



**STRAIGHT TALK TO  
PARENTS AND TEENS  
FROM HOMESCHOOL  
GRADUATES**

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Published by  
Homeway Press  
PO Box 187  
Canmer, KY 42722

[www.moneyandteens.com/grads](http://www.moneyandteens.com/grads)

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## **Disclaimer**

All of the opinions expressed in this ebook are not necessarily the opinions of the publisher. We take no responsibility for the claims or opinions expressed herein.

They are the honest and candid opinions of the homeschool graduates who participated in this survey.

## Introduction

This amazing collection of “straight-from-the-heart” advice to homeschooling parents and teens (and “almost teens”) came together almost by accident. You might have read a bit of this story in our webpage, but it bears repeating here:

We recently purchased the website [www.homeschoolingTEENS.com](http://www.homeschoolingTEENS.com) from the original founder. Although in the past we have published our own homeschooling oriented magazine (the late, lamented “Coming Home Magazine”) and currently operate [homeschoolradioshows.com](http://homeschoolradioshows.com), we weren’t certain WHAT the readers at homeschoolingTEENS wanted to hear about.

So, we asked them.

In a recent issue of the HomeschoolingTEENS we asked what they would like to see discussed in future issues... and out of the many responses we received, one family from Alaska replied:

"We'd like to see some feedback from some homeschool graduates about what has worked, and not worked, for them."

I dropped that brief note over into a folder along with several other suggestions we'd received to look over later -- but for some reason I just couldn't get this one out of my mind. The more I thought about it, the more I realized what a great idea it really was.

I thought about all the "how to homeschool" information we have read and heard over the years. 98% of it comes from parents, educators, and curriculum publishers. Yes -- occasionally we see some articles or a book by a homeschool graduate, but usually they were involved in the family business of publishing homeschool material for homeschoolers.

And let me say again, I’m not knocking ANY parent, educator, curriculum publisher or homeschooling business at all. Nor am I knocking any articles by their young people. We truly love the many great people who we have met over the years who are (often sacrificially) involved in the homeschooling marketplace. We love the study helps, books, magazines and resources that are now available in the homeschooling market, and think these wonderful people are doing a superb job supplying the resources homeschoolers need.

BUT --

I realized there was ONE very LARGE and important piece of the homeschooling puzzle that I rarely - if ever - have heard from. And that was -- regular, normal, homeschool graduates!

I'm talking about those young adults who don't write articles in homeschooling magazines and aren't involved in their family's homeschool-related business. I'm talking about those young

people who have quietly graduated from their respective homeschools and have gone on with their lives: to college, to work, to learn a trade, to homemaking, to missions, or to whatever direction they have chosen to follow.

Had anyone really sat down and asked them what thoughts and advice THEY might have for other homeschoolers? (After all -- they sure are in a position to know!) If they could candidly pass along any advice they wished to other homeschool families and teens -- what would it be?

Well, to make a long story short, we created a very special survey and asked young adult homeschool graduates from all over the country to share their candid, honest advice and thoughts about what works and what doesn't with other families who are homeschooling their own teenagers.

Amazingly, over 200 replied, and shared their hearts in a way I wasn't quite prepared for.

In fact...

The answers these 200+ homeschool grads gave to our questions just blew me away!

These young people had opened up to us with candid, honest, straight-from-the-heart insights -- chock full of encouragement, admonition, and practical, helpful suggestions.

I printed them all out -- pages and pages and pages of them -- and sat down with my wife Susan and read through each and every one. We laughed at some, nodded in agreement at some, and choked up and got convicted at others. What an experience!

Even though we are 13 year veterans at the homeschooling thing, we picked up all sorts of new insights into ourselves, our kids, our mission and our goal. We ended up making our own "to do" list of changes we wanted to make sure happened in our own homeschooling.... Pasted several quotes up on our refrigerator... Made another copy for our kids and had them read them too! We couldn't believe how helpful and inspiring they were just for our own family (with kids aged 18, 15 and 11).

And we knew, right away, that we had to share these with other homeschooling families.

That's the background behind this collection.

We want to say an huge "thank you" to the 200+ homeschool graduates who took the time to share their thoughts and their hearts with us to make this project a reality. It is because of their openness and honesty that this collection exists.

We want to say another big thanks to the parents of these homeschool grads, who obviously gave dearly of themselves to raise such great kids and wonderful thinkers. To you, we are also indebted.

Thanks also to you who are reading this ebook collection, for your support of our little home business by purchasing this ebook, but more importantly for your dedication to training up YOUR children in the best school on earth.

As you read through these pages, please keep in mind that we ASKED these young adults to share their personal thoughts and convictions about homeschooling, and that is just what they did. They aren't preaching at anyone, or trying to pretend to be wiser than their years. We asked... they responded. Now it is your turn to read... glean what you can... and ponder the words that they have shared. Feel free to agree or disagree with the opinions expressed herein. But if and when you find some thoughts that seem to apply directly to your own homeschooling journey, we hope you will consider taking them to heart.

We hope this collection will offer you — AND your kids — not only some practical “hands on” ideas you can implement in your household right away, but also encouragement and motivation to run well the race that is set before you.

Best Wishes,

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## **So Just Who ARE the Homeschool Graduates Who Contributed to Responses to this ebook?**

Before we get into the actual comments themselves, let us give you a few details about just who it was who shared their hearts so willingly with us.

Of the 200+ respondents to our survey, 29% were male, 71% were female.

Of all our respondents at the time of this survey, approximately 24% had been graduated from homeschool for less than a year. 35% have been out of homeschool for 1 - 3 years. 16% have been out of homeschool for 3 - 6 years. 22% have been out of homeschool for 7 or more years.

95% of the grads come from homes spread all across the United States, from Alaska to Hawaii, California to New Hampshire and almost every state in between. Other countries represented in the survey include: Canada (5), England (3) and Australia (2).

Approximately 34% of respondents are currently undergraduate and graduate-level college or seminary students. Approximately 25% of these students also work a part time job.

Other occupations listed included: secretary, graphic design, missionary, waitress, magazine editor, phlebotomist, back parcel clerk, music teacher, tax accountant, homemaker, wife/mother, between jobs, piano tuner, piano teacher, bank teller, cashier, photography assistant, chef, program coordinator, lab technician, accounts receivable clerk, "homemaker in training", seamstress, editor, nutrition consultant, author, engineers, garden center clerk, teacher, ad agency proofreader, Army, Navy, professional dancer & instructor, administrative assistant, seminary student, electrical engineer, radio journalist, programmer, property manager, childcare provider, janitorial business, newspaper reporter, employee at "Focus on the Family", business owner, caterer, farmer / dairy operator, factory worker, medical practice administrator, "homemaker extraordinaire", firefighter, receptionist, self-employed, homeschooling mom, car lot attendant, pharmacy technician, computer consultant, church secretary, beauty shop owner., and many others.

Not every respondent answered every question, so there are not the same number of responses in each section of this ebook. Some responses were edited out as they were repetitions of what others had already said. We did only minor spelling & punctuation edits on the remaining replies. So what you see here is pretty much word-for-word what these homeschool grads sent to us.

Take your time... glean what you can... and apply!

## Part I:

# What is your best advice for PARENTS who are currently homeschooling their teenagers?

You have to give your teens ownership of their own work. It's really hard because you want your children to succeed so badly but you can't force success on anyone. They have to have that drive, that inner motivation. You can put them on the swing and give them a starter push, but they have to learn to pump on their own.

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When your child has an interest in pursuing a career in a particular line of work, it's great when they are able to either volunteer or work in that field to see if it is really what they want to do. My brother is interested in building, so he has been able to work with a Christian contractor here in town. I am interested in medicine and have worked at various things that have helped me to be sure that is what I want to do. Talking with people who are in that particular profession is also helpful.

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When you have younger children that you are homeschooling as well as teenagers, it's easy to focus your attention on the younger ones and trust your highschoolers to get their work done. But if they study in their bedroom, it's very easy to shut the door and waste the day doing nothing at all. So keep an eye on what they are actually spending their time doing.

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Be open and encouraging. Each child is unique and what works for one will not always work for the other. At this point in schooling most kids will be very independent with their studies. Even though this may be the case, what they won't tell you is that they still want you to be involved, interested, and supportive of decisions as they begin to tap into adulthood. My suggestion: I think using a variety of books and not one set curriculum is best. It allows variances and spice in education. Take time to get to know your teen. Don't allow them to become isolated as they are doing most everything for themselves. I think very small children as well as teens need the most attention. In the baby years that is self explanatory. In the teen years going through certain

feelings, questions about themselves, their life, and their future, they need to know they have your support. You are the person they will come back to or should want to come back to as life progresses. Just be there!

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Don't hold them too tight- you'll have to let go sometime anyway, and you don't want to drive them further away. Sheltering is good to a certain extent, but you don't want them to be naive... innocent, but not naive. Good luck!

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Don't give up! Even though your teenager might seem to dislike being homeschooled, they probably like it a whole lot better than they would like being in a public school. I was homeschooled all the way until I started college in 2001 and by the end I was a little tired of it, but I know it was one of the best things that could ever have happened to me. I know I wouldn't have succeeded as well in a public school environment as I did at home.

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First of all, my hat is off to you. You are doing something that is not easy. If you think your child will be going to college and your school district offers "Running Start", where they will pay for classes, I HIGHLY suggest that you take advantage of this. Tuition is high and as I am trying to pay for it all, I kick myself for not taking advantage of a 'free' ride if you will. Also you can help them adjust to something that is totally different. Academics are important, but if you really want to make a difference, raise your teens on good moral standards. I see homeschoolers who are just out of this world when it comes to knowledge, but their character is flaking. Your teen may not be a Einstein, but if they are character-ly sound it is much better then a 'know everything about everything on this earth' person. That was a mouthful. If you are 'religious' or hold the Bible in high regard, I highly recommend that your teens soak up Proverbs. As we all know, the teen years are when the hormones kick in and members of the opposite gender go from 'yuck' to 'wow'. Having a good knowledge of what is good and evil is invaluable. Your home can show all that is good, but when they step on that campus, they see the absolute opposite. I have been reading it daily for several years now, and it has been the best tool my parents ever gave me. No joke.

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Try to get together with other homeschooling parents and students as much as possible because its good to work with other students and its fun. Also try to mix up the curriculum, try new classes and different extra curricular activities. Homeschooled students are so fortunate because they can create a learning program that they want to do and not what everyone else is doing.



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Do not overly shelter your children. It is easy to point out in a crowd who is socially adapted and who is not. If you shelter your children too much now they will pay the price later by not knowing how to behave socially. Let them go out with friends, give them freedom. They need to grow up on their own. If they learn to use freedom now while you can still have a bit of a hand in their exercise of it, they will better know how to use their freedom when you are not around to guide them. You can instill in them the values that will help them make good choices, but don't make the choices for them.

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Push your kids to be as social as possible. Get them involved in their local community programs. Anything from community theater, sports, music groups, or volunteer work. It's important for part of their education to take place outside the home and in various social circles that is larger than their peer group or family. If possible, work with the local school district. Also, encourage them to work at their own pace. I finish my Sr. year a semester early and went to a community college. This made the transition from homeschooling to studying at a four year university away from home smoother. Be aware of all that your teens are involved in. Support their hobbies and interests by either attending performances or games. Make it possible for them to get to these places. Be apart of their lives but let them have a life. Your teens will not be at home their whole life and you are preparing them to move on and start a life of their own while they are in high school. So make sure that their world is larger than the walls of their home or homeschool co-op.

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Help them with math / algebra / chemistry, and if you can't, take refreshers yourself.

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Don't talk too much about how amazingly gifted your teenager is, I can't tell you how discouraging it is to always be hearing how great you are, when you don't feel like you realistically measure up to that standard. I know you all want your homeschooled kid to be the best and the brightest, and that's great, but you don't need to brag about it all the time. I've noticed

it's a homeschool mom thing, or maybe just a mom thing, but homeschool teens feel like they are carrying the weight of the world on their shoulders already, after all the whole world is looking at us and judging homeschooling through us, don't throw being perfect on top of that. I loved it when my mom would brag about me, but sometimes I wished she would do it just a bit less.

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Keep the kids active and involved in extracurricular activities so they can start learning the life lessons and making the social connections they'll appreciate during their college years -- so that life isn't all so overwhelming when the homeschool grad leaves home! Homeschooled kids get teased a lot for being socially inept, but because my parents encouraged my participation in Church, music groups, and youth groups, I was able to avoid this stigma while making lifelong friends in the process. One problem every homeschool student runs into is falling behind in work. In high school, this can be a HUGE stress which is only complicated by the pressures of making life choices (i.e. What college will I go to? How will I pay for it? What do I want to major in? etc, etc. ). If the student falls extremely behind, I would suggest sending the student to a library to do his or her work... a quiet place away from home where the only thing to do is study! I found this helpful in my life; my sister finds it helpful as well. Homeschooling high school was hard for me - I had to discipline myself to get the work done, but I gained so much -- a great bond with my parents, independence, and a flexible schedule that allowed me to pursue music, volunteer work, non-volunteer work (!!), and other interests. I wouldn't trade my experience for the world!

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Spread the word on homeschooling. Get other parents to do it, too. Guard your teenagers from negative influences of the public school system.

