

A hand with dark nail polish holds a magnifying glass. The lens is focused on a bright, glowing area of a sunset or sunrise, creating a circular vignette effect. The background is a soft, out-of-focus gradient of warm colors.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF
Peaceful Worldschooling

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Introduction

“Mom, do I *have* to go back to school?” My four-year-old daughter would utter these words through tears almost every single day. *How could my daughter hate school?* I honestly could not relate to her at all. Growing up, I *loved* school. I always got good grades, participated in clubs and sports, had a great group of friends, and was well-known as the “teacher’s pet.”

I attended a small, Christian private school from Kindergarten through 8th grade, and then I transferred to our local public school for grades 9 through 12. After high school, I managed to finish two bachelor’s degrees in just two and a half years at one of the largest Christian universities in the world. Upon graduation, I had applied to be a part of an alternative teacher certification program. Out of over five thousand applicants, they chose only ten of us to join the ranks of the “teaching fellows,” and I was one of the lucky ten.

The summer after my college graduation was filled with an intensive teacher training program. We learned the latest research-based teaching strategies like differentiated instruction and scaffolding. We read hundreds of pages of articles and studies conducted about project-based learning and creating formative and summative assessments. We observed our mentor teachers as they taught summer school, and after just eight short weeks, I would step foot into my very first classroom for the very first time.

I was hired to teach Spanish 1 at a Title 1 high school. My lead teacher opened the door to my empty classroom, handed me a stapler with no staples and an eraser with no chalk and, with a sarcastic smirk, she said, “Well, good luck!”

As I scanned the empty gray walls of my new classroom, I knew I needed to start making my new space as beautiful and vibrant as possible. I wanted every single student that walked through my doors to feel the joy and excitement that I felt about Spanish and about being their teacher. I spent hundreds of dollars on colorful posters and fun decorations. I scoured Pinterest for hours for tips and tricks to make the room as warm and inviting as possible. By the end of the first day, my classroom was starting to feel more like home.

The next morning, we had a meeting with all of the other teachers in our department. The lead teacher introduced me to the rest of the team, and we each took turns sharing our names and the courses we would be teaching. When it was my turn, the lead teacher asked me why I accepted a position at that school for my first year.

“I’m here because I want to make a difference with every student that walks through my classroom door.”

The other teachers just laughed. “Not at this school. There’s a reason why they send all of you to Title 1 schools - because no one else wants to teach here.”

Another teacher interjected, “Yeah, did they tell you about why the teacher before you left?”

“No,” I replied plainly trying to conceal my curiosity.

“She left because her students were so horrible to her. She was such a nice, old Mexican lady, but they would fill up the trash cans with water and then dump them all over her when her back was turned at the board. They would constantly throw things at her and curse at her. One of her students even attacked her and broke three of her ribs. The last straw was when the principal told her that she needed to teach the Chinese class as well - and she doesn’t even speak Chinese!”

The other teachers laughed, but I did not find anything that they said to be funny. Perhaps I was too young and naive to realize that I became a teacher in order to try and improve the lives of my students without being aware that it was the whole schooling system that needed improving.

After two years working in a “failing school,” I got my Master’s Degree in Bilingual Education Curriculum and Instruction and transferred to a different Title 1 school - an elementary school. I taught English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) at the elementary school for three years where I soon learned that while my students were young and eager to learn, they came to school with so many other

issues that made learning extremely difficult. Many were extremely poor and would struggle to focus because they were so hungry. Their parents did not speak English, so they could not help with their homework or communicate with their teachers. A few were homeless or in foster care. I loved those children, and they loved me. My heart broke as I watched my students who were once so bright, curious, and eager to learn now growing to become “failures,” apathetic and miserable.

My last year teaching, my daughter, Sophia, was born, so I accepted a position to be a Resource Teacher at a middle school that would allow me to be closer to home. Having my own daughter changed everything in my life. All that I thought I would be and do as a mom was suddenly thrown out the window. I found myself diving into the world of attachment parenting. I loved breastfeeding, co-sleeping, baby wearing, and even attempted elimination communication! Everything about attachment parenting resonated with me. I longed to have a loving, connected relationship with my daughter, and I could not imagine missing out on a single moment from her childhood.

So, even though I was a single mother, I decided to quit teaching entirely in order to become a nanny. While I took a major pay cut, it did not matter to me. I was so thankful that I was able to be with my daughter all day, every day and make money while I was with her. Being with her every moment and watching her grow was priceless.

All I wanted was to be the best mother that I could be. This was one job that I could not mess up. I bought books, joined mommy groups, read articles, watched documentaries, interviewed mothers I admired, and more! As time went on, my “attachment parenting” style paved the way for me to adopt a “peaceful parenting” style.

While attachment parenting focuses on having a loving, connected relationship with your infant, peaceful parenting¹ focuses on having a loving, connected relationship with your child - no matter the age. In 2019, I published my first book about my journey into peaceful parenting called Gospel-Based Parenting: A Biblical Study on Discipline and Discipling.² At the time, my daughter was five years old, and my son, Benjamin, had celebrated his first birthday the day before.

In the United States, we have compulsory schooling laws meaning that all children are expected to register and attend school beginning at the age of five and usually are required to attend school until they turn sixteen (in some states, the ages may be different). My daughter attended a public Pre-K program the year before, and her experience was less than ideal.

¹ Some people refer to peaceful parenting as “gentle parenting”

² Available for purchase at www.peacefulworldschoolers.com

Sophia would often complain that her teacher would yell at the class, the other kids would say “bad words,” and on one occasion, she stepped off the bus with marks on her wrist from the teacher “dragging her to time out.” That was the last day that she attended public school.

