

Introduction

The following is the **Introduction** of
Things We Wish We'd Known.

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Time tested. Tried and true. Words of wisdom. Nuggets from the mine of experience. We see these phrases used so often in reference to everything from dog collars to home mortgages, but they usually turn into nothing more than empty clichés. There is a distinct difference, though, when real people with a real interest in their topic write about issues that have been their total focus for years. If we agree that the proof is in the pudding, then, when reading an article on schooling or parenting, we are suspicious of theories espoused by experts once we learn that the expert has reared no children, or that his children are in jail. The chef whose pudding tastes good is more likely the one we read for pudding recipes. Likewise, the author with a remarkable family led by insightful and creative parents living in vital relationships is the one we turn to for true help in homeschool concerns. Well, the parents contributing to this book have created some wonderful "puddings," most of which Diana and I have sampled. Though a few of the authors in this collection were invited because we had heard about their "puddings," most of the authors included here are friends whom we wholeheartedly recommend to you. We have enjoyed their hospitality, or sat under their ministry, or gabbed over dessert for long sessions until we tasted what their lives were really made of. The families in these authors' "puddings" come in all flavors - you will want to try some of each!

When you need encouragement in a hard time or instruction for something unfamiliar, you want it direct with no added ingredients to sort through. Rhubarb pie is good, but when we sat in the back yard with a slender red stalk on a hot August morning, that was straight, twist-the-tongue-upside-down, scrunch-down-the-eyelids, direct, nothing added, rhubarb flavor. This book offers direct, honest, straight from their hearts to yours encouragement, instruction and help. This is not green rhubarb - a sob story followed by some miraculous triumph - unusable and impractical to your experience, but ready and ripe rhubarb - real struggles with real solutions discovered over time - ready for immediate use. There is a depth of wisdom offered here gained over ten, fifteen and twenty years of daily life with earnest care and heartfelt prayer. Enjoy it raw.

Diana and I asked our friends to explain what they had come across in their home schooling that they wished they had known earlier, that "Aha!" moment when their questions and frustrations were resolved. We wanted them to write, for your encouragement, the main message, from their perspective, of how home schooling can be a place of victory, joy and accomplishment. These authors, who come both from the famous conference podiums and from humble, quiet obscurity, have opened their homes and hearts wide to reveal to you their motivations, their insider tips, their most profound secrets. You will cry and laugh as you read some of these honest accounts, and you will have, perhaps for the first time in your homeschool life, that moment when you exclaim, "Aha! I get it now!"

If you are an experienced home schooler, these insights will brighten your heart and remind you of lessons learned, and, I daresay, they will teach you new things, too. If you are considering whether to home school, you have come to the right place to learn how it is done and what it is

all about - this is where the heavy hitters hang out! There is address and phone information in the back of the book for most of these contributors. Drop them a line, thank them for sharing, and get them to answer those other questions you have been pondering.

We want to thank Tom Bragg and Warren Walsh at Emerald Books, our publishers, for pitching to us this incredible idea and for entrusting us to take care of it. You men of faith are remarkable professionals. We appreciate you greatly.

Bill and Diana Waring.