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Don't be over protective. I know that you love your son or daughter and you have reasons for homeschooling, but I also know how important having friends is to homeschooled teens. Now I am not saying "no rules," but you need to be a little sympathetic to your teens having friends. Maybe, just maybe your teens will be the influence and not the other way around.

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Try to always keep in mind how to prepare your teens for the work world and what will be expected of them by employers and customers. As homeschooling often neglects to present a schedule with real deadlines for homework to be "turned in", etc., it could present problems with being on time. It's good to require reasonable deadlines and speed.

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Be more than a parent and teacher to your child, be their friend. Do not always criticize them in their schoolwork, but encourage them to try harder and improve their skills. An understanding, non-condemning attitude will make a marked difference in the effort that most teens give to their studies. This time of homeschooling is a perfect opportunity for you to grow closer to your children, and build strong relationships that will last your whole life. My mother is my best friend, and I would not know what to do without her!

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Just don't give up folks! Don't give up just because we teens are knuckle heads at times. You can do it! My parents stuck with it, and I am very thankful for it. WE DID IT! It took very much self discipline, but if you hang in there it will be for the best.

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Advise & encourage your children to prepare for college early, by visiting a college advisor, and taking your college entrance exam as far in advance as possible.

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Give them freedom to take the classes they're interested in. Encourage them to find jobs and volunteer work in things they enjoy, take them places, TRAVEL IS INVALUABLE. Don't be overbearing-- they're still kids, teenagers at that, and they need to grow up and make their own decisions-- even if its hard for you to step back and watch.

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Help your teens to learn to manage their own time, esp. school time; it really pays off when they get to college and already know how to be self-motivated.

Focus on writing skills, but don't kill yourself or them over it. Also, emphasize hard work and progress more than good grades; college can be very demanding and it's important to teens that they know from experience that Mom and Dad are more interested in the effort than in the final grade.

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Let them be a part of deciding what direction to take with their studies.

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Get involved with an active support group and keep the Lord Jesus Christ first. Prayer and hard

work will get you anywhere you need to go in life. Even without a college education I was blessed to have several careers. I worked my way up from the bottom in each field I pursued, it was much easier for me since my homeschool education prepared me to be diligent in everything.'

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Let them focus on subjects that particularly interest them, besides the basic essential subjects. Help them develop a real JOY for learning and give them a chance to learn practical skills...don't let them waste time.

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Expose your students to diversity- That means various art music drama and the "traditional" subjects as well. I can not tell you what an edge it has given me in my practice to be able to know a little bit about everything. It has helped me professionally as well as my personal development.

Also remember that all children do not like the same type of learning. Some may read from a book and absorb everything while her sister may only really learn if she DOES the assignment. This might take some more creativity but isn't this freedom to customize you education why we love homeschooling?

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Success is glorifying God and enjoying Him forever. It isn't getting good grades, and getting a big scholarship to an academically acclaimed university. Recognize that education isn't about text books and research papers and quizzes, and it doesn't stop when you graduate from highschool, or college, or even after you get a master's or doctorate (if you go that path). I like something Mark Twain said: "I never let schooling interfere with my education." Don't get bogged down in book work and trying to pull together 20+ credits. Live life! Do the required academics, but let the electives be driven by personal interests and life preparation things. If your son is interested in being an attorney, set him up to volunteer with a local lawyer to test that out. My brother did that; and found out it wasn't at all what he wanted to do with his life. It was a lot easier (and faster, and cheaper!) than letting him go through college and law school before to reach that decision. To sum up: What are your goals? Think through what you want son or daughter to have learnt, and where they're headed. Then map out a way to achieve that goal. If your goal for them is that they'll be worshipers of God and committed to Him, it means your academics will take a subservient position. After all, what is the use of learning, if not to better understand God and how He made the world and how better to serve Him?

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Make it as practical as possible. High schoolers are beginning to think about college, career, and sometimes wonder how high school education fits into the big picture. Also consider how your

homeschooled high schooler will apply for college, if he or she is planning on it. One difficulty with homeschooling is not having a GPA -- something most college admission forms ask for. I did running start at a local community college and was able to register just by taking a placement test. After attending there, I had a GPA (as well as great college experience!) to put on applications to four-year universities.

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Do your best to get input from your teen. I've found that helping to choose what courses I've taken did help me to enjoy it more. I was learning what I was interested in then, rather than just whatever everyone else does...another plus is that if they chose the course then they can't get mad at you when it turns out to be hard or they don't like it :) Also, get them involved with homeschool groups, or something. Not overly so, or else you'll go crazy with being too busy, and I know that is easy to do. But do get them together with other like-minded teens. It has always done me good to get together with other people who are like me and see that there really are other people out there who do what you do and understand what you go through.

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Don't give up! If you doubt that you have the ability to give your kids a good education, don't worry about it. You can do a lot more than you think you can! You are the best teacher for your kids no matter what.

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Make sure you prepare for the SAT's, try and get your teen to learn another language and always check their homework to make sure it was really completed.

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Don't be scared to let your teens look at state or non-Christian colleges and universities! Homeschoolers are often well-prepared to face the academic challenges, and the diversity of your average state school really teaches students to relate well to other people of different backgrounds and belief systems.

Being a homeschooling graduate I think the best thing parents can do is homeschool their kids. I also advise parents to continually encourage your children. The more kids know their parents are

happy with them, the more it seems they try to improve because they know their parents are backing them up. Best thing, for me, about homeschooling would have to be that I had the opportunity to find what my interests were and spend time learning more about them, whether it was history, learning to play the keyboard, or even cross stitching. I can remember when I collected stamps all the time. I have a huge collection as the family all contributed to it. About two years ago, my mom used my love of stamps and fit it in with history perfectly. She bought some stamps of the presidents all the way up to George W. Bush and they were to go on my timeline. I enjoyed them so much I took the time to read a little about each president along the way. :D

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Don't give up on them! It can be difficult being homeschooled, especially if all your friends go to public school. Be patient - it takes us a little longer to get things sometimes. Encourage them - let them know that you're there to help them in any way - when we know that you're there for us it takes some pressure off & helps us to concentrate .

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Spend lots of time sitting and talking with your teens. Don't just talk AT them, but talk with them. Find out what things they're thinking about, and help them to see how to apply their faith to their own problems. Also, don't bend to the peer pressure of your own friends. It can be very discouraging as a homeschool teen to be compared to all your friends' children's accomplishments. Take time to encourage YOUR child for THEIR accomplishments. And don't stress if your teen doesn't excel in every subject under the sun. Be confident that you are teaching them what they need to know to be excited about learning, teachable, and willing to work hard.

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Just because you're a parent doesn't mean that you're not a teacher too. There are things a teacher in a classroom wouldn't let kids get away with, and you shouldn't either. Yes, sometimes it's okay to do school in your pajamas, but it's never okay to backtalk about assignments, so don't back down. Look for a community college nearby that offers dual-enrollment, and let your kids take a class or two. That was one of the best experiences of my life, and it took pressure off my mom too. Find other homeschoolers the same age who can enroll in classes together with your child. Take time out of school to learn how to be friends with your teenager. This is the time in their life where they're trying to be an adult, and you have to start learning how to treat them like an adult. Share your own hopes and fear and struggles with them, go shopping, fishing, whatever and just "be" together.

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Don't stress the curriculum. If you discover later that your child needs to learn something, he or she will be able to learn it as the need arises. Also, keep track of the subjects studied, and don't be afraid to count your homeschool hybrid material as credits in more traditional subjects.

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Allow your children to follow their dreams, even if they don't line up with what you imagined for them.

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Treat your teens more like adults than children. Give them chances to prove their maturity - they might surprise you. Give them a chance to earn your trust - you may be surprised how fast they grow on you.

Be patient. Your teenager is going through tough changes in their lives. Let them have a little breathing room, but also make it very clear that you are there and that they can talk to you anytime and you will listen. They may want to totally detach from you and not have anything to do with you. I would again suggest the same thing: allow them some breathing room (they are becoming more independent, just remember what the ultimate goal is here: they're becoming adults!) but also make yourself available to them if they need help or someone to talk to without judging them.

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Be patient with your kids and understanding. they are still growing and learning and they need you to be there for them. mostly that is the biggest issue I stress is to have patience with your kids and have fun! Don't stress over it. It should be fun! I know from experience that when both the parents and kids lose their patience and tempers that it makes it less fun for everyone.

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Dual enrollment! I'll have an associate's degree by the end of my first year.

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Hold them to the task, whatever it may be; not just finishing it, but doing it to the best of their ability.

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Stay the course. Stay committed. Don't threaten your child w/ sending them back to school. Don't tell them you give up. You may mean you give up for that moment, that subject, etc....but they hear you say you give up on them.  
Stay the course.

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Don't try to "public school" your teenager-this is home school. :) Let them follow their own interests to a point, learning how to LEARN will serve them better in both college and real life more than calculus will. Cultivate this desire for knowledge, regard it as the most precious thing that you can impart to your child. Encourage reading, if he/she doesn't enjoy it actively search out books about subjects your teen does enjoys. Just the desire to learn, and the adoration of reading are, I am convinced, the two most vital things that can be taught.

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Don't leave them to teach themselves.

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Treat your teens like Adults. Trust them as long as they have not broken your trust, if they have, let them earn it again. Live a life of character and share with your teens what Christ has done for you. Ask them about their personal commitments and where they stand on important issues and why. Young adults have to make decisions for themselves because Your standards are not enough for them to live by when they leave your care. Know their friends and make certain that they are positive influences. DO NOT let your children "rule over" you, but DO, ABSOLUTELY, treat your teens with RESPECT as Individuals.

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Make sure that your children are well prepared in math, writing, and research skills if they plan to attend college. Start planning for college when they get to ninth grade. Consider college as you are planning their extra-curricular activities and start pursuing scholarships early.

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The end result is worth all of the hard work and effort you put into raising your children. The rewards of homeschooling will impact your children FAR above what your expectations and reasons were for homeschooling them in the beginning. Even if don't see the rewards right away, the harvest will surely come! Remember: family relationships, and gaining the hearts and loyalty of your children are more important than book-learning!

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Don't stick to just one type of curriculum- part of the fun of homeschooling is being able to learn from not only books, but videos, online classes and more!

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Listen to your teenagers no matter how frustrating it is...and keep sharing your wisdom with them: In a few years time they'll look back and say, "my parent's weren't so wrong after all" :-)

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Calm down, and quit worrying. Your kids are going to turn out just fine .. even if they are in 2nd grade and still not reading. Just remember: When they are 20 years old, living in their own apartment with a life where you aren't at the center, will it really matter whether or not they read on grade level, or if they learned all those math facts you're trying desperately to smash into their minds? Cherish this time with your kids .. we only get to be young once.

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One of the things I found most helpful is being a part of a classroom of other homeschoolers for a science class. It was good for learning how people interact in a classroom and how to succeed. Because I had most of those experiences, adjusting to my community college has been really smooth.

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"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your OWN understanding!" For teenagers-- trust God to work out His best in your life through your parents direction. God gave you to the parents He did for a divine purpose and reason. To parents--don't be afraid to expect things from your teenagers. The teenage years don't have to be a trial. This is a transition time for them as they leave childhood and enter adulthood. Give them freedoms ONLY after they have "shown themselves approved...a workman that does not need to be ashamed."

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PATIENCE is a virtue!!!! Things get tuff and little fights with your parents are NORMAL... It's called stress and every one has moments. The most important thing I've learned (I figured this out after I graduated and went to college and didn't live at home any more) "mom is always right" no matter how crazy what she is asking of you sounds... there is a GOOD reason! I look back now and think of all the things my mom wanted me to do and didn't because I thought it was stupid, all those little things add up and a lot of them would be of big help to me now.

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Keep involved and most important to keep the communication lines between parents and teens open. Study skills and independent study habits must be cultivated, in order to prepare the student for the college atmosphere. Independent research must also be stressed.

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Give them the guidance/help/encouragement they need, but give them as much independence as they can handle as far as school - it'll make them much more self-driven in the future.

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Let the child interact often with the world outside the home. But before that make sure that he/she has a sound knowledge about the truth. So when they go into the world, they will know what to believe and what not to believe. Prepare and tell them about the world, about the challenges, about what the world believes, the world's strengths and influences. Encourage strong accountability with friends. I know parents want the teenager to be accountable to them, but it is easier for the teenager to be accountable to someone else other than parents. Encourage the child and tell him/her that you can tell he/she is growing, maturing, becoming more and more like adult. Do this even if the teenager might not be at that level yet. This will give the teenager more confidence and will start acting more and more like an adult. Be flexible and forgiving yet not erasing the limits(boundaries, rules). More than anything else, make sure you walk your talk. Be an example to your kids. Be their model. And if you are not, don't expect them to be. Be real, and show them that your faith, beliefs, relationship with God is the most important factor in your life. They will desire that one day, and they need a model. So how about you be that for them?

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Encourage exploration of ideas and fields of study. Involve them in household functions: helping the younger ones with school work, cooking dinner occasionally, etc. Let them in household finances: balancing a checkbook, budget, shopping, etc. we need those skills! Encourage opportunities they have to hang out with public school kids. I'm at college now, with a desire to minister, but finding myself such a stranger to this public school culture that I can't. We need to understand the world we'll be working in. Entertain and encourage spiritual questions. The teen

years define our future spiritual lives: we need to deal with doubts, questions and ponderings now: let us grow!