As a teacher, I had always wanted to homeschool my children, but, as a single mother, I did not imagine that it would ever be possible. However, I knew that I could not attempt to parent my daughter one way at home - with respect, kindness, and autonomy - while sending her everyday into a school system that operated with exactly the opposite values.³

At Home	At School
We speak respectfully to one another	The teacher would yell at the students
We use “time-in” ⁴	The teacher uses time-out
We work together to solve problems	The teacher solves problems through punishment
We desire intrinsic motivation	The teacher only provides extrinsic motivation
We focus on being kind to one another	The teacher and students were rude to one another
We enjoyed learning about various topics	The teacher decided the topics that were necessary
We voiced our opinions freely	The students were not allowed to voice opinions
We made time to walk and talk together	The students were told to “sit down and be quiet”
We learned through play and life experiences	The students learned through worksheets and tests
We sought to control ourselves (self-control)	The teacher sought to control the students
We encouraged independence	The teacher encouraged dependence
We valued cooperation	The teacher and students valued toxic competition
Learning was fun and enjoyable	Learning was forced and frustrating

³ If you would like to learn more about the toxic and abusive values in compulsory schools, check out my book, [Tales of a Toxic Teacher: Exposing the Cycles of Abuse Within Our Schools](#).

⁴ “Time-in” is a parenting strategy in which the parent recognizes that a child is not “giving you a hard time, but is instead *having* a hard time. Time-in is a way to focus on connection in the midst of chaos and confusion; being a calming presence for a child that is experiencing big emotions and remaining *with* the child until the emotions pass. This strategy calls for parents or caregivers to help children communicate what they are feeling (“You are feeling angry...”) and offer a positive strategy to cope with that emotion (“Would you like to punch this pillow or draw a picture of your anger?”)

It became clear to me that we were at a crossroad. And just as attachment parenting paved the way to peaceful parenting for me, peaceful parenting paved the way to *peaceful worldschooling*. And so our journey began into the wonderful world of peaceful worldschooling. We invite you to join us on the adventure of a lifetime! You may just find a life so full of love and joy and passion that you never even dreamed was possible.

Chapter 1

What is Peaceful Worldschooling?

Many are familiar with the term “homeschooling,” but often view homeschooling as simply “doing school at home.” It is *so* much more than that. When choosing to remove our children from a traditional schooling system (either public or private), we are no longer bound to anyone else’s expectations for us or our children. We are truly *free*. Our children are free to learn what they want, when they want, and how they want.

This reality can be equally amazing and terrifying! For many parents, it can feel extremely liberating while at the same time extremely overwhelming. When I first decided to stop forcing my child to attend public school, I was excited about the possibilities for her and for us, but I was also nervous and a bit scared.

Am I making a mistake?

What if she gets “behind”?

What if she wants to learn something that I don’t know anything about?

There are thousands of curricula out there; which one is the best?

How can I work and also make sure that I’m investing enough time in her and her education?

How long will homeschooling take each day?

What if she never learns to read or do math?

How will she be accepted into college?

What if I mess up her life forever?

What if we both fail?

As we embarked on this new journey into homeschooling, I did what I do best - *research*. Just as I did with attachment parenting and peaceful parenting, I bought books, joined homeschooling groups, read articles, watched documentaries, interviewed other homeschooling parents I admired, and more! The philosophy that resonated the most with me was something called “unschooling.”

What is Unschooling?

Unschooling is a term coined by John Holt, famous teacher and author, in the 1970s. After many years of teaching, he became frustrated and disillusioned with the school system. He wrote several books including [How Children Fail](#) and [How Children Learn](#) that demonstrated his belief that “children who were provided with a rich and stimulating learning environment would learn what they are ready to learn, when they are ready to learn it.”⁵ He believed that children were born “natural scientists” - eager to learn and curious about life.

Surely, anyone who has spent any amount of time with a child would readily agree with him. From the moment a baby is born, that child is learning - learning to open its eyes and adjust to the light, learning to identify their mother’s voice, learning to suck and swallow milk, learning to hold their head up, learning to roll, learning to sit, learning to crawl, learning to eat solid foods, learning to produce sounds that will later become words, learning to walk, learning to identify colors, learning to respond to their own name, learning to turn the pages of a book, learning the sounds of the animals, learning to go potty, learning to put on their pants and shoes, learning to make sense of everything and everyone around them.

Perhaps you’ve heard the saying “fish gotta swim, birds gotta fly.” I would add one more phrase, “humans gotta learn.” Human beings were made to learn. It is simply impossible for us not to learn. With an unschooling philosophy, we trust that our children will do exactly what they were created to do - *learn*.

⁵ ["Who Is John Caldwell Holt: Author"](#). Essortment.com. 1986-05-16. Retrieved 2020-08-16.

As a peaceful parent, I have been learning to communicate positively with my children. Instead of stating the behavior that I don't want, I state the behavior that I *do* what. For example, instead of saying "Don't hit!" I instead will say, "We use our hands to be kind and gentle." Instead of saying, "Don't run across the street!" I will say, "Would you like to hold hands when crossing the street or would you like to ride in the shopping cart?" It's important to clearly communicate your commitments and convictions.

This is why I prefer not to use the term "unschooling." For many people, the term unschooling focuses on what we are *not* doing (namely, school) and can often give the impression that children are not only not going to school, but also that they are not educated. So instead of saying that we are "unschoolers," I wanted to choose a word that would better depict what we *do* instead of what we *don't*.

We are *peaceful worldschoolers*.

The Philosophy of Peaceful Worldschooling

As peaceful worldschoolers, we are committed to two main goals:

1. Cultivating *peace* in our hearts, our homes, and our communities, and
2. Perceiving the *world* as our *school*, while seeking to learn from the people and places in it

Peaceful worldschoolers cultivate peace by treating each individual with kindness, respect, and empathy - beginning with the way that we treat ourselves. There are times that I treat myself in ways that I would never want someone else to treat me or my children. We are so often our own worst enemy - critical, judgmental, unforgiving, and cruel. When we can begin to treat ourselves in the way that we want others to treat us, we can find healing for many a deep wound. And so often, our wounds are self-inflicted. So before reading any further, take a moment to consider:

Do I like myself? Why or why not?

