

Note to Self

From the moment I said, “I do”, I knew I would do things differently. No, even before then, I knew I would be different, probably from the moment I realized things at home were not as they should be, way back in middle school. So, I did do things differently! My babies came after marriage, not before. I knew I wanted God to be a part of my life and my family’s life, so He was! I knew how it felt to be involved in school activities with no support, so I was there for every school party and field trip whenever I was able. I was determined to be the best mother that I could be and knew I would be as long as I did everything better than my mother.

Note to self: Never be sure of something you know very little about, especially raising children.

As Christians, we decided that homeschooling was a good choice for our family, so we pulled our two oldest kids out of public school. That sacrifice was exactly what a devoted, Christian mother should do. After all, we want the absolute best for our children. I felt like super-mom as I tended to my two ‘students’ while being a loving mom to their toddling little brother. I would stay up late at night to prepare lessons, and study for myself when needed, so I could be a super-teacher as well. Those two fought me every step of the way, even though we were involved in homeschooling groups that provided field trips and other outings. The kids complained and fussed because they weren’t in school like their friends but didn’t complain as much when we would take trips to McDonalds or go out for ice cream. I was the epitome of a good mother. Or so I thought.

Note to self: Even when we think that what we are doing is the best thing for our children, there are no guarantees that the outcome will always be what we had hoped for. Measure the sacrifices you choose to make.

As it turned out, our little toddler turned out to be a mini, human tornado, and I knew in my heart I didn’t have what it would take to home-school this little guy. He had already frazzled each nerve I had left. It was time again for public school, for all three of our little angels. I felt like a failure as a mother, and I failed as a teacher. After all, a good teacher is able to convey a love for learning to the children they teach, and I failed miserably. They couldn’t wait to get back in school with their friends, but I saw it as they could not wait to get away from me.

Note to self: The immediate rewards of parenthood are few, but you could put money down on the fact that you will experience failure, and quite often.

Along with all of the other highs and lows that come with having three children in elementary school, middle school, and high school, there are bright moments that give you courage to keep on going. I do not know how anyone can be married or raise children without having a heavenly Father to lean upon. I couldn’t have done any of this without His divine intervention. I continue to lean on Him daily, as each day still produces parental challenges that no one could be prepared for. As we try and help these young people grow into responsible adults, isn’t it ironic that we need to become ‘as children’ ourselves, all over again, seeking our Father’s help?

When I was younger, I always wished little kittens could stay kittens, because they were so cute. I can remember wishing my babies could stay babies because I could hold them and take care of them. But then we start wishing they could walk so we don’t have to carry them anymore. We want them to start talking so we can hear what they’re thinking, just to ask them to “please, be quiet.” There is no rhyme or reason to parenthood. Yes, we must do our very best, to make sound decisions and lead our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But there are never any guarantees. No promises of white picket fences and ‘happily ever after’. We can only take each day as it comes.

Note to self: I wish my mother were here so I could tell her, “Thank you” and “I’m sorry.”