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Each teenager is different. You may have to use different books for different kids. Also, let 'em sleep in a little- don't start until at least 9:00 in the morning.

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Make sure you have other activities outside of homeschooling. I was very involved in choir and student leadership at my youth group which opened up other options once I graduated. One nice thing about the schools in my area is that they welcomed homeschoolers to take a class if they wanted. So if I wanted to play sports or join band I could.

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Realize that what you are doing for your children is the best education possible for you and your family. One on one education has such a great impact on your student, and will most definitely pay off in the end. Even if they give you stress now, struggle through it! They will thank you one day. And know that you're not alone. Many homeschooling families don't know how many others like them are doing the same thing. Be encouraged, and encourage others.

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Start college early if that is an option, take AP and CLEP tests, and look into accelerated learning if the student is interested in college.

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Not everyone in college appreciates homeschoolers, be prepared for negative feedback from faculty, teachers, and peers. Jump into college swimming, find out all you can and then just take a plunge into the water because you will not know until you have experienced it!

Make your expectations known. Plan out what they must complete to finish

'highschool' and sit down with them to set up a schedule for completion. Let them decide what to do with it (within reason) but set some guidelines to keep things under control. For example, if they get more than two weeks behind, all privileges disappear. Find ways to pass on responsibilities to them, especially spiritual disciplines. If your beliefs have not become personal for them, sad things may happen. Take advantage of learning and ministry opportunities. Help them get a job in a good environment (most churches have at least one member who runs a business they could work in - I worked for a roofing contractor). This will help them learn responsibility and earn some money. It will also give them opportunities to get input about life from new people - we all need this at some point, and teenagers are at the front edge of that time in life. Teach them to budget savings and spending with the money they earn from their job. Search for 'savings calculator' online and look at what saving early can accomplish. Finally, cultivate an adult-level friendship with them. They may not think they want it, but they will need it later, if not soon. It will be good for you too!

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1. Parent/teenager relationships is far more important and beneficial long term than anything else.
  2. Don't assume that college is the next step.
  3. Some great resources/books are: Vision Forum material ([www.visionforum.com](http://www.visionforum.com)), The Way Home by Mary Pride, Bound for Glory by R C Sproul, Jr

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Be flexible...let us learn about what interests us. Also, lots of teens learn best at night...if I tell you "I can't concentrate this morning, I'll do my work after dinner" I mean it. Giving us some control over our learning makes it interesting and meaningful.

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Have your child take a GED (or some form of Diploma), and If going to college, CLEP Math courses (in particular) and any other things that would be easy to CLEP right after you finish High school, before you forget all the math etc.

- 1) Give them lots of multiple choice tests. Other than the SAT, I hadn't taken any and had a hard

time in college at first. In fact, statistically homeschoolers have the hardest time adjusting with the forms of assessment at my school. (They are very bright, good at research, and love learning, but the school told me that they have the hardest time because they came from such a variety of methods.) 2. have a really strong marriage and home life. If you don't, then you have no business homeschooling. It won't do your kids any favors, and they'll be as frustrated with school as they are with family situations because there won't be a clear line to separate them.

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Get into a group of other homeschoolers and create a "mini" school that meets 1-2 days a week. It is very intimidating teaching a subject that you know nothing about. These groups come together and use the talents of the parents in various subjects to teach the students. One parent has a degree in math, or another might have taken chemistry, enjoyed it, and is willing to teach it, or a parent is willing to learn right along with the students in a subject. My favorite memories of home schooling are getting together with others and learning about art from my favorite "teacher" who had a passion for it and was willing to teach it. We still talk art to this day.

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When they find something that really grabs their interest, let them teach you about it. Give them plenty of opportunities to become involved in volunteer work. Try to instill in them a sense of humility and compassion. Without those, the smartest person in the world is useless. Expose them to all kinds of people, different ages, family backgrounds, customs and traditions. Challenge them to do their best, but always make sure that they know your love for them is unconditional, not performance based.

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Have set academic goals, but allow your student flexibility to pursue their interest. Does your student love cabinet making, but hate math? Make sure he has a good grounding in math, but there is no need to do calculus! Perhaps working for a cabinet maker would be a better use of his time.

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Make sure your kids like the curriculum, but make sure you make them do it if its the best one but they still don't like it. Let them excel in a subject they enjoy. Don't nag. Let your kids help make the schoolwork schedule so they feel apart of it and more cooperative. Using the computer to study isn't all bad, but make sure they have some hands on things and textbooks as a big part of their curriculum. Teach the boys how to cook, do laundry, and help keep the house as well as

all the outdoor 'boy stuff.' Older kids like to do their schoolwork on their own, which is great. Keep them accountable, but don't constantly hound them all the time to do it. If you treat them like an adult, and tell them you're depending on them to act like one, things might get a lot better than you thought. Teach lots of history. It's important in our world today, to know about the mistakes and victories of the past to learn from and refer to. Teach grammar and phonics. If they never had it when they were little, they will benefit from it now. When you try to help them, don't get frustrated. They're already frustrated, which is why they asked you to help. Have fun learning with your kids!

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STICK WITH IT!!! I know it's frustrating sometimes and they sometimes say they want to go to public schools and it seems so much simpler than dealing with the colleges, but I promise the thanks will come not too long after it's all over. Also, really check your colleges out before senior year. Even if they aren't sure what to do or where to go, find out ASAP from several nearby colleges what their requirements are for homeschool kids. Some are really easy to deal with, especially the Bible colleges, but check any way. A good time to start is in 8th grade. Yeah, early I know. And things do change at the colleges, but it's nice to have a general idea if thier going to want a detailed transcript from all four years.

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Let kids work at their own pace. Give them deadlines and let them figure out how to meet those deadlines. For me, I worked much better late at night even though my mom preferred me to be up early to start on my work. I always got more accomplished when I was allowed to do my work when I wanted to do it (within reason, of course).

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Start checking out colleges when your teen is in their 10th grade year, and start getting ideas for majors. It is never too early to start thinking of college. Also, try to get your teen involved with many things in their high school year so they can experience many situations that teens homeschooled don't get to experience. Lastly, try to make the senior year their most special, try to involve them in a senior trip with a church group or homeschooling group. That was the best year of my life, my senior year.

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You need to be your child's best friend. Listen to them, talk to them, let them know that you are there for them. Do stuff with them.

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Include your kids in everyday living and the financial aspects that go along with it. I didn't know anything and had to learn the hard way when I moved out of my parent's house. Also, make sure that you actually research and know what it takes for your kids to get into college. My parents didn't, and I felt like high school was the end of the line. I didn't know how to better myself through furthering my education. I just wasn't prepared at all for life outside my parent's home.

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Do not get caught up in what the other parents around you are doing. Do what is best for YOUR teenager and YOUR teenager alone. Your son/daughter will respect you more for it if you respect them as well.

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Encourage your children to read, starting with books that interest them. Ultimately, do not be afraid to expose your children to philosophies and theories that do not necessarily correspond to your own beliefs. If you feel that public schools offer a strong intellectual bias, be careful that your own choices as an educator do not leave you open to the same criticism.

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Let your teens take outside classes in areas you are not proficient in. Teach lots of math and science especially if your teens will be attending college. Don't make them wear uniforms.

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Provide lots of opportunities for service - this enables each child to figure out their strengths and weaknesses and gives them ideas about what they'd like to do with their lives. Enable each child to go on a mission trip to a foreign country. Rather than giving allowance, my parents paid me to read books and memorize Scripture. Provide opportunities for social interaction with people of ALL ages. Invite a group of widows over for lunch, go hiking with some high schoolers, have a Bible study with college students, offer to babysit for a friends' young children, open your home to visiting missionaries or speakers. Discuss EVERYTHING! Let no subject be taboo. Establish a final authority - in our house it was the Bible. It was our final test for everything and when we got older we were able to stand alone in any group because we had our final authority established. As your child gets older, become their best friend, cheerleader, counselor. Let them make mistakes and help them learn through

it, but always let them know where you stand. Don't be afraid of your children. Create a family identity. Make traditions and keep them. Welcome others into your home and make them a part of what you hold dear. Be enthusiastic. If you are a Christian, make your relationship with God your number one priority and your spouse second. Let nothing keep you from building and maintaining those two relationships. Everything else will fall into place.

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Let your children choose what they study. Make sure it is something that interests them. If they are interested in the subject they will WANT to study it.

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Understand where they are coming from, my family is very open and very close and their support in everything I do is what helps me stay focused and strong.

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As scary as it seems, try to let your student be as self-directed as possible. The number one thing I hear from professors and employers is that they appreciate my ability to be self-motivated, a quality that is directly linked to my self-directed learning in high school.

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Keep God first. Always encourage your child to serve God. Studies should only be valued as they contribute to knowing God better. Strive for the perfect balance. No student must take every interesting subject but every student should be well rounded. Keep to the basics and then see what he can handle. Do not heed your child's complaints too much. Anyone will grumble if he does not like something. If you are sure what you are doing is right be confident that he will eventually be grateful.

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Keep working with your children, don't give in to the pressures of public opinion!! If you don't know a subject get together w/other parents or get a tutor. Especially these days teenagers need to be kept homeschooling and not in the public schools!!

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Don't let your children pull away from or hold people at a distance. What us kids don't always realize, is that hiding your feelings is not a strength, but a weakness. I did this, and discovered that not only was I not happy, as I pulled away from my friends, afraid that I would either show when I was upset or hurt, or that I would be hurt, but I was also holding God at arms length.

Parents, you see your kids and see what is going on. My parents were not sure how to confront me on it, so I struggled through my last year of school feeling very alone, aside from my family. Also, don't let them procrastinate with their school work. I know that this is hard, but it is a lousy habit and very difficult to break. Trust me, I know. Lastly, be there for them. You are vital in your kids lives. We may not always show it, but if you are not there, we really feel it. We need you to help us through hard times, to share our excitement with, and help us by giving us sound advice.

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Make sure to get your teens involved in projects/classes with other teens so they don't feel on their own. Help them with time management and do not be too lenient with paper deadlines, exams, etc. It's easy for parents to say "well, you had a tough day yesterday, let's hold off on this" but this special treatment will not be available in college.

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With God's help, give them the skills to live in this world without compromising God's standards. It's easy to raise them to be obedient to you, but too often, when a young adult gets out on his own, he dabbles in the world's allures out of curiosity. As I said, only with God's help is it possible to keep this from happening.

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Be very sure that the teens get a good deal of interaction with peers from various situations and backgrounds. Do not surround them only with other homeschooling families/teens. The resulting culture shock when beginning life in the "real world" as an adult is overwhelming and the ripples are felt for many years. Make sure that curriculum is comparable, as is appropriate, to that of others their age. This way there are commonalities and topics to connect them to others when they are in "mixed" situations.

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Enjoy the time with your children. Be creative. Be patient, and help mold your children into what God wants them to become. Be organized, but flexible. Be thankful for the time HE is giving to you with your children. If it becomes burdensome, take a break or find another teacher!!!!

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Stick to your guns. No one can educate your own children better than you. others in your home school community may try to force their issues on you whether it be about courtship, time spent on studies or movies. let God be the one to dictate such things. and teens, know that your folks are not out to ruin your fun or out to "get you". they are doing their best and they love you and want the best for you. and don't let anyone make you feel like a freak because of what you've chosen to do with your education. you're A-1 just like everyone else! perhaps more so as you probably have more of a sense of who you are and what you want out of life as a result of your parents' diligence to school you. let God be your goal and it will all be ok.

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Our parents are thorough homeschoolers. I think that is important because I was well educated and ready for college. We also had the right mixture of structure which again is important. I knew what to expect when I went to college and I was prepared to meet the academic standards when I got here. Also, instill the love of reading from an early age. I think that has helped all the children in my family. I have 4 brothers and 2 sisters still at home.

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You need to find ways to keep things interesting. It's very easy to get caught up in electives and requirements, which tend to drain the excitement of homeschooling. I had four wonderful high school years filled with many happy memories. My mom always said that character came before academics, because without character, you are sure to fail.

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My brother and I were "pioneer homeschoolers" in the 80's. We both graduated and attended college and each made the Dean's List every semester. He attended West Point and graduated at the top of his class. This is a VERY hard school in which to be accepted. Homeschooling was such a great opportunity! It allowed us to learn SO much more than the average school-aged child. We both enjoyed it immensely and felt more than prepared for our life-long journey. I loved it so much that I am now teaching my own three children! Take it year by year and KNOW that God's Hand is on you! Your children will thank you over and over again for your commitment and sacrifices you are making now!

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Find out how to keep them interested in learning. It is difficult to learn when you're not interested or you don't understand the importance of what someone is trying to teach you.

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Encourage them! They will finish school and they need to hear that. Let them work at their own pace, as long as they really are doing and learning something.

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I would say that teaching the good habits of living is just as important as teaching real "school." Also teach your student how to think not just follow formulas, find out why it works not just plug and chug.