Do I love myself? Why or why not?

What do I need to forgive myself for?

How have I been talking to myself lately?

How have I been talking about myself lately?

How have I shown respect or disrespect for myself?

What have I done today for my care for my physical, emotional, and spiritual self?

How am I judging myself? Am I willing to let those judgments go?

Am I treating myself in a way that I would want others to treat me or my child?

It may take time to cultivate a habit of loving and caring for yourself, but you will find that the love and care that we show to ourselves will then overflow to those that are closest to us - namely, our family and friends. Take the time to reflect on the way that you are loving and serving those closest to you. If you *really* want to dive deep, ask your loved ones the following questions and genuinely listen to their answer.

How do I show you love and respect with my actions?

How do I show you love and respect with my words?

What do I do that does not communicate my love and respect for you?

How would you describe me and/or our family?

Is our home a peaceful one? A happy one? A kind one? A [fill-in-the-blank] one?

What do you love most about our family?

What is one thing that you would like to change or improve about our family?

Remember, do not judge yourself or the other person for whatever their response is. Accept their answer as valid without making excuses or shifting blame. Listen with humility. Keep in mind that you are both on the same team with the same goals - living a life of love, joy, and peace.

Finally, Peaceful Worldschoolers shift the focus outward. Once, there was a woman who sought the help of a counselor because she was struggling with depression. The counselor told her, “Don’t worry! I have the cure for depression.”

Surprised, she said, “You do? Please tell me!”

“Go home and bake a cake,” the counselor said with a smile.

The woman looked confused and perplexed. “How is baking a cake supposed to cure me of my depression?”

“Once you’re done baking the cake, I want you to deliver it to this nursing home.” He scribbled down an address on a small piece of paper and walked with her to the door.

The following week, the lady returned. For the first time in months, the counselor saw a slight smile on her face. “How did it go?” he asked.

“Wonderful! I did just as you said. I baked the cake at my home and then went to the nursing home to deliver the cake to the residents. Several of them stopped to thank me. One of the elderly ladies even invited me to return next week. Her family is from out of town, so she doesn’t really get visitors.”

“I’m glad you had such a great experience. Now, do the same thing this week and the week after and the week after,” the counselor instructed. The counselor knew something that few of us do - it is hard to continue staring at your own problems when you are looking into the eyes of someone else. I don’t know what it is about loving and serving other people that seems to make all of my problems feel smaller. This is one of the reasons why I devoted every summer of my life to serving women and orphans in Guatemala. I always returned home with a renewed sense of purpose and so full of love.

As we seek to demonstrate love for those outside of our homes and closest circles, we teach our children to carry on the traditions of peace - in mind, body, soul, and society. This can take a little bit more work for an introvert (like myself), but shifting our focus outward is the key to making a difference in the world. By doing so, we make the world a better place for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren for generations to come. Here are a few questions to ponder:

What is a problem in the world that I would be interested in working to solve?

What type of people would I be most interested in helping or serving?

In what ways can I model serving others for and with my children?

How am I cultivating friendships and relationships with people who are different from me?

What gifts and talents do I have that I could use to make a difference for someone else?

Again, this is just the beginning of our journey into peaceful worldschooling. I promise you, this will be the adventure of a lifetime! The world is open to you. You are here with a purpose. Your children have a purpose. We do not need to wait to start living out that purpose. We can start today!

Chapter 2

Who can be a Peaceful Worldschooler?

The short answer to this question is: ANYONE! Yes, you read that right. *Anyone* can be a peaceful worldschooler. *You* can be a peaceful worldschooler!

Many people think that worldschooling is only for people who travel the world, but that is just not true. Peaceful worldschooling is for anyone who perceives the *world* as our *school* and seeks to learn from the people and places in it.

I mentioned in the last chapter that I spent every summer in Guatemala volunteering with women and orphans. The first time that I went to Guatemala was for a mission trip with my church; I was just 12 years old. That experience forever transformed my life. I had so much fun playing with the children at the orphanage (many of whom were the same age as me), trying new foods, and experiencing a totally new culture.

After just a few days, I had fallen in love. I wanted to learn anything and everything that I could about Guatemala - the language, the people, the culture. When I returned to the United States, I started paying attention in Spanish class for the first time. I *finally* saw the value in what I was learning! I purchased CDs in Spanish, watched movies in Spanish, and tried to talk with every single person that I could find that spoke Spanish. I would ride the bus around the city and purposefully sit next to a Spanish-speaking person so that I could practice my language skills. I started buying my groceries from the international grocery stores and eating in Hispanic restaurants. I had pen pals in

Spanish-speaking countries all over the world and started making friends with the Spanish-speaking children at the playground or park. When I returned to Guatemala the following year, I spent hours in the kitchen learning to cook their traditional dishes and attempting to make fresh tortillas by hand. I was excited to practice the new Spanish words and phrases that I had learned in school and with my new friends.

I returned to Guatemala every year, and every year I learned something new.

I learned to dig wells and how to clean water from the river.

I learned how to make purses from chip bags that we salvaged from the trash dump.

I learned how to say words that I never learned in school like “parasite.”

I learned about the impact of government corruption on its citizens.

I learned what it’s like to live on less than one dollar a day.

I learned about the school system in Guatemala - things we do differently and even things that I believe they do better than we do.

I learned about sex trafficking, drug trafficking, child trafficking.

I learned about poverty.

I learned about being satisfied and content with what we have and what we don’t have.

I learned how to plant crops to survive.

I learned how to barter in the markets.

I learned that they have hopes and dreams - just like me.

