry, grocery shopping, etc.
  - Each child should be trained to care for their own spaces and for cleaning up after themselves.
  - Assign the kids their own chores and take time to teach and explain your expectations for each task. Bring them alongside you while you run the house and train them to do each job. By the time the child is 12 or 13 he/she should have some basic ability to cook meals, plan menus, shop for groceries, clean up after a meal, straighten their rooms, tend the animals, care for sick siblings, etc. When it comes time for them to establish households of their own you should be wondering how you will get along without them, rather than feel relieved that you are no longer their servant.
  - Take some time to do a whole-house purge and cleaning. Donate unused or unwanted items to charity, have a garage sale, or pass it on to another family—but put it out of your house! Excess possessions uses up time and energy in care and maintenance that you won't have to spend unnecessarily.
  - Reading suggestions: [Sink Reflections](#) by Marla Cilley; [Sidetracked Home Executives](#) by Pam Young and Peggy Jones.
- Rediscover an old hobby or begin a new project you've been putting off. Allow your child to see your passion, your success and failures, your struggles, your determination.

#### **Family oriented outings with a slower pace:**

- Get outside: hiking, camping, nature journaling, digging in the dirt, exploring woods, climbing trees, catching bugs, playing in streams, etc. Take lunch and spend hours at a favorite spot. Return there regularly as the seasons change.
- Take long walks in your neighborhood, wander the town of your county seat, picnic on the court house lawn, walk to the local visitor's center and read all the brochures.
- Devote an afternoon to the library. Plant yourself in the middle of the juvenile section and encourage your children to walk up and down the aisles. Talk to the librarians. Read book after book that your little ones bring to you. Check out a huge stack on a favorite subject.
- Go to the zoo with notebooks, sketch pads, and colored pencils and spend the entire visit observing only one animal. Talk to the zoo keepers.
- Volunteer as a family: help sort cans at the local food pantry, clean out stalls at a historical farm, spend the day cleaning for a new mom with an infant, cook meals for someone who is recovering from surgery, grocery shop for an elderly neighbor, read to the residents at a nursing home. Look for opportunities where you work side-by-side as a family.