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Don't do "school" at home! The joy of HS is that you can tailor the curriculum to your child's needs and learning desires. Oh, and please don't press your child to go to college. We NEED mechanics and plumbers and drywall men!

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Three things: 1. Love your children 2. Love your children 3. Don't forget 1 & 2

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As teens they are old enough to know the ropes. Guide them but don't push them. Help them find their PASSION and build on that. My folks let me choose my path and I made a few solid wrong choices but see it now as necessary to have learned what I needed to learn. I took jobs I hated because I needed the money. Then, one day I realized that the money is not as important as the passion for what I do.

## Part II

### What is the most important advice or encouragement you would like to share with TEENS who are still in homeschool?

Be patient with your parents. Try to get a job, it may be the only way to slowly integrate yourself into the real world, and besides, you'll make some money. You really don't have to be like everybody else to be cool, and you don't have to "try everything just once" to see if you like it.

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I went through long periods of disliking homeschooling because I felt that I was missing out on the true highschool experience-- What is that? What is the true highschool experience? There is no such thing and if all you are looking for is to have educational experiences equal to everyone else- that is exactly what you will be--- equal. Why not be superior? Why not also be wonderfully rounded and diverse instead of only book smart. Also remember that the responsibility to get the best education lies more on you than your parents. You have to be motivated and have an unusual sense of personal discipline to keep pushing yourself higher... It will all be worth it in the end.

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In my college calculus class there is a 13 year old and a 15 year old. They are homeschooled and receiving scholarships to go to college and other universities are begging them to come to their school.

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Get out and be socially adapted. Don't stay in the homeschool bubble of eternal innocence. It doesn't last, and it doesn't help you. Be gentle as doves and wise as serpents.

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With homeschooling we don't have deadlines the way regular schools do. If we don't do something one day, then we have to finish it the next. And if we don't finish that day, the assignment has to be done again the next, etc. until it's finished. It's easy to get behind because we have flexible schedules and this false illusion of time. But when you get to college there are deadlines, and if you don't finish an assignment by the due date, you get an F. Period. End of story. So try to train yourself now to finish your work on time.

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Your parents are smart, so listen to them. They have been there before you and know a lot more of what you are going through than you think they do. Enjoy the time you have with them because one day they won't be right next to you all the time...and believe me, you will wish they were. Oh, and everything you are doing now will help to prepare you for college which will come one day. When you get there, don't let people look down on you. Still be yourself because being yourself is the best thing you can be.

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Be open with your parents about what you are interested in. What you want to do, or accomplish. And realize that waiting a year or two to go to college is not going to wreck your life. It's better to know what you want to do before you go than to go and come out hating your major.

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1. Even if your parents don't make sense and sound really dumb....they aren't and probably know what they are talking about.
2. If your parents aren't the brightest about finances, find someone who can teach you about them. I was blessed with fairly gifted parents in finances.
3. Find time to spend without school and home.
4. Do what you can to improve your memory skills!

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Dare to dream and analyze what you want for your life. Find out your interests and what things you are passionate about, then pursue them. Think about your future beyond high school. Set goals for yourself and reach for them. Aim to make a difference in your world, your life and among your friends. Try to expand yourself and your knowledge of society by getting involved in programs or opportunities that will open your eyes to the larger world. Live in the moment, but think a year ahead of where you are. Most importantly, realize what is, and who are, the most important in your life. Love life, love your friends and family, and follow God's will for you. Seize each day and all the opportunities it offers you.

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Be diligent, I know how easy it is to slack off/cheat, but you only cheat yourself when you do that.

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Go to a career counselor for testing so that you can plan better for what you want to do with your life.

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Do as much as you can! I know that sounds crazy, but when you get into college, and meet all these kids who don't have any experience with real life it can be quite a shock. Enjoy the fact that you aren't stuck in a classroom for the majority of your waking hours. Remember that you don't have to do everything, right this second, but also remember that right now you have a lot of freedom to explore a lot of different options so utilize it.

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Keep it up. School is more important than you may think.

Do your work! Keep up with the work - remember, to put it off just one day doubles the work you have to do for the next day. Also, reach outside yourself to make friends outside of your own circle. This is important because as homeschoolers, we got to choose who we associated with, for the most part. When we go off to college or out into the world, this will not be the case. It is important to start interacting with different people in order to learn how to get along with others who are very different from you! It's great practice to start now... Also, volunteer! -- that looks really good on your resume.

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This is a time that you will not always be privileged to have---so enjoy homeschooling while you can! Enjoy the comfort of studying in your own home. If you think that your social life is limited, be a leader: call your friends and have a get-together (game night, go out to eat, go to a Christian coffee house, encourage friends to do the next activity at your youth group at Church, etc.) Perhaps you are old enough to take a public job. That's a good idea too.

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As a teen in homeschooling, you are doing the right thing! I am a homeschool graduate and have never regretted it! You know that you have all the time in the world to learn, investigate, find answers to your questions, **READ!**, and do the things you are passionate about. By the time you graduate, you, most likely, will be steps ahead of your peers. You are ready to take the world on and fearful of very little! You know the world is yours so you grab it and go full speed ahead. The thing about homeschooling is that it prepares you for the future and teaches you how to think. You realize how much there is to life and that you are a minority because you think outside the box. As you grow older and face challenges of life, you will be ready. So, what will you be doing in 10 years? How is your life going to impact others? Prove that because you are alive people in this world are better off!! Go get 'em!!

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Believe me, whatever you might be thinking at the moment, homeschooling is so much better than public school! I was homeschooled right up until I started college and by the last couple of years I was getting a little tired of it, but now I realize how fortunate I was to have parents who were willing to put in all the time and effort and give me a great education. Just remember that your parents love you and want you to have the best.

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Keep at it. I know personally that it can get kind of lonely, because there are no other kids around, but that's one of the many benefits....no distractions. Keep in touch with that Homeschool Association for activities. It really helped me.

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Accept yourself and do not be embarrassed or ashamed of your family. What other people think really does not matter. View your homeschool experience positively and remember that the education you are receiving is by far better and more valuable than public school. When you graduate colleges, employers, and friends will respect you more for what you have accomplished. This time of homeschooling is a perfect opportunity for you to grow closer to your family, and build strong relationships that will last your whole life.

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It'll be over soon. Haha, no, enjoy all the freedom while you can because it will be gone soon. You'll be so thankful for those years-- don't sit around at home, go out and find something you love. Your parents really do want the best for you.

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Take this great opportunity to learn to work on your own. Having been homeschooled my whole life, I can't tell you how well working by myself helped prepare me for college and dealing with an undergrad work load. Learn to be self-motivated now; it really pays off in college to know how to manage your own time without Mom being there to make ya do it :-)



Prayer and hard work payoff! Thank God for this gift of love. It may not always seem like a wonderful gift, hang in there, the Lord will bless you for it. I homeschooled from the seventh grade through twelfth grade. I would not trade it for anything...I missed out on most of the peer pressure and drug scene, but I still had a great social life through support groups, community clubs, and church youth groups. Even without a college education (which I deeply regret)I have had a career in Dentistry, Chiropractic, and Mortgage Lending. I am now blessed to be a homechooling mother and we wouldn't have it any other way! It's not always easy...but the good far outweighs the difficult.

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Keep a clear focus/goal always in mind and work for it...don't waste these valuable years of your life! Be content where you are and develop a true JOY for learning any time, anywhere.

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Recognize that education isn't the same thing as school. You'll graduate from school, you'll always be learning. In fact, that's one of my parent's criteria for graduation. We have to have the mindset of a lifetime learner. Be diligent, take initiative. Do your work as unto the LORD (realizing that, at least if you're a Christian, you bear the name of Christ and your work reflects upon His name) and don't make your folks drag you through it! Also, I found that if I took the initiative to pursue a course before it was actually assigned, my parents gave me a lot more freedom, and often didn't assign me as many "extras."

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Be nice to your parents! I advise taking advantage of a Running Start or other similar program that lets you take college courses during high school. It allows you to get a feel for college and its demands and requirements, but with less stress than enrolling full-time in a four-year university right off the bat. It will also provide you with a GPA that a lot of college admissions people strongly consider.

Don't wish the time away! Use the time that God's given you right now to learn as much as you can. I know how it feels to be anxious to finish school and "get on with life". But I've realized that there's no such thing as finishing something so you can get on with life. That is life. It is what God has given you to do at this point in time, and what you do with this time will effect the rest of your life. As soon as you graduate (or soon thereafter) life is almost guaranteed to get busy and you'll think of all kinds of things you wish you'd learned but now don't have the time to (or the motivation...when you're in school your parents are the motivation :) So don't ignore the blessing that school is, and use your time wisely.

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Have fun! You are getting a better education than most kids in public (or even private) schools are, and you save so much time not being in a classroom filled with a bunch of people, you can even sleep in!

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Do your best. The sky is the limit. Consider yourselves lucky that you can go beyond the "boxed public school" education, work at your own pace and advance in the areas you are interested in or excel at.

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I'd like to encourage the teens still in school to keep pressing forward and not to give up. These are the main years you will have for learning. I believe almost everyone, once they graduate, wish they could go back and learn something else or a little more of a certain topic. It is true once you graduate that you will continue to learn, but you wont always have the opportunity to learn as much as you can now. I have not forgotten how much work and studying it takes to keep up with your work and grades and I encourage you to keep going. You will be very satisfied, once you are graduated, at how much you learned!

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**ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS** get your school done for the day. When you quit halfway through a lesson and say you'll finish it tomorrow, it'll be just as frustrating to do tomorrow **AND** you'll have a whole new lesson to do. So always get your school done.

Don't get discouraged if your public school friends make fun of you or say you're stupid or any other hurtful things. It's not their fault that they don't understand. Sometimes in order to make themselves feel good they need to make you feel bad. Don't shut your parents out when they try to help you when you're struggling - it's their job as our teachers. Stay focused - the harder you concentrate the better your grades, the better college you can get into!

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Don't forget to focus on the future. Don't just pursue a career because it looks fun, or it's what everyone thinks you should do. Pray for God's leading, but also be thinking of how your education now, and after high school will benefit your future job and home life. Guys need to have a focus on how they can be the best husband and provider (in the future) Girls need to make sure they don't get a degree that will be useless if they are a stay-at-home mom in the future. Find something that will be an asset to you either married or single. And if you don't feel like college is for you, don't go! But be active in continuing your education, even if it is just in learning a trade. Life isn't over at high school graduation. It's just beginning!

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Try to think of your parents as teachers when they're helping you with school. Respect them the way you would respect an outsider. Don't get frustrated when they don't seem to understand how to relate to you; they're learning too, you know! It's hard to change from treating you like a kid to treating you like an adult. The more responsible and respectful you are, the easier it'll be for them. Learn the most you can now; learn how to study, how to memorize, how to write, how to relate to people of all ages. The world is a big place, but make it bigger. Love Jesus!

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I won't sugarcoat the truth; homeschooling is hard, but it's worth it. I learned more about life and reality through homeschooling than I ever would have learned in a public school. Homeschooling taught me discipline and really brought my family together. Hang in there; it will be over before you know it. I guarantee that you will never regret being a homeschooler.

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Be patient. Remember that your parents are homeschooling you because they want you to have a better life and a better education, NOT as a punishment. Also, remember that your parents are there because they want to help you, and remember that they were your age at one point too. Talk to them about what's going on in your life...you might be surprised by how much they can help.

Stay motivated and discipline yourself to do your very best. It's easy to get distracted and lose focus when at home sometimes because you want to do other things. Motivation and self-discipline is a good tool to use and can help you in college as well.

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Be outgoing. Be willing to take risks, physically and emotionally. But think about what you say and how you say it and what you do.

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Home is better than high school. I really wanted to go to high school in 9th grade and my mother told me to wait and see. After I listened to the stories my friends told me about high school; I was glad I didn't go. Be serious with your study habits. The first year in college was a little tough for me. I didn't have my mother to nag me to do my homework and didn't do so great my first semester at college.

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Hey it beats going to school for 7 hours and then coming home to do homework in the evening for another 3 or 4 hours.

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Take advantage of your situation! Use the time you have out of a traditional setting to study, to work, to get a head start in life. Remember that the things your parents say are usually correct....& realize you'll have to admit they're right one day.

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Keep at it, I know that sometime it feels like you have forever before you are done with school. Whether you are going on to college, to travel or whatever you choose. Your junior high and high school years just fly past you, then all of a sudden there you are. And if you have not attained everything that you wanted..well, you're stuck. So keep working, don't slack off. More than anything though, love learning. Desire knowledge, this love will last the rest of your life (hopefully) and you will reap huge rewards from it.

It may seem at times that you are missing out on things, such as socialization, dating, witnessing, but this is the time for preparation. My mom stressed this to me a lot and I didn't always agree, but now I'm glad she prodded me in this direction. Now I am happy that I had so much preparation time, and that I missed out on so many things other teens were doing; I'm a better man for it. I'm now twenty-two and I don't regret any of my time homeschooling. I know how to think for myself, which is a very useful ability in college. I only wish I had listened to my mom a little more than I did.

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Don't get lazy. Take pride in what you are doing. Be the best student out there.

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Work hard, you're not missing much by not going to school. There are plenty of opportunities for friends other places than that. Plus you can work more flexible hours if you want, or work jobs you wouldn't be able to otherwise.