I learned that while I may have gone there to teach English, Bible verses, sewing, knitting, piano, business, and more, I had a whole lot more that I needed to learn from the people that I had intended to teach.

That one trip to Guatemala gave me the opportunity to get two Bachelor’s degrees – one in Spanish and one in ESOL – in just two and a half years. Because of that trip, I was able to get a job as an interpreter in a hospital and a Spanish teacher in a public school. Because of that trip, I was able to take a group of my Spanish students back to the orphanage in Guatemala over spring break. Because of that trip, I married a Guatemalan that I met at the orphanage. Because of that trip, I hope to one day be able to adopt a Guatemalan child. Because of that one trip, my life has been forever changed.

Life experiences teach us things that a book never can.

Don’t get me wrong, I absolutely love books! But a book can never replace the value of real world experiences.

Growing up, my parents instilled in me a love of travel for which I am forever grateful. I have had the privilege of visiting over 20 different countries before I turned 20 years old. I remember in elementary school when we would be reading in our textbooks about the Grand Canyon or the concentration camps in Germany during World War II. My fellow classmates would look at the pictures, but I had *memories* of those places. I had seen them in real life with my own two eyes. No picture in a textbook could ever compare.

So when my daughter was born, I knew that I wanted to instill in her the same love for travel, languages and culture that I had. One of the first things that I did after she was born was to order her passport. She was on her first flight before she was even a month old. But circumstances change and life changes. I found myself a single mother and not quite sure how I could still inspire my child to have a love for adventure, travel and exploration when the realities of work and bills seemed to consume my time and energy.

Could I still be a peaceful worldschooler even *without* traveling the world? While I still believe that every human being should own a passport and gain the experience of traveling to another country at least once in their lifetime, I want you to know that *anyone* can be a peaceful worldschooler - even without leaving your home. So whether you have a passport or you do not have one (yet), I would like to invite you to join us on our journey as Peaceful Worldschoolars.

Be a Worldschooler *in your home*.

Most of us have access to explore the world right from our very own fingertips in the comfort of our own home. Whether it's watching documentaries about other countries on Netflix or YouTube or "flying" to a distant land via [Google Earth](#), if you have a smartphone, tablet, or computer, you can be a peaceful worldschooler.

Research other countries and cultures. My family and I like to learn about other cultures through [CultureGrams](#) or [the Joshua Project](#). We talk about similarities and differences between their culture and ours. We look at pictures, listen to music, and experiment with cooking recipes from places all over the world.

Do you want to learn another language? Simply change the audio settings on your Netflix account or search for movies already in your target language. Or you can also download a free app like [DuoLingo](#), listen to a podcast, or find an online friend through [ePals](#) or [Skype](#).

There are many ways to begin learning about the world from the comfort of your own home. Give one a try today!

Be a Worldschooler *in your community*.

Ask a librarian at your local library to help you find books and movies about another country or culture.

Go out to eat at an ethnic restaurant and try something new!

Visit local museums.

Buy your groceries at an international grocery store.

Attend a church (or a mosque or a temple) in a different language or for a different religion/denomination.

Volunteer to teach English as a foreign/second language. (If you speak English, you can teach English!)

Take your children to play at a park or playground in a new or diverse area.

Develop relationships with people from another country or culture. This is probably the most important thing that you can do as you seek to be a Peaceful Worldschooler. As we open our hearts and our homes to people that are different from us, we begin to learn to value those differences, and, oftentimes, we find that we are not so different in the end. Building multicultural relationships is vital to growing as Peaceful Worldschoolers.

Be a Worldschooler *in your country*.

One of the things that I love best about being a Peaceful Worldschooler is *traveling*. However, if you cannot travel out of your own country for whatever reason, make it a point to travel within your own country. Because let's be honest. The "world" of Southern California is not the "world" of Washington, D.C. and the "world" of New York is not the "world" of Texas.

Even within my own state of Maryland, the "world" of Baltimore is not the "world" of Langley Park or the "world" of Bethesda or the "world" of Annapolis. A simple 30-minute drive can literally bring you to a variety of different worlds – each one with its own beauty and uniqueness, each one with adventure and excitement, and each one with something and someone to learn from.

So if you are committed to cultivating *peace* and perceiving the *world* as your *school*, then congratulations! *You* are a peaceful worldschooler, too!

Be a Worldschooler *in a different country*.

Saint Augustine once said, “The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page.” I have been traveling to other countries ever since I was a baby. Before I turned 30, I had visited over 20 different countries. A passport is one of the most valuable possessions that I own. Opening the pages of a passport can be the greatest tool to open your eyes, your mind, and your heart.

It has never been easier to travel from one country to another. So, go for it! Spend a few days, weeks, months, or years in another country. Take a car, train, plane, boat. Learn the language, try the food, make friends with the local people. Explore. Experience. Expatriate.

Chapter 3

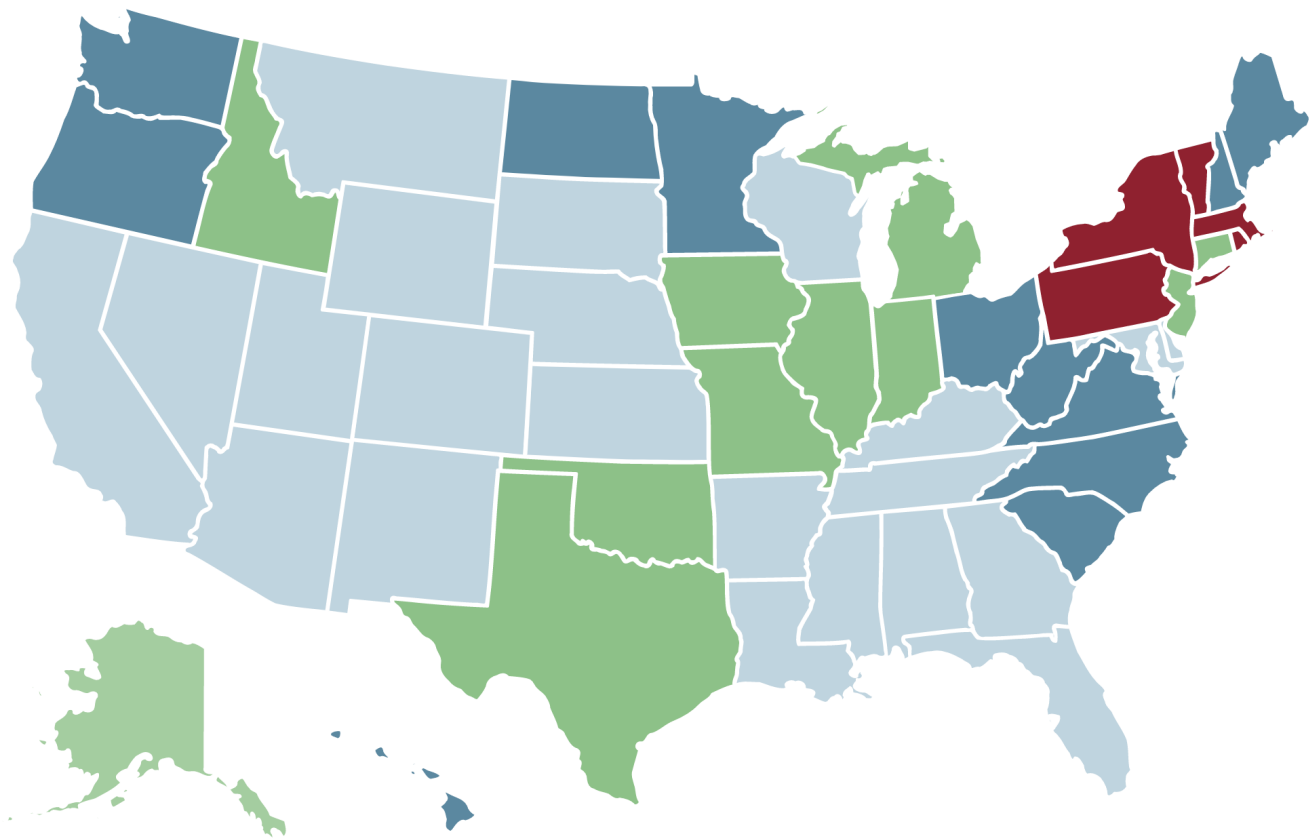
How to start Peaceful Worldschooling?

If you are reading this book, I trust that it is because you are a parent that is committed to having a vibrant, connected relationship with your children and the world. There are many stages in this journey, and wherever you are is perfect. Please remember that this life is a marathon - not a race. The goal is not to finish quickly, but to finish well. And I know that you will!

Stage 1: Brainstorm.

If you are in stage one, you are still considering a Peaceful Worldschooling lifestyle. Maybe you have children already. Maybe you don't. Maybe your child is still registered in a local public or private school, or maybe you have already made the choice to homeschool (or unschool).

Take some time to research the homeschooling laws in your state or country. The [Homeschool Legal Defense Association \(HSLDA\)](#) is a great resource that shares the laws of each state regarding homeschooling. They provide step-by-step guidance for getting started as a homeschooler. Some states require more than other states, so it is essential to get familiar with the requirements of your state. If you live in Maryland, I invite you to join the [Peaceful Worldschoolers umbrella](#).



● No notice, Low regulation ● Low regulation ● Moderate regulation ● High regulation

Research different homeschooling philosophies and see what resonates most with you and your family. I recommend taking the [Homeschool Style Quiz](#)⁶ so that you will know exactly what your natural inclination is, and be aware that your homeschool style can change over time.

Every decision has pros and cons(iderations), advantages and disadvantages, positive and negative consequences. Use the Stage 1 Brainstorming Sheet to help you as you consider your options. Feel free to make copies for each member of your family, and then one for your whole family. Some families also like to create a vision board with pictures and words that creatively depict their family goals and dreams. Whatever you choose to do, make sure to create a physical representation that inspires you!

⁶ Spooner, Rebecca. “The Homeschool Style Quiz.” *Homeschool On*, 26 Feb. 2018, homeschoolon.com/the-homeschool-style-quiz/.

Stage 1 Brainstorming Sheet

Name: _____ Age: _____ Date: _____

My [homeschooling style](#) is: Traditional Classical Charlotte Mason Unit Study Eclectic Unschooling

My [learning style](#) is: Auditory Visual Tactile/Kinesthetic

I am excited about Worldschooing because...	I am concerned about Worldschooing because...
A topic that I am interested in pursuing is....	A place that I want to go to is...
A skill that I want to master is...	An activity that I want to participate in is...

Stage 2: Deschool.

You have made the decision to homeschool (or unschool) as Peaceful Worldschoolers. You have filed all the appropriate papers with your county. Now what?

Deschooling is one of the most important stages that you and your family will go through in this journey. Deschooling is the stage when you live as though school does not exist. Imagine that every day is Saturday. Turn off the alarm clock and wake up when your body is fully rested. Spend some time relaxing on the couch, watching a movie, playing games together, cooking together. Pretend like you are on a vacation, and do what you would normally do on vacation. Plan fun activities. See some sights. Take a tour. Go out with family and friends. Read a book. Laugh.

It can take a long time to unlearn a lot of the things that we have been taught about school and learning in general. In school, you were taught what you needed to learn, when you needed to learn it, and how you needed to learn it. As Peaceful Worldschoolers, no one is forcing or coercing you to learn anything, so you have the freedom to learn anything at any time and in any way you desire.