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Persevere, it is worth it all. The research and writing skills that you learn in high school will be priceless in college. Start planning for college early in your high school years. Take hold of the opportunities that you have in high school and plan your activities wisely with what will be good to put on your resume later.

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Book-learning is such a brief period of your life. Friends may come and go, but the relationship with your family lasts a lifetime! Remember, in the midst of learning, to cultivate family relationships, and enjoy the simple pleasures and moments with your family. You will always be grateful that you did!

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Really apply yourself. This is a credentialed society and your high school days will follow you the rest of your life. This is your foundation that will determine much of how you live. Dare to more. Always go that extra mile. Be competitive even if it is just with yourself. Try to see things from everyone's point of view. Though you may not feel understood at times, someone took the time and money to homeschool you because they love you and know your education will either make or break your future way of life. Live each moment to the fullest... even the icky ones.

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Put God first. Strive for excellence in all your work. Find projects to volunteer on. Show others daily your strength of character by not compromising on the "little" things. Obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

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Trust me, I've been in college for three years and have seen what quality of students public education is turning out- it's not good! You're getting an EXCELLENT education, so don't listen to anyone who tells you that you're underexposed to the real world (come on, you go out into the real world every day), or that your education is substandard. Colleges are actually seeking for you; don't be ashamed of how you learn!

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Enjoy the opportunity you have to live and learn in an environment which allows you to be YOU. Try to understand your parents -- the very fact they are homeschooling you means they are serious about seeing the best for you.

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Don't over-do it. Contrary to popular belief, you do not automatically stop learning at age 25, and your zest for life will not suddenly die one day .. that is as long as you make sure to cherish every moment, and really keep your priorities straight. It is true that you can become a 15 year old burnt out high schooler, who never wants to 'learn' again. Take the opportunities that you really want to take, and don't pile extracurricular stuff on to your pile, just because you'll "never have this chance again."

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Looking back, I wish I had learned to drive. I think that many homeschool parents are especially protective of their children. If i had learned to drive, I might not be having so difficult of a time getting freedom and responsibility right now. I also think it's important to expand and make friends with public schoolers. There are a lot of great people in the public school system, and they offer new perspectives that sometimes homeschool teens are not aware of. It can be tough though, feeling as if you have no social life. But that's not true! If someone tries to tell you, as a homeschool teen, that you have no social life, it's not true! You can remind them that you do see other people, that you're not just shut up in the house all day. I do feel that being homeschooled made me more shy, but that's not bad either. People who aren't shy have social difficulties of their own. It all evens out.

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God DOES have a great plan for your life. Seek Him till you receive the answer. God has given you a great opportunity by allowing you to be homeschooled. Don't be surprised if His plan for your life is EXTREME!

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No matter how stupid the things asked of you sound there is a good reason for it even if you can't see it yet. "mom is always right".... just breathe if you don't think so... Write down your feeling... yelling DOESN'T help!!!

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Learn discipline before you leave home. Take advantage of the fact that you are still at home, with your parents. Learn from them, listen to them, and look at "rules" as a opportunity to become more disciplined. You get to spend lots of time at home--use that time to get to know God more and more. You have no idea how much that will help you while in college. And once you are disciplined, college life will be much easier for you.

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You are not better than the rest of the world. We have distinct advantages, yes, but we are not superior to the crowd outside. **HAVE DAILY QUIET TIME**, your relationship with God is vital during this season, and you're laying down foundations for the rest of your life. Look for opportunities to hang out with honorable adults other than your parents: especially those involved in fields of study you're interested in. Sometimes you need other outlets than your parents. Take advantage of opportunities to learn about household functions: cooking, cleaning, teaching, finances. **INVEST IN YOUR YOUNGER SIBLINGS**. They need your influence, love and interest in their lives, you have no idea how powerful your support and encouragement can be.

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Get involved with your community and people who aren't homeschooled but hold similar values. Don't box yourself into a 'homeschoolers are the only good people who have real values.' There are amazing people everywhere who weren't homeschooled and yet have amazing things to teach and share.

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Be thankful you are not in public school. No, you are not surrounded by your friends and you are constantly surrounded by your family, but at least there aren't cops and write-ups and bomb threats.

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It's ok to be different. I was one of the only homeschooled kids in the group of people I hung out with and it was awesome because I was able to bring a different aspect to the group.

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Oh boy... Here's something difficult; encouraging those who don't want to homeschool is really hard. I think as a homeschool graduate, it wasn't until I was in my late high school years till I realized how great homeschooling was! The education that I received was SO great! I was able to learn at my own speed, and I didn't have to wait for anyone else to catch up with me. I could study the subjects that I really enjoyed. If I ever had difficulty with a subject, I would spend time learning it until I understood it. I made my own schedule. I had time for a job that I went to and finished both work and school by the time my friends were getting out of public school. And that whole myth about homeschoolers being anti-social; That one cracks me up. There are so many places to meet people, you just have to get out there and do it.

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Trust God. If you can't do that now - even if your parents are the worst in the world - you'll never be able to do it later. Also, trust your parents. Even the worst I've seen are certainly bearable, and usually have a really good idea of what you need in order to become the adult you want to be.

Yes, I'm serious. Get your school done! I'm 24 and finally a Senior in college (University of Oklahoma, Business degree - Management Information Systems and Supply Chain Management). A Big part of me would like to have finished up a couple of years ago, and I could have if I had been more diligent at your age. The next thing you want to do in life is probably waiting on you completing school. Get it done. Pursue God. this might as well be at the top of the list. Nothing will affect your life like a solid walk with God - and nothing will put you in the wrong direction than neglecting Him. God may seem boring or out-of-touch to you, but find someone who has experienced Him and you'll hear a completely different side of the story!

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Grades are very important. However, ten years from now they will not matter. Relax a little, and realize that school is not always learning everything inside the classroom and take this period in your life to build relationships.

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Don't give up. Don't procrastinate. Do your assignments. It will come in handy when you get to college.

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1. For girls, don't neglect domestic skills through the pursuit of academic disciplines. 2. For both genders, a true understanding of the dominion mandate is really important in helping direct one for the rest of ones life. Understanding that our purpose here on earth is to glory God through taking dominion over every area of life and that all our academic and technical skills should be aimed towards this taking dominion for the glory of God makes a big difference to ones outlook.

3. Read "Bound for Glory" by R C Sproul, Jr

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Don't forget to have social activities. Teen years are some of the most important times for building friendships and learning how the world works. It's important to be a good student, but also important to be a good friend/citizen/thinker etc.

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Learn everything you can from every situation you are in, with school, being at home, in a job, and interacting with others. You never know where something that interests you will pop up. You have an opportunity to do and be whatever you want in life. Find that one passion for something and go with it. I never had one thing that I just had to do and it wasn't until my junior year of college that I found what that one thing was, and it was not what I was expecting!

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Explore as many different fields of study as you can. If you find something that interests you, go deeper. Always respect your parents, even when you don't agree with them. Get involved with groups that match your interests. When I was a homeschooling teen, I participated in various choirs, other musical groups and youth groups (both Christian and secular groups) and I volunteered to work with younger children on a regular basis. Get a job... once you are old enough, I highly suggest getting a part time job. This will give you life experience and teach you responsibility as well as interpersonal communication skills. Even if it is a basic job like working at a retail store or restaurant, it's a good experience to have.

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Don't get discouraged, don't get annoyed with your parents. You may think you're missing out on the things that "real" high school has to offer but honestly, you have such an advantage because of your parents keeping you at home! You have every opportunity that public school kids have, probably even more. If your family is doing something that you don't particularly like regarding your education, talk about it. Chances are that if you have a calm conversation you and your parents will be able to come up with a solution. Even on the days that are hard, remember that your parents love you and they're doing this because they want the best for you.

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Learn to study properly and organize your time well.

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Don't Give Up. Homeschoolers have better ACT and SAT Scores. BUT that doesn't mean you don't have to study.

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Explore and develop many fields of your talents and interests now, before you get to college.

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If you are one of those lazy, just barely pass type of people (like me): Get to work and don't complain! You will be working for the rest of your life: it's time to get used to it! Learn to enjoy learning. If you are one of those driven, graduate before you're 14, finish college by 16 type people: Relax! Do your very best at your school work, but never let it be more important than your family, your friends, your ministry (did I mention that you should be developing your own personal ministry by now?) or your relationship with God.

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It's so worth it! You learn how to work on your own, do things at your own pace and have flexibility to study what you want to study.

Life's hard, learn to live with it.

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Get involved in activities outside of home and respect your parents for giving you the best education possible. Take advantage of not having to be held back with the crowd.

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Don't get frustrated with your parents when they try to help you. In most cases, you were the one to ask for help, so take what you get and stay calm - things usually aren't as hard as they seem at first. Take responsibility for your schoolwork. If you act like an adult, it will be much more likely that your parents will treat you like one. (It might take awhile for your parents to start treating you differently, don't give up - you're probably closer than you think.) If your parents are nagging you about your school, they're probably worried. Remember, it's only a few more years until you're done and work your heart out - you won't regret it. Have fun learning with your parents!

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Talk to your parents. Tell them what's going on, how you're feeling, what you are thinking. Start looking around at what you want to do with your life. Work/apprentice in some fields you are interested in to see if you would really like to work in one of those fields. Listen to your parents and those older and wiser than you. You may not like the advice, but they have experience on their side and what they say should mean a lot to you.

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Listen to your parents. They know more than you think they do. :) If you disagree with something they are doing (in regards to school), sit down with them and discuss it in a rational, well thought-out manner instead of doing the typical teenage yelling/slamming of doors. They will respect you so much for that and will listen to what you have to say, even if they don't agree with you.

Don't give up on yourself. It may seem like other kids from public schools know more than you do, but if both of you were thrown into the real world, you would survive so much longer. I know I was always behind in math, and now I'm making it up in college. But I could always read faster than anyone I knew and tell you all about it afterwards. Look for what you're good at, don't focus on what public school kids can do. Do any volunteer work you can. The zoo here in my town has a program for high school volunteers that you have to treat like a job responsibility wise, and everyone I talked to said I had matured so much after working for one summer there. Nursing homes, church groups, anything. And keep a running resume. Try to get a job (I personally recommend once you're 16 and can drive yourself). Not anything big, and if your parents are worried about work environments, try babysitting at your church activities, or for church families. Other than that, just stay active. Connect with other homeschool kids for support, join an active youth group from a church. It doesn't have to be from your church, just one with very similar, and go on lots of trips with them. Youth assemblies rock and there is no other time to go until you have kids of your own. Stick with it and have fun!

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I feel my most important experience during my high school years was having the time and ability to work and interact with adults. I still had opportunity to socialize with friends of my own age.

But the interaction with adults in a paying job, as well as volunteer work, taught me how to handle myself in a professional setting, and "the adult world." I learned how to carry myself with self confidence in many situations and that is something that was invaluable to me. It is a great help when you step out of your parents' car into the big world that is College, and the Future. So get out there, and do those things you think you are too young to do! People will take notice and you will be surprised at how much you learn from your experiences, in addition to your textbooks!

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Apply yourself now.

It's much easier than digging yourself out of a hole later in life.

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Even if it's scary - GO TO COLLEGE! My brother and I never did because it was different and scary, and we didn't think we could get in anyway. It's much easier than we thought, and it's such a valuable learning experience. Even if you think you don't have a way to pay for it, talk to some financial advisors, school admissions, etc. You'll be glad you did.

If you plan on going to college, take this time to learn how to take good notes and how to learn on your own ('cause sometimes you don't get everything from the prof). Either way, if at all possible make your subjects interesting, or try to figure out how they apply to what you want to do in life...and have fun every once in a while. Book worms need air, too.

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Keep looking towards the future, but do not get caught up the idea of tomorrow. As of now, tomorrow does not exist, so look at today. Live it as though it were your last. Do not regret anything, if you do, chalk it up to "mistake," learn from it and move on. Learn something new everyday. Respect yourself.

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Don't be afraid to think for yourself - but in all things, show respect for your parents who sacrificed a lot to invest directly in your education.

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Give your parents room to fail and pray for them faithfully. Make your hopes and goals and fears known to your parents and discuss EVERYTHING with them, even the embarrassing stuff. Open communication now will save you worlds of hurt later on. Keep a journal. Daily write what you're thinking and experiencing. It will help you get to know who God has made you to be. Be honest about your strengths and weaknesses. Become best friends with your siblings. Consider others as more important than yourself. Read, read, read. Talk about what you're reading. Be diligent in your studies. This is such a short time in your life. Learn as much as you can. If you are a Christian, make your relationship with God your absolute number one priority and don't let anything interfere with it. Get to know good people of all ages. Ask them questions. Learn from their mistakes and triumphs. Read about people from many different walks of life and experience as many opportunities as you can from janitorial work to mentoring children to teaching a class to leading hikes, etc, etc. The more you experience the more you will find in common with other people and the more quickly you will discover what you want to do with your life. Don't be afraid or compare yourself with others. Be confident in the path you and your parents have chosen. Joyful confidence dispels criticism like none other. Face your failings and work hard to overcome them. Forgive others no matter what they do. Love unconditionally.