The longer we are in school, the more time it takes to unlearn many of the things that we have been taught about what learning is “supposed” to look like. I recommend deschooling *one month for every year that you or your child has been in school*. So for example, if your child is in 2nd grade, they have been in school for 3 years, so they would need 3 months of deschooling.

Deschooling is not just for our kids. It’s for us too! Since I have spent 20 years in formal schooling (from Preschool to Master’s degree) and 12 years as a classroom teacher, I should spend roughly 32 months deschooling. But to be honest, I believe that we will be deschooling for the rest of our lives!

Use this deschooling time to focus on building a purposeful, connected, loving relationship with your children. Get to know them in newer, deeper ways. Observe them. How do they learn best? What are they excited about doing? When left to themselves, how do they enjoy spending their time? What topics do they enjoy talking about? What skills do they have that they can cultivate? What skills do they need in order to accomplish their goals? Are they introverted or extroverted? How do they interact with people of other ages? What are they passionate about?

Two important resources that helped me during the deschooling process were podcasts and books! Check out the [Exploring Unschooling Podcast](#) and the [Peaceful Worldschooling Podcast](#).

Top 25 Deschooling Reading List

These are some of the amazing books that I recommend reading while exploring peaceful worldschooling especially while going through the deschooling stage.

1. [Tales of a Toxic Teacher: Exposing the Cycles of Abuse within our Schools](#) by Angela Harders
2. [The 5-Hour School Week](#) by Kaleena Amuchastegui
3. [The Brave Learner](#) by Julie Bogart
4. [The Call of the Wild and Free](#) by Ainsley Arment
5. [Dumbing Us Down](#) by John Taylor Gatto
6. [Free to Learn](#) by Peter Gray
7. [Gospel-Based Parenting](#) by Angela Harders
8. [Home Grown](#) by Ben Hewitt
9. [How Children Fail](#) by John Holt
10. [How Children Learn](#) by John Holt
11. [How Children Succeed](#) by Paul Tough
12. [Sandra Dodd's Big Book of Unschooling](#) by Sandra Dodd
13. [The Self-Driven Child](#) by William Stixrud
14. [Teach Your Own](#) by John Holt
15. [Unschooling](#) by Kerry McDonald
16. [The Unschooling Handbook](#) by Mary Griffith
17. [Unschooling: Exploring Learning Beyond the Classroom](#) by Gina Riley
18. [The Unschooling Journey: A Field Guide](#) by Pam Laricchia
19. [Unschooling Rules: 55 Ways to Unlearn What We Know About Schools and Rediscover Education](#) by Clark Aldrich
20. [Unschooling to University](#) by Judy Arnall
21. [Weapons of Mass Instruction](#) by John Taylor Gatto
22. [What Is Unschooling?](#) by Pam Laricchia
23. [The World is Our Classroom](#) by Jennie Germann Holz
24. [Why Are You Still Sending Your Kids to School?](#) by Blake Boles
25. [Worldschooling](#) by Ashley Dymock de Tello

Stage 3: Plan.

“Start with the end in mind.” When I was in my teacher training program, we learned about a strategy called “Backward Design.” Simply put, you figure out the goal that you want your students to achieve and then work backwards from that goal in order to achieve it. For example, if I want my students to master writing a persuasive essay about a topic that is important to them, then I must:

1. Show an example of what an amazing persuasive essay looks like
2. Analyze the key aspects that make a persuasive essay awesome
3. Brainstorm the topic you want to write about
4. Organize your topic into an outline
5. Write a rough draft
6. Edit your final draft
7. Share your final product with the people you wish to persuade
8. Analyze the results of your persuasiveness

We will follow a similar “backwards-design” in planning to reach your worldschooling goals for travel, activities, and skills. Use the next two pages to help you make your own SMART Goals based on your brainstorming sheet.



Worldschooling Backwards Design Template - TRAVEL

1. Where do I want to go?	
2. Why do I want to go there?	
3. When do I want to go there?	
4. How much will it cost? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -gas -airfare -car rental -hotel/lodging -food expenses -entertainment -activities -etc. 	
5. How much money do I need to set aside each week in order to reach this goal? Is that attainable? (If not, make adjustments to your timeframe or to your budget.)	
6. What activities do I want to do while on this trip? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -tours -sightseeing -important historical locations -parks and natural wonders -volunteering/serving -etc. 	
7. Who can I connect with while there?	
8. Additional Notes/Details to Consider:	

Worldschooling Backwards Design Template - ACTIVITY

1. What activity do I want to do?	
2. Why do I want to do this activity?	
3. When do I want to do this activity?	
4. Where will I do this activity?	
5. How much will it cost? Is that attainable? -fees -supplies -materials -membership -etc.	
6. Who will do this activity with me?	
7. What do I expect to learn while participating in this activity?	
8. Additional Notes/Details to Consider:	

Worldschooling Backwards Design Template - SKILL

1. What do I want to learn?	
2. Why do I want to learn this skill?	
3. By when do I want to learn this skill?	
4. How would I like to learn this skill? -read a book -watch a YouTube video/movie -learn with a teacher/mentor -try to figure it out on my own -read an audiobook -take a class -etc.	
5. Who can help me learn this skill?	
6. How much will it cost (weekly/monthly/annually)? Is that attainable? -fees -supplies -materials -class registration -etc.	
7. How much time am I willing to commit to practicing this new skill? -daily -weekly -monthly -annually	
9. Additional Notes/Details to Consider:	

Chapter 4

The Seven Principles of Peaceful Worldschooled

Peaceful worldschooled strive to abide by the following **seven principles**:

1. We lead with love.
2. We support with service.
3. We guide with gentleness.
4. We relate with respect.
5. We teach with travel.
6. We explore with empathy.
7. We persevere with peace.

The way each family manifests these seven principles will look different, and that is wonderful! What a boring world it would be if we all thought and did everything exactly the same.

One of the most beautiful aspects of worldschooled is the fact that there is no failure because there is nothing to fail. Worldschooled is a philosophy, a posture for approaching life and the people in it. If we truly believe that all of life is learning, then even in our “failures,” there is something valuable to be learned - which means that failure really is not a failure because it serves a purpose. Failure is an opportunity to learn and grow.

As parents, we will have many “opportunities to learn and grow,” so it is essential that we can model a healthy attitude towards failure. The goal in this life is not to avoid failure, but to learn the lessons that we were meant to learn from that failure and to pass along those lessons to others. So get

ready to take that first step. Step into the wonderful world of peaceful worldschooling, knowing that it is impossible to fail! Yes, your journey will have ups and downs, bumps and bruises, but it will all be perfect... because it is perfectly yours.

It all begins with a simple choice - not an easy one, but a simple one. *Choose* to live each day and each moment by the seven principles of Peaceful Worldscooling. And when failure inevitably happens, *choose* them again and again and again. And then take action consistent with that choice.

1. Lead with Love

We are all familiar with the “Golden Rule” - *treat others as you want to be treated*. This concept is universally taught in every religion, on every continent, of every skin tone, for every age. Who could have imagined that such a simple idea would be so difficult to manifest? But this is the heart behind Peaceful Worldscooling.

As we lead our children with love, it looks exactly like that - treating others as you want to be treated. I would even go a step further in that we lead with love when we learn to treat others as *they* want to be treated. While human desires of respect and belonging unite us all, the way each person perceives respect and belonging may differ. We must master the art of learning to love our children in the way that *they* uniquely receive and perceive love.

Perhaps you consider yourself to be someone who is “not very touchy-feely.” However, your child may need that in order to receive and perceive your love. They may need you to give them hugs and kisses and cuddles.

Perhaps you tell yourself that you’re not great with words. However, you may need to be because you have a child who needs you to be. Your children need to *hear* that you love them just as much as they need to *see* that you love them and to *feel* that you love them.

So when in doubt, ask yourself: “Am I leading with love? Am I putting love first? What would love look like?” Do that.

2. Support with Service

Peaceful Worldscoolers support their children with service. We serve our children, and we teach them to serve others. Serving does not mean “doing something for them.” Because it truly does not serve our children to have them grow up without any real skills. Sometimes the best way we can

serve our children is by giving them space to struggle and stepping in to provide support *when they ask*.

While stuck at home during COVID, I discovered my old Nintendo 64 console in the garage, so I pulled it out, plugged it in, and, much to my surprise, it worked! I was so excited to share my nostalgic memories with my 6-year-old daughter. N64 was my first video game - and now, it would be hers too!

The first game that she wanted to play was Super Mario. She was very happy walking around safely outside the castle, but as soon as she entered a “world” with a mission and a chance of dying, it was literally game over. You see, my daughter is extremely competitive. She doesn't like to lose - truly, no one does. However, she reacts to losing - or even just the *fear* of losing - in ways that definitely do not serve her. She gets angry, sometimes she quits, she gets frustrated, she cries, she complains.

“Mom, you do it! Can *you* jump on the mushrooms? I’m scared!” She would exclaim as she forcefully thrust the controller into my hands. I didn’t want her to just give up because she was afraid, but I also saw that this game was creating a lot of anxiety and stress for her.

At first, I refused to help her - thinking that the best thing would be for her to simply learn to overcome her fear and anxiety on her own. However, a friend gently challenged me: “If your daughter asked you for help in any other area of life, what would you say?” If it was cooking or folding the laundry or reading a new word, if my daughter asked for help, I would happily say “yes!”

The fact of the matter is that if she is asking for help, it’s because she still *needs* or *wants* help - and that’s okay. Not only is that okay, but it’s a great skill to be able to ask someone for help when you need it. So, I made a promise to myself and to her: if my daughter ever asked for help, and it was within my power to say “yes,” then I would. I would not make her feel bad or guilty for asking for help. Instead, I would feel honored that she was coming to me as the person she chose to provide that support when she needed it.

My friend continued, “Why would you make her suffer and struggle over a Nintendo game? It should be fun! So when she asks you to play, then play. Support her by serving her in that moment. Show her that it’s not scary to jump on mushrooms. And even if she dies, she’ll come back again. There’s nothing to fear - and so much fun to be had!”

So, the next time we were playing Super Mario and she frantically thrust the controller in my hands, I happily played. And as she watched me fail and die over and over, she began to build up

enough confidence in herself that she did not need to be afraid of dying either, because it's just a game. There's nothing to fear and so much fun to be had!

Eventually, she asked for a turn. "Mommy, let me try! I think I can do it now!" I smiled at her as I handed over the controller. I supported her with service until she did not need my support anymore. And as parents, we continue to do this not just with Nintendo games, but with the game of life. May we be faithful to say "yes" to supporting our children and living in such a way that they know there is nothing to fear - and so much fun to be had!

3. Guide with Gentleness

I am not a very "handy" person which is why I absolutely love IKEA! Everything you need is in the box - all the tools, all the pieces, all the parts, all the instructions you need are there. I mean who could have imagined that someone like me could build a whole table by myself just by looking at a few pictures?

The beauty of IKEA is in its simplicity. They take a complex task like building a table, and provide a guide so simple and clear that a child could do it. Now if only "building character" could be done that easily, then our world would be much better off!

Dear friend, I want you to know that you have everything you need to be the kind of parent that you want to be - all the tools, all the pieces, all the parts, all the instructions. It's all there - right inside of you! *You* are the guide that your child is "reading" to learn how to "build character" in their life.

You are guiding your children each and every day. They are looking to you for instructions as they are building their lives - step by step and piece by piece. As Peaceful Worldschoolers, we commit to guiding them with gentleness.