Always strive to know God better. Do everything for His glory. Serve others. Get involved in your community. Not only will you display good citizenship, it could win you scholarships for college. Do not do the bare minimum. Take as many classes as you can handle well. You can become adequately familiar with a great variety of things in a very short time. From a general understanding of a topic, you may find you want to study it more. Read in every spare moment you have. Look for the best books and only the best books. Variety is great. Read fiction and non-fiction, ancient and modern but always seek good books. Do not read a book you will regret wasting the time on. Thank your parents every day for the education they are giving you. Be extremely grateful that they take this time and sacrifice so much for you.

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No matter what you might hear from others, colleges want you! Being a homeschool grad did not interfere with my admission to college, or getting a scholarship.

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Get as much experience as you can in a lot of different areas. It's fun to get out and meet other people, and someday you'll have all those neat experiences to take into your marriage and share with your spouse & children.

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Take your education seriously!! Pray about what kind of job you want that will fit into what you like to do. Try your very best to make money at what you like to do, you'll be much happier!! Realize that your parents are doing the very best they can and help them all you can!

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Hiding your emotions is not a strength, but a weakness. Do not hold people at arms length, for fear of showing what you feel, or being hurt or let down.

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Go to some place away from home for college. Homeschoolers are among the brightest high schoolers in the nation. Usually if your scores are good enough you can get into most any good school.

Make sure to have friends who did not homeschool so you can understand their perspective (since most everyone you meet after highschool will not have been homeschooled). Get involved in whatever you like: church activities, dramas, competitive sports, etc. because it's harder to do these things after the teen years. Enjoy the time with your parents and siblings because this does not last forever.

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You are a young adult, heading for adulthood/independence rapidly - too fast for your parents, I imagine. If you feel your parents are holding you back, remember to honor them. Take your frustrations to God, your perfect Father, and let Him work in you. You'd be surprised at how letting Him change you can fix stressful situations. Whether or not you are feeling stress in this transition period, seek out Godly advice (start with Proverbs). Do not be conformed to this world. It will only bring you grief. This world (Satan) offers instant gratification, but the consequences are inevitable and eternal. The Lord promises you will have hardships in this world as you follow Him, but the rewards are also eternal. And eternity is a lot longer than our little life span. Think outside the box. Don't put God in a box.

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Learn self discipline in studying. When you get to college you will have to do a lot more studying than you do in High school and self discipline is a necessity.

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Hang in there, it'll be over soon. When at all possible, keep current on world events, and read about as many different subjects and topics as you can.

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Enjoy the time with your parents. It goes way too fast. I will be graduating this year and can't really believe how fast the time has gone. Try not to be a procrastinator!!!!Set goals and really try to achieve them!!! Learn to do everything as unto the Lord!!!

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This too shall pass. Highschool can seem long without the usual distractions of highschool. Enjoy the calm of this time b/c college will be much more hectic and distracting.



Make sure you learn to work independently and to do structured work. If you want to go to college, that will make the difference in success. We knew a family whose children basically unschooled and their was no real structure. It drove mom crazy. The kids had to go back to regular school, and they were so lost and behind. It was sad. oh, and don't fight your parents on your education, I know that can be hard. But they do know what is best.

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You will make it! School doesn't last forever. Remember, this is training for LIFE, and God's plan for you.

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Use this time to learn a skill/vocation for your life. Do not feel pressured to waste the time/money in college.

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Search for what you are interested in and keep asking people for help if you need it and it pops up in the most unexpected places.

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Learn all you can. Learn from others' experience and mistakes - they paid dearly for it, but you don't have to. Don't wait for life to start; life is what happens while you are waiting for it to start. Seek the Lord above all else.

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You are lucky to be in homeschool if your folks let you "find" your true calling. If you are not passionate about what you do, stop and find where your passion lies. Then build on that and you will not only become a much wanted expert in that field, you will rarely think of it as work because you love what you do What Color Is Your Parachute? is a good book to start with. Then look for other books that help you find your true calling. Go for it! (Just because your dad is a doctor or your mom an accountant does not mean you have to be one too, if you'd rather dream of running a bed and breakfast Inn.

## Part III

If you could go back in time and change something about your own homeschool experience, what would it be?

I would not have been so consumed with grades like my public school friends. I would have worked hard to gain the most knowledge, and not to work hard just to receive an A.

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I think I would have stayed home a little bit longer before heading off to college.

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Use junior colleges, the credit will carry with you to real college.

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I'd try to waste less time and spend more school hours doing school.

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I had so much fun being homeschooled. I am so glad that I was. I can't think of a whole lot I would have changed. I would have started taking actual french lessons with a french tutor sooner (Parents can't teach everything) and I would have taken more writing and acting classes instead of just the basic subjects. Oh, I would also have taken some college courses so I could have gone into my freshman year at KU with some credits under my belt and gotten to register earlier!

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That I never developed good studying skills.

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If i could change one thing I would have procrastinated less. Since homeschooling is so self driven I wish I had put less off. Anything from academic things to things like taking dance up again or playing a sport. I sometimes would get frustrated at the lack of opportunities homeschoolers had at really good side involvements.

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I would have worked harder, and taken Chemistry.

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Making more friends and getting more physical activity.

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I would take more math, and pay more attention in my studies. I realize now that I was being handed an invaluable resource and I only nibbled on the edge of it. If I had it to do over again, I would take advantage of more of the opportunities thrown in my path.

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I would have kept up with my work in order to avoid the stress and fights with my parents!! I would also have had a more routine schedule, to prepare me for the rigidity of my current work/college life. I would have done more independent study or travel while I still had some flexibility!

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I would have taken it a bit more seriously. Those years of your life are your own. It's almost like those few years stand still and allow you to gain your knowledge. Knowledge that you actually carry with you. I would have tried to be a bit more focused. Of course, you can NEVER read to much...I would have done more of that too!

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Try not to rush it so much. try to take it all in more and appreciate what a blessing it really is to have the opportunity to Homeschool.

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I'd focus on grammar more. Don't get me wrong, my papers are and always have been error free, but ask me to identify a types of clause or phrase etc. and I'm at a loss. It's a real plus when you go to learn a second language to already know the grammar of your own . . . take it from someone who learned the hard way.

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I would not have gone to Public school for gradeschool. But, then again it taught me to be thankful for homeschool.

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More involvement with like-minded homeschooling families would have been nice...and more of a focused diligence during my highschool years (I wasted lots of time).

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I would have worked more closely with my mom/dad with algebra! I didn't do well just reading the new concepts and understanding them, and we'd go a week or more without finding time to check up and go over them; which made math a lot harder.

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I would try to frustrate my mom less. As I now consider homeschooling my children, I see what a daunting, formidable and time consuming task it is for parents.

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I would have completed more classes and interacted with more students. It was just me and my mom. So definitely more interaction with people

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I think I would try to be more interested and really make an effort to do well in school. I wish I would've concentrated more on the actual learning, rather than treat it as a nuisance to just finish as fast as I can and get it out of the way so I could go on to other things. I did the last couple years of high school, but did not most of the rest of the time. I also would've liked to have become fluent in at least one other language.

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When I was in early elementary school (probably age 5-9), I was in a school group that did lots of activities, but the moms pretty much did all the work for the younger kids, so we didn't get much if anything at all out of it.

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I would have studied more, I would have learned Spanish while I still had free time. You don't realize how much time you have as a teenager till it's over, so use it wisely.

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If I could go back in time the only thing I can think of changing in my homeschool experience I'd have to say I wish I'd not have been so shy. I have always been a shy person until about three years ago. But as time has gone by, I find that I have missed out on a lot of opportunities and chances that I could have had a blast doing, not to mention the multitude of friends I could have made. Although I am unable to go back in time and fix this problem, I did begin working on this issue and I'm glad of the benefits I've received so far!

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Longer spring break... my mom didn't even give us a full week off... until I graduated, when she gave my younger siblings a full week off. No fair!

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I would have used the same style of curriculum (predominately unit studies) from the beginning that I used at the end.

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I would listen to my mom more! I tuned her out when she tried to explain how to write an essay & now that I'm in college I wish I would have listened. I have to have lots of help to write a good essay whereas if I would have listened to my mom I could do it on my own.

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I would push myself harder to finish all my work. And I think I would attend a community college while still in high school to get some college experience under my belt.

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I would enjoy it more and stop wishing to be older.  
Life doesn't get easier after graduation.

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Maybe I would just appreciate it more. It was so much easier than I made out. Homework is tedious; homeschool is fun.

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I wouldn't have isolated myself so much. Just because I wasn't in a public school with lots of other kids didn't mean I couldn't have friends.

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I'd have gotten a job a lot sooner.

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I would have personally been more motivated because being home all the time, well i sometimes felt lazy and wanted to do more fun things then mess with homework. I would have learned to be more motivated and self disciplined.

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I played sports but if I could go back I would have pursued baseball more intensely.

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I would study harder, be more diligent, & plan to go to college, even if only for my AA.

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I would have spent more time concentrating on the “hard facts”..math, science, grammar. I really regret all the time I wasted. I could have read more classics, I could have become fluent in a language..etc.

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I would have listened to the wisdom of my parents more often. I would have read a little more.

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I would develop a better attitude toward my abilities in areas such as Math and Science.

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I'd spend more time with the other homeschool friends I had.

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I'd have taken my SAT's and spent more time on that blasted algebra.

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It would be to homeschool from the beginning! We began when I was entering the 4th grade. Other than that, I wouldn't change a thing! I loved the flexibility of homeschooling. My sibings and I were able to do and experience SO many more real-life/hands-on things than kids in public school. We didn't just read about things, we studied them, then went on vacation to visit the places we just learned about (while public school kids were sitting in a classroom somewhere only reading about the places). We were able to work side-by-side with my dad (he was working with new construction at the time); we were able to study things we were personally interested in, and SO much more! So, the only thing I would change is starting the adventure sooner!

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I would have volunteered more in the community.



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I would have taken more time, and not gotten myself so worked up about my future career. I was worried that I wouldn't be prepared, or that I would be looked down upon because I was homeschooled. So I stressed myself out trying to learn things that I had no interest in, and don't need. I wish someone could have told me that when I graduated I would be okay. That it wouldn't be impossible to get a job, and that I wouldn't need to have a 'real' diploma to get anywhere in the world. Too many adults, mostly those from the public school mentality, really depressed me with their view of our society, and made me believe that my education was less than a public schoolers. **TOTALLY FALSE.** I ended up graduating 2 months in to my Jr. year, got a good job, and I find that I function much better in society and the workplace because I learned to learn, and not just 'get by'

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I would be more self-disciplined. I think sometimes my mom was rather lenient. While at the time I enjoyed that, I wish that I hadn't pressured her to be easy on me, as I would have learned more. I also wouldn't have stressed out so much about wondering if I was going to be able to get into college because of being homeschooled. It was so easy to get into my community college, and i'm already in my second semester with great grades.

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I would ask God to give me a mind that understands Algebra! :0)

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Work WAY harder in chemistry... I would also have not let other people think I was stupid for not going to "real school".

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Absolutely nothing, other than perhaps working a little harder and managing my time a little better. However, I have no real regrets, and have thoroughly loved homeschooling.

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Either be involved in a larger church (ours had under 10 middle/high school aged students) or live somewhere with easier access to friends.

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I would have more classes outside the home to meet more people. While at home, I would spend more time reading my Bible.

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I wish my Dad had been more involved in our every day lives, our schooling, adventures, relationships and so on. I wish I had taken the time to try my hand at cooking, and learned the basics of financial management for a household.

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I would have had a more integrated experience - I wouldn't have been so shocked when I got to college by the world if my mother had been slowly teaching and exposing me to what the 'real world' is like earlier on.

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I guess I would try to be more involved in helping my younger siblings.

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I don't think I'd change anything, since I was homeschooled from preschool, but I'm sure my brothers, who exited public schools at 2nd and 5th grade, would definitely have liked to start earlier.

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I'd have done more school during the summers. I wasted a bunch of time there. I mean, I wouldn't have worked ALL summer, but some of it. Some each year could have knocked a year off my last four. I also would have payed more attention in English...

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I would try harder to learn. I didn't always pay attention to what I was studying, and I regret that now. I always wanted to get finished with my school for the day, and now I wish I had concentrated more on my studies.

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More emphasis on writing and report writing.

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I probably would have studied harder in the sciences and asked for more help when I needed it.

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I wouldn't procrastinate. I would keep up with my assignments and care more about the grade.

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I was homeschooled all my life. Most of my homeschooling was simply discussing things with Dad. This was brilliant! The BEST! And Dad's aim was to ensure that I had a good base from which I could work. He used the Bible as the base and showed how it related to science and history and literature etc so that I had a good grounding in the Christian worldview. I couldn't have asked for anything better. I can build on a good base. But it wouldn't have mattered how much I had tried to build on a bad base, it would have all been fruitless.

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I would have relaxed a little more and worked on being a more well rounded person. I wouldn't have gotten so frustrated by trying to be perfect.

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I would have moved around from state-to-state less and spent more time developing one skill. I feel like I'm adequate in everything because I was involved in everything, but I haven't really mastered any one thing. Find your niche and chase after it-- sports, art, drama, etc.

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I wish I would have been better at studying. Being a graduate student means a lot more studying and I didn't really get the right habits early. I was homeschooled from 5th grade through high school and I had the opportunity so many times to study right, but I never took them. Don't slack off in studying.

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I would look at more options for plans after high school. I believe everyone should go to college, but you don't have to go to a traditional one.

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I would have paid more attention to a lot of the material we covered, even the most boring parts.

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Honestly, though I'm sure everything wasn't perfect, thinking about it right now, I can't think of anything that I really disliked. I had a really great homeschooling experience and I look forward to homeschooling my own children.

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In the earlier years, I would have respected my mom more and trusted her. I was a very difficult child to homeschool and she did such a great job. I wish I had simply been nicer. :) In the later years (high school), I wish that there had been more extra-curricular activities to take part in in my area. I know there are many more opportunities now but there weren't 8 years ago.

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I would have explored more not just a narrow area of interest. I would have pushed myself to try something out of my comfort zone.

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I would go back to age 12 and enter high school with a better attitude and work harder. I would do my math even though I hated it and I would graduate a year early.

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I would have taken more college classes and learned a language other than Spanish.

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I would have added an art course into my studies and more history and science.

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I'd work harder at some of the areas I didn't like. I did good enough in those subjects I didn't like, but I could've done better and gotten much more out of it.

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I think I just would have been more on the ball about figuring out my college requirements, and where I wanted to go.

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I would have gotten together with more people my own age, and tried out for sports and got involved. But I have no regrets on my senior year, it was the best year of my life.

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What would I change. I look back now and realize that there were periods in my life where I really wasted a lot of time and missed a lot of opportunities because of laziness or I just didn't realize what I was doing.

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I'd not be so lazy about my schoolwork. My mother never really checked up on me because she trusted me to do the work. I'd do the work, but promptly forgot what I'd just learned. I didn't care. I just wanted to get finished and move out of the house. I really regret that now, because I probably would have been more prepared for life had I worked harder in school.

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Doing all of my subjects to the best of my ability. When there was a topic I didn't particularly care for (such as spelling! I still hate spelling!) I would let myself slack off and only give it enough effort to pass. Now I am haunted by bad spelling everywhere I go, I had gaps in my math knowledge which made for extra work when I had to take math classes in college because I had to 'catch up,' and it is a whole lot harder to play catch up while learning something new, instead of learning that something new right the first time.

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I would try to choose activities that would force me to build more relationship with kids outside my homeschooling circle i.e. public and private school students or even non-religious homeschoolers.

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I would not have allowed myself to get caught up with the crowd. I wish I would have stood up for what I believed was right for me.

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I'd participate in public school or some sort of organized sports i.e. track, soccer or dance team. It's hard for a large homeschool family to let all their children pursue their interests to their fullest extent.

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I would have gone on to complete college, even though I was 12 at graduation.

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I think I would work more on the basics.

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I don't think I'd change anything. I feel that home-schooling prepared me well for my pre-marriage "career" of computer technician, and most of all for my current "career" of wife, Mommy, and future home-schooler.

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There are several things. I would have tried to not hold my friends at a safe distance, for fear of revealing what I was going through. I would have worked much harder at studying Gods word and growing closer to him. I would have worked much harder against procrastinating. And even though I have a good relationship with my parents, I would have firmed it up even more.

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I'd appreciate the sacrifice of time/energy my Mom gave more than I did.

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My parents used a traditional curriculum from Christian Liberty Academy and if that had been the extent of my learning, it would have been boring. But my life was rich in experiences. We were in New Zealand for my 10th and 11th grade years. (Public school in NZ for 10th grade.) I had many opportunities for life lessons. I worked on a dairy, a berry farm, an apple orchard....

And of course, exploring a foreign country has lots of educational value! Not everyone can provide this for their children. Nor should they try unless the Lord leads them to do so! But they can provide plenty of experience outside the classroom through apprenticeships or just volunteering somewhere. To sum it up, no I wouldn't change a thing. Except maybe my attitude when I had to study a subject I didn't like.

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I would have spent more time job shadowing people and really trying to figure out what I like to do best. This was, I wouldn't have switched majors half way through my career and maybe I'd have an inkling of what I want to do when I graduate.

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My personal experience was a fair balance, but I am the oldest, and it's been 14 years. The following 5 children have each been alienated from life more with each one.

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I would try and be less susceptible to peer pressure. because, yes, even among Christians and the homeschooled "elite" there is pressure. it's supposed to be good pressure, but I'd just rather have been able to be me with out all the expectations. my dad was a pastor and the microscope feeling was already there without my peers thinking i had to be like them. so i guess i wish i'd have listened to my mom more about certain friends and of course listened to God about them and not ignored the little red flags in my spirit. the pain wasn't worth it.

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I would keep the vision for my life in front of me. If I didn't like something or didn't think that it mattered, I didn't try very hard. As I look at colleges now, I regret that.

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If I could go back I to when I was younger I would have worked harder so that my highschool years would not have been quite as difficult.

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Wouldn't have spent so much time with History and Science.

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Worrying about college, and the entrance requirements. I would have spent way more time on home economics and preparing for the vocation of being a homemaker and being self-employed.

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I'd explore early on what I feel passionate about. Or rather, I would have my parents help me find and then nurture the things I liked to do. I believe a lot of parents and certainly the school system do not allow for this because they feel a kid has to do the exercises and learn the stuff as laid out by the system. I was lucky as my parents made me study the "assigned" stuff only the day before the "school police" showed up so that we had some paperwork to show. My brother and I learned on our own pace and looking back, we are smarter than the average bear and can fix about anything you can imagine because we were allowed to work in our dad's mechanic shop.

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## Part IV:

What other thoughts / encouragements / warnings / ideas that you would share with other homeschooling families as they complete their homeschooling years?

Keep your eyes on Jesus and don't think you have to follow traditional methods to be "successful"...God's best path for each of us is different and we need to just stay close to Him!

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We used Dr. Wile's Exploring Creation with Biology (Apologia Science), and it was just fabulous! I'd highly recommend Apologia. I'll probably use it with my kids. (Yep, planning already.) - Identify the way your student learns best. I'm an auditory learner, so in planning my highschool curriculum we used a lot of tapes/CDs. Recognize that kids learn differently, and try to customize your curriculum to meet their needs. - I highly recommend R. J. Rushdoony's "A Christian Survey of World History." It has 16 tapes and 12 chapters of text, as well as study and discussion questions for each tape. It takes a few tapes to get used to his flat delivery, but the content is EXCELLENT! Rather than focusing on names and dates, he brilliantly explores the philosophies, ideas, and the "Why?" behind history from a refreshingly Christian point of view. I loved them, and can't say enough about them!

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Strive to be greater. Take your time. Just cause you are homeschooling does not mean that you need to try to finish early. But set a steady pace and if you complete early than more power to you.

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I am now a sophomore in college and haven't had any major difficulties adjusting. I was in a tutorial my last couple of years of high school and took college classes my senior year, which helped. Most homeschool students do their work independently through high-school, which is very good preparation for the kinds of things you have to do in college.

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Stick with it. Many highschool age kids think that they are missing out by not going to school, but the truth is the opposite. So many more doors are open to kids homeschooled than those stuck in the classroom. In fact, every opportunity available to kids in school (sports, clubs, social events) are also available to homeschoolers on some level. In addition to this, there are so many MORE opportunities available to homeschooled kids!!

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Try to decide what college you're going to at least 2 yrs in advance, and go to a community college where you can transfer credits as long as you can, cause its so much cheaper than a university.

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For those who are coming to the end of their homeschooling years. Take some time and double check your list of subjects before you graduate to make sure you finished them all. I'm being very serious. When I went to graduate there were a few things I thought important but decided I'd do once I graduated- thinking I would have more time. This usually does not happen and if it does, it takes twice as much effort to get it done then it would have taken if you finish off your list before graduating.

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Please, take the time to engage with people of different backgrounds! Being in youth orchestra got me involved with people in public and private schools, and that really helped to prepare me for college. There's a lot of opportunity out there for people with a good education, but I see a lot of homeschoolers staying in our own little groups. We have stuff to offer the larger community, and they (believe it or not) have stuff to offer us. So let's engage!

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Don't be embarrassed about, or feel like you have to make excuses because of, being a homeschooler. Your homeschool education is just as legitimate as your neighbor's private or government education.

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Enjoy each others company - I've learned that there's no better friend than your siblings.

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Use the time you have with your children to become friends with them. Don't overstress the academics. There is so much I learned in high school that does not come into my everyday life. But the friendships I built with my parents and siblings while still in school have been so valuable to me. I am much closer to my siblings than I ever would have been if I had attended a school outside of the home. Make sure your kids spend time with other homeschool kids. It can be lonely to be the only homeschooler in a group of friends. Your kids need to be friends with people who understand what life is like as a homeschooler.

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You're almost there! All those years of effort WILL pay off. Don't slack off toward the end; try to be creative all the way through. Mostly, love each other.

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Find ways to make homeschooling fun. Doing the same things every day can get very monotonous. Take time to do something different; don't let it become a routine.

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First, have fun! Second, have fun! The best thing about homeschooling is that you can be creative with learning. So, have fun with it. There is no reason to be stuffy and uptight about schooling because then you're not doing much better than a public school teacher. You have to find a good balance of rigidity and fun. That's up to you to find.

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Kids, learn to do laundry, families, stay in Scripture, and don't worry. It all works out.

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You cannot force learning, so if the student doesn't want to learn, the student won't learn. Find some thing they want to learn or find a way to teach it that they will want to learn. Become enthusiastic about the subjects.

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Homeschooling gives you time to explore the things you love to do. I am only officially out of high school about six months and I have a band that's pretty successful in the local scene. I had time to write music and learn how to promote the band throughout high school. Now that I'm in college, it's a lot tougher to find time to do anything but work and study. Time is something most high schoolers don't have. Use it wisely - find a hobby, read a book, travel - do something with your life!!

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Just because colleges like homeschoolers, doesn't mean that homeschoolers will have an easy time in college. My homeschooling was too easy through high-school and when I got to college I was simply not used to spending so much time studying.

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God bless you parents, for sacrificing your time to invest in His highest priority: your children. God bless you students, as you are enjoying the best teacher/student ratio in the country...the ultimate in "smaller class size"! Make the most of your private education. Find something new or different in your curriculum every day to share with the members of your family...this is not just your education, you know!

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When you register your school name make it something fun but remember it will one day go on your resume. Find someone/school that will host your graduation and issue a genuine certificate of graduation.

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Stay encouraged as you near graduation, and don't give up! I've known so many students who complete ten or eleven years of homeschool just to go to a public school to graduate. What's the point of that?

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Don't be afraid to let your young people spend time away from the family ~ family is important, and it always will be, but sometimes it's in experiencing other situations that you learn to appreciate your family more. Homeschooling gives young people the freedom to be themselves -- God wants us to be "shared around", even let loose in the "big bad world" out there...not all at once, but bit by bit, until we are able to stand on our own two feet, supported by God, released to be His life and love to a broken world!

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Don't take other peoples opinions for fact. Do your research. Find out what educational requirements you will need for the jobs your children hope to pursue, or the college they hope to attend. Make sure you enjoy the process of learning, and don't force it. It will come in it's own sweet time. Parents, enjoy the time homeschooling gives you to spend with your children. Get to know them, and encourage them. Children, enjoy the time homeschooling gives you to be around your parents. Like it or not, they do know more, and better. And in a few years, you'll see what I mean. Trust me, I didn't believe it either => You have a great opportunity to see into the adult mind, and I'm sure that you will appreciate it one day.

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Having too much school and being so focused on school and spelling bees and competitions and being Miss Homeschool Mom of the Year is no fun for anyone!! I have a special needs brother, and people don't treat him well just because he's not the typical cookie cutter perfect homeschool child. I think it's important for homeschoolers to help each other instead of cutting each other down or acting like we're better than one another just because someone isn't using the right curriculum.

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“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and ALL these things will be added unto you.”

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BREATHE... I see now all the tension my mom has with my younger sister — a lot of things would be a lot better if she would except the fact that even when you can't see the importance of what you are doing at the moment it will come in handy later.

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Never sacrifice relationships for school. Also, be careful to challenge students, they should be expected to work hard on something and then succeed.

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"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses...let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." ~Hebrews 12:1-3 Enjoy the time you have as a family. You're really going to miss it, and it's never the same once you're on your own. Invest in those relationships now, and they'll last a lifetime.

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Be willing to try new things. Be willing to meet people you wouldn't normally hang out with. Discuss as a family what you disagree with about families / people you meet with different value systems - DON'T shun them. Interact and learn why they think the way they do. As a family discuss and relate why you do things differently. And be open to changing your own ideas about things - your family probably doesn't have it all right, either, and believe it or not a non-homeschooling person/family may have something to teach you!

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Look for a college now. That way you will have plenty of time to choose which one is right for you. Find out what scholarships are available to homeschoolers, because sometimes it's harder to get that information if you are not in a regular school. And always remember- you will graduate, and will probably be smarter and better educated than the average public or private school grad.

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Parents be open to changing what curriculum you use. My family had to change books so many times and sometimes in the middle of the year. Don't make your student continue in a book just for the sake of finishing a book.