4. Relate with Respect

There are a few phrases that you will hear often in my home: "Respect the rest" (when someone is sleeping or napping, we do not want to be loud or disrupt their sleep) and "Respect the reading" (when someone is reading, we do not want to be rude or interrupt). Even my children say these phrases to one another and to me, so I was a bit surprised when a few days ago, my daughter asked me, "Mom, what does respect mean?"

We talk a lot about respect, but I realized that we never really defined what that word means for us. I asked her, “What do *you* think that respect means?”

She thought for a second and then replied, “Like kindness and honor mixed.”

“That is a perfect definition, sweetie!” Respect is kindness and honor mixed.

As Peaceful Worldschoolers, we commit to relate to our children, our spouses, and anyone else that we encounter with “kindness and honor mixed.” Relating to one another with respect is one way that we cultivate peace in our homes and in our world.

5. Teach with Travel

Saint Augustine said, “The world is a book, and those who do not travel have read only a page.” Traveling opens up a world of possibilities and lessons to be learned. As Peaceful Worldschoolers, we are committed to teach our children with travel and through our travels. While I hope that you will make the effort to travel with your children to another country, even traveling to a different city nearby can provide tons of opportunities for learning.

Traveling is one of the greatest teachers that we will ever have. We will experience foods, music, languages, people, beliefs, cultures that we otherwise never would have known if we did not take the leap to travel somewhere new.

Traveling is also one of the greatest tools that we have to be able to cultivate a love of learning. Travel with curiosity. Ask new questions. Try new things. Make new friends. Explore new lands. Discover a new *you* because you will never be able to return home the same as when you left.

So, open your passport to new places, open your mind to new ideas and open your heart to new people to love.

6. Explore with Empathy

I went on my first mission trip to Guatemala when I was 12 years old. We stayed at an orphanage for just one week, but that short trip changed my entire life. I went to Guatemala with the purpose of making a difference and “helping the poor orphan children,” but I did not anticipate that *they* would be the ones helping me.

Even though I was just 12 years old, I was struggling with depression and suicide. However, I could no longer wallow in my own self-pity and ungratefulness as I watched hundreds of children with

no parents, no food, and no shoes experience a joy and a vibrance that I could only dream of. I realized very quickly that happiness is not found in things or in money. Gratitude and attitude make all the difference.

I returned home from that trip and never again took an antidepressant or had another suicidal thought. I committed to myself to learn Spanish, and I continued to go back to Guatemala every year to visit my old friends and to make new ones. After several years, I read a book that absolutely transformed my life, When Helping Hurts by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert. This book put into words what I had experienced so many years prior - that there are things that we do in an attempt to “help” others that we end up unknowingly and unintentionally causing so much damage!

This book was like a punch in the gut for me, and I highly recommend that every human being that cares about any other human being make the time to read it. One of my biggest lessons from that book and from my travels in Guatemala was the importance of exploring with empathy. I did not need to approach other people as the foreigner who had all the answers to solve all their problems. Instead, I needed to first connect with people and then listen with empathy to what *they* actually had to say. Instead of viewing myself as the teacher, I began to see myself as the student. And I sure had a *lot* to learn from them!

Empathy empowers. The more I understood their experiences and their struggles, the more I became confident in their ability to solve their own problems. They were truly the experts in their own situation. They did not need me to play the “Savior.” They needed to be the hero of their own story - and they were fully capable of doing so.

The same is true of our children. When we can make the shift of viewing ourselves as the “teacher” to viewing ourselves as the student of our children, we can then view our children as the experts in themselves. After all, they know best what they like and what they don’t. Our children can and will be our greatest teachers if we allow them to be.

And just like the “poor Guatemalans,” my child does not need me to be their “Savior.” Human beings are much more capable than we could ever give them credit for. But we can continue to encourage them to explore themselves and the world around them with empathy and empower them to use that empathy to create connected communities that are founded in peace and purpose.

7. Persevere with Peace

Cultivating peace in our homes and in our world takes hard work. It is not something that will happen overnight. Instead, it is something that we must persevere in working towards and maintaining. The biggest threat to peace is *fear*. We cannot address our fears if we do not first acknowledge our fears. Once we acknowledge our fears, then we can lay them aside in our pursuit of peace. So whether you have a fear of the future, fear of failing, fear of what others may think, fear of not having enough, fear of dying, whatever your fear may be, take the time to write them down on a piece of paper. Get them out of your head. And symbolically let them go. Because as Peaceful Worldschoolers, we commit to persevere in peace with ourselves, with others, with nature, with God. We will not allow our fears of tomorrow to rob us of the peace that we have today.

If you agree to commit to live your life based on the seven principles of Peaceful Worldschooling, then I invite you to sign your name to the Peaceful Worldschooling Commitment on the next page or you can go to: <https://peacefulworldschoolers.com/certificate-of-commitment/> in order to download your free certificate of commitment. Print and post it in a place (or as many places) where you may need a reminder of your commitment to live by these seven principles. Share them with your spouse, your children, your family, your friends. Invite them to sign their names and commit to live by the seven principles of Peaceful Worldschooling with you.



CERTIFICATE OF COMMITMENT

I commit to live my life by seven principles of

PEACEFUL WORLDSCHOOLING

1. Lead with Love
2. Support with Service
3. Guide with Gentleness
4. Relate with Respect
5. Teach with Travel
6. Explore with Empathy
7. Persevere with Peace

SIGNATURE

DATE

Chapter 5

Now What?

Congratulations! You have made the choice to be a Peaceful Worldschooler, and now the adventure really begins. When we strip away the curriculum and the control that is so often forced upon us and our children, we are left with a world that is completely open to us to explore. With a commitment to peace and a love of learning, we may begin writing the next chapter of our own life story. So this chapter is yours to write. This book is yours to finish. This life is yours to create.

The Beginning