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I see the joy in my parents when they see their children attain a higher education level than if they had been left in a public school. I don't think I would be where I am educationally if it weren't for my parents and the choice to homeschool.

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Parents- the children you are teaching are the future of our society. Instill in them a great knowledge that they may share with others! In all you do, let it be for the betterment of them and others. Students- Accept what your parents have chosen for you. They do it with your best interest in mind. Should you want to attend a good college, start a great job, or anything else you may do, know that homeschooled students are greatly welcomed. Take advantage of your experience. Learn all you can. Strive to learn more. Always attempt to achieve excellence.

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Carefully evaluate the time commitments you make, and then be committed to what you do. Jumping from group to group and program to program doesn't prepare teens well for stable jobs and college degree programs. On the other hand - diversify your experiences and be involved! Find ways to serve together where you can't expect anything back. Get your young people around good mentors - and know the mentors as well as you can. Not all godly looking young people are all that godly. Have a family vision (serving the neighbors, helping widows, hosting youth events, etc) and pursue it together. That's good stuff.

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As a homeschooler myself I procrastinated a lot. Because I was homeschooled I didn't care a whole lot about grades I made. Homeschooling it doesn't matter much as long as you learn it. But when I reached college I didn't try hard as long as I learned it. I wish now that I could go back and make straight A's, but I can't.

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A great approach to this time would be to balance time with parents, time with siblings, academics, work around the home and/or elsewhere, service (voluntary) and time in the Scripture and praying and meditating to build relationship with God.

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Have an intense hunger for God's word. Don't do anything out of apathy. Live life to the hilt and recognize that the world literally is your classroom. Take advantage of every opportunity to learn and instill that in your kids. Don't be afraid to teach logic, philosophy, and biology to your eight year old. My mom did and we ate it up. A friend and I were having a conversation yesterday about this. She mentioned that a college diploma is just a really expensive piece of paper, and I agree. Some people who went to a formal school the least know the most. It's in the person's drive to learn and continue learning, and they will do that the rest of their lives. Train your kids up to be that kind of person-- the kind that loves learning and knowledge. No matter how high they go scholastically, they will achieve great heights intellectually.

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When applying to college homeschools are looked at more thoroughly. Please make sure that you have completed all the classes that are equivalent to the high schools in your area. I would also suggest being very involved in several different activities.

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Go on vacation, er I mean a field trip, to places your kids might otherwise never get to go. We took a long trip across the country, visiting Washington DC and New England when I was about 9 years old. I'll never forget that. Share your passions with your kids. My mom was a history buff, so we did a lot of history. I'm more of a math geek, so if I homeschool my kids we'll play around with numbers and patterns a lot. When you're excited about something, it shows, and it rubs off.  
Have fun and make good memories!

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Just don't give up! :) I am not a fan of "unschooling" because I feel that without all of the needed academics one is really putting their child at a disadvantage. While I encourage outside activities, kids need the 3 r's! This is a hard time, I was a teenager only 5 years ago and I know that they are a lot of work. Just remember both teens and parents, you can get through this, not only through, but excel! Good luck and God bless you as you continue on! :)

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Don't send your kids to high school just for "social" activities. Find ways for them to participate without actually being in Public school.

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Encourage diversity, the development of individual characteristics and strengths.

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As you enter your teenage years it is very important that you develop a ministry. Look at what skills and talents God has given you and try to think of a way to use that to bring people closer to God. Think outside the box: God has given me a wonderful ministry using juggling to share his word.

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I would encourage the kids to spend a portion of their summers away from home (mission trip, exchange student program, camp counseling, volunteering, etc.) to both strengthen the bond between parents and kids (space often helps that!) and to give the kids a chance to grow in a good environment away from the securities of home. It's also much more rewarding than an empty summer with the TV. For parents, don't hold on too tightly... instead encourage independence in enriching ways... things that help your kids help others.

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Have a goal and a plan for working towards the goal. Even if you have to change them later on, having them will help you to set your course.

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Public school kids can make good friends, as well as members of the opposite sex. I'm most certainly not condoning dating or alone time even, but one of my greatest friends through it all was a guy. We met when I was 10, and though we don't do a whole lot together, we could talk. My sister's greatest friends are from public school. They're awesome, together, Christian kids. No, not a one of them has ever gotten into real trouble or anything. I think she has heard more things than even I have from their other friends, but because she's heard it now she's making good decisions about what to do with that information. And our parents even agree on that last. Expand your horizons.

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Remember to celebrate special events, just as they do in a public high school. If your student has excellent grades, create an "honor roll" certificate for them. When they graduate, have a ceremony. Find opportunities for them to be involved in sports, choirs, music, art - all the things that they would be able to take part in at high school. And enjoy the time spent together, as hard as that is sometimes. :) It may be the last time for you (if the student leaves for college, he/she may get married and stay far away from that point on!).

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I think the most important thing would be for students to learn to think for themselves. Question EVERYTHING, don't take any idea on a "my parents said this, so it's right". Understand why you hold certain beliefs or ideas. When (if) you go to college, your parents won't be there to hold your hand. Professors will tell you things that are wrong, and you need to know why what they say is wrong. You might even be required to give a good argument, and "because my parents said so" isn't a good one.

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As long as you are all dedicated, homeschooling is a great experience for all involved. Just make sure you make a big deal out of graduation!

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First and foremost, enjoy learning! If you can't do that, than learn to enjoy learning. For the student: if there's something that's distracting you from your studies, make it a reward instead of a distraction. I found I did a lot better, say, with putting my novel down withing sight (but out of easy reach) as a reminder that I got to read it when I was done for the day. For parents and student(s): Don't give up! There'll be bumps and arguments and "ah HA!" moments, but in the end the good and the bad mix together to form what you'll look back and call "those high school years" which prepare you to take the next step toward whatever it is you want to do in this life.

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Make the most of them! Get ideas from other homeschooling parents, from teachers, pastors, etc. Learn as much as you can and thoroughly enjoy every moment you have with each other. Become each others best friends and don't let anyone turn you against each other. See each other truly, not idealistically. Make room for failings and love each other through them.

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Stay organized.

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Homeschooling prepares you uniquely for college in a way that public school cannot. Unit studies and independent learning teach your brain to work in a way that is necessary in college, which gives you a head start. And don't worry about that whole "socialization" thing - I had to "come out" as a homeschool grad to my first year symposium, and they were all shocked at how "normal" I was!

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Do not send your child to a place that is more strict than you already are.

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Be understanding with one another. Listen to each other. trust each other.

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Yes, studying and working on school is important, but don't let it take over your life, which means don't procrastinate. Highschool can be a lot of fun, but not when you are constantly stressing out about school. Learn to say no. You don't have to be in every possible activity. Stay home and enjoy your time with your family, or the chance to rest, instead of constantly racing from one activity to another. And make sure you have margins in your day, so if something goes wrong, you are not running late, and so will not get so stressed out.

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Parents and teens: the senior year will be a difficult and challenging one. There will be a lot of stress and emotions on both sides. Most everyone I have talked to (including public and private school students) saw a big strain on the parent-child relationship their senior year of high school. Realize it is normal, but work through it.

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Every family is different. Find God's unique plan for your family and for each of your children. It won't necessarily look like anyone else's journey.

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Listen to your kids. Take the time to talk to them and listen to what's important to them at any given stage without minimizing their feelings. Allow them the latitude to speak openly whether in agreement or dissent as long as presented calmly and with respect. Have the courage to evaluate processes regularly to be sure they are effective. Don't assume what worked for one child will be successful with the next.

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As you near the last few years of your highschool careers, cherish it all and really take responsibility for your relationships. God, your parents, your friends and possible future mates, always guard your heart and take every thought captive to God. don't judge those who aren't like you and who don't do things like you. Don't reject being involved with your community for fear you might have to mingle with outsiders. they are kinda afraid of you, too, till they get to know you. make sure you do extracurricular things with your friends like sports or choir. don't hole up at home. you don't know what you're missing! Strive for the best, finish the course completely and get that diploma. There's a whole world waiting for you!

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I love the flexibility. Especially in my years after becoming 16. I can have a job at Subway, play in a Christian teen band, do video auditing for my church, and complete my assignments just fine. I'm saving to go to Australia to learn at Hillsong Ministries.

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I think the parents have to know when to stop. What I mean is, some kids want to return to school when they reach high school age. Then, when they don't get what they want, they rebel and refuse to do work and basically mess things up for other homeschooled children at home. If it comes to that, allow them to go back to school as the others will suffer if you don't.

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After graduation life changes fast for the whole family. Expect it, and don't let the tension that it brings cause permanent scars on your relationships. Teenagers, respect your parents and their authority. Parents, remember that you are preparing your children to be able to make they're own choices. Instruct them wisely, but don't be afraid to let them make some of they're own decisions even when you know they may fail.

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Spend time with God daily. It will affect everything else that you do.

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Keep a clean area to work in. As odd as this may seem if you work in dump you won't work as well. Have a regular desk to work on, don't always study on your bed.

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The pull to college is very fierce and people will even try to guilt or bully you into it. **DON'T LISTEN.** Pay attention to your child's strengths and weaknesses and learn what they desire to accomplish before leaving home.

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Don't push the children to do what you want, it needs to be what they want. They can only get into contact with what they want by taking time to think about it over a long period of time - so give them that time and wait.

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The problem with being together all the time is, that the parents become the major "emotional outlet" for the kids and the troubled teen years (a normal part of growing up) can be really tough for all parties involved. I recall that at times I hated my folks, yelling at them because they were the only ones near by. Had I been in school, and been gone from home a good part of the day, home would have been a shelter to come to out of the cruel world. But since I was home there was nothing to come home to. Yes, we did get on each others nerves for a time. But I think that is normal - besides some homeschoolers yell at their folks, too. Not having been in school, I don't know if and how it would have been different for me. My advise to parents and teens is to find many outlets for the teens to be involved in. We were in 4-H, swim and gymnastic programs, church, camp activities, and other activities that kept us busy. Local colleges offer classes high schoolers may attend before they graduate and we were able to be in classes home could not offer such as computer, advanced math and science classes. I recommend these. Besides, that gives you a good feel for being a member of the grown-up world.

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It is a good idea to have classroom experience before coming to college. By the senior year of highschool, the student should be in a regular school. Go part-time the sophomore and junior years, and then full-time the senior year. This will give the student classroom experience and help him to adapt to regular school life. If possible, use junior or community colleges for this. The credits will carry and it will be a more accurate representation of what college is like.

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Homeschooling isn't for everyone. If you're having a lot of problems, maybe consider other options. It won't mean that you are a failure. If you do homeschool, enjoy it. Be flexible. Make memories. Don't be afraid to look stupid. Don't get so stuck doing the book work that you forget to do the important things: taking a picnic lunch to mall, going to the beach and playing in the water even though the water is freezing, taking a walk, going on field trips, and singing the "five little ducks" song at the top of your lungs! Cherish the time you have to be together because this is a once in a lifetime opportunity!

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One of the best things that I have is a Dad that is very supportive of my goals. When I decide what I want to do and what college I want to attend, I know that he will be there ready to counsel me when I need it and ready with encouragement when I'm discouraged.



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Homeschooling through highschool was one of the best life choices I've ever made. I had opportunities to travel and a larger say in what or how I studied that other students could never even dream of. I feel that my education was much more rounded than many of my peers. My love and passion for learning was never killed by a negative experience. The relationship and respect I have for my parents is mainly due to being educated by them. My family is one of the closest and strongest I've ever known. Homeschooling was a glorious experience for me. I realize that it works better for some people and doesn't work for others, but it was great for me.

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Take your home school group to a local Bible college (or maybe not-so-local!) for a senior trip.

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If you get an opportunity to visit another country, do it.

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Don't get too wrapped up in being "perfect" homeschoolers. Every family is unique, and that's the joy of homeschooling, so don't feel like you have to compete with the public schools, the private schools, and especially other homeschoolers. If the teen/child grows up to be a well rounded thinking adult, than you have given them the tools for life, and you shouldn't be too worried about whether they won the national spelling bee or aced the SAT's. In the long run it's the ability to think critically and be able to continuously learn that is more important than mere fading academic honors.

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Keep morale up among your students; try to keep your kids' interest up in school. Don't let apathy be an issue. Keep focused and upbeat.

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Put Jesus as number one in your life. Remember Proverb 3:6 which says, "In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path."

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Fight the fight!! The fight of freedom! Not only do we have to fight to be a free country, but we have to fight the daily battles that try to drag us down. Our mission on earth is to serve others. We do that as we are an example to everyone around us, regardless of age. Parents who have chosen to teach education to their children are acknowledging a special calling. As they serve their children on a daily basis, the mission is not easy. Stay focused on the outcome and it will pull you through. The outcome is: To raise strong, confident, godly leaders in our children. Each person and child makes up our Nation. When we all strive to be the best and help others in doing so, we will have a unified Nation. A Nation we can be proud of, and that starts in the homes...one person at a time!

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Take advantage of all learning experiences you never know what the Lord has in store for your life.

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Enjoy it...

your experiences as a homeschooler  
will make you invaluable in the larger world.  
It's the unique backgrounds and educational  
and social experiences that make the people  
you'll be living / working / studying with  
so amazing. I'll never regret or stop being  
thankful for having been a homeschooler.