



Homeschooling Our Children Unschooling Ourselves

Alison McKee

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A compelling story about one family's journey into the unknown territory of homeschooling, told with skill by Alison McKee, a gifted teacher with a wide experience in traditional education and a special sensitivity to the individual needs of children. Trusting her own children to "show me the way" was a difficult challenge - but one that gave unexpected and rich rewards. Anyone familiar with the writings of John Holt will be interested to learn how things worked out for a family that decided to test his belief that children are the best directors of their own education. McKee offers the reader insights on how children learn, plenty of illustrations and practical advice about how "unschooling" works, and thoughtful commentary on the state of education today. This book will reassure parents considering homeschooling that nurturing children's natural desire to learn can empower their children to become enthusiastic life-long learners.

Homeschooling Our Children Unschooling Ourselves Details

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From Reader Review Homeschooling Our Children Unschooling Ourselves for online ebook

Kelly Shultz says

I have had the opportunity not only to read this book, but to see Alison McKee speak on several occasions. She is a respectable, valuable voice in the unschooling community. She also happens to be one of the earlier unschooling mothers who wrote about her experiences, along with Sandra Dodd. Her experiences, particularly with her son, are valuable for those who are struggling with trusting that their child will find meaningful passions to explore. Her calm voice, both in the book, and in person, are reassuring to those who are new to the idea of trusting our children to learn and find a meaningful path to adulthood without the structured milestones of traditional learning.

Austen to Zafón says

I've known I wanted to homeschool since way before my son was born and unschooling seemed like a natural path for me. But I have my days when I worry that I'm making a mistake. He's not "gifted" like most his homeschool friends and he doesn't show a wild thirst for knowledge. In fact, he's deeply suspicious about anyone or anything trying to "teach" him anything! But I'm still plugging away and people like McKee keep me going. While my friends and I can talk about how it's going right now, McKee has come out on the other end, able to talk about what worked, what didn't, and what her kids are doing now. She was a teacher of special needs kids before having her own children and she saw from the inside the ways in which, well-intentioned as it is, the system can fail kids. The book chronicles how she gradually came to her decision to "unschool" and how she went about it. Inspiring and enjoyable read.

Lisa says

Unschooling myself is the key to approaching my continuing education as well as facilitating my daughter in her education. It is her education! Mrs. McKee shared so that I could see her struggles and relate them to my own. Knowing something about her outcomes with bright, energetic, enthusiastic and intelligent children I am encouraged along my journey in homeschooling.

Alex says

Certainly not a brilliant writer or anything, but this memoir was perfect for me. Helped me to understand and come to grips with (at least a little) some of my own doubts about unschooling our own children. I came away much better prepared than I went in.

UPDATE: Reading this review again, I'm not sure I said what I intended to say. I don't have the kind of doubts that would stand in the way of our unschooling. I really do think that it is the right thing to do for us and especially for our children. I am fully on board as it were. The doubts I have are the kind of doubts one might have if one had no real experience of any kind of schooling except institutional schooling. These are

just the regular old nagging concerns that I bet other unschooling parents feel at some point or another. "How will they learn math?", etc.

The fact of the matter is that I believe (and especially now after reading this book): 1) that they will learn what interests them which will in turn keep the love of learning - that I see so evidently at their very young ages - strong, 2) the things that I find important may not actually be so important, 3) things like reading and mathematics will come up because they just do - and if it happens later than it happens in school that doesn't mean it won't happen.

Sanz says

Likely one of my favorite homeschooling books. This is the story of the author's experience unschooling her two children. Definitely gives you a lot to think about.

Loved this: "I had to remind ourselves that learning has no failures, no beginnings and no ends--it simply continues."

Jessica says

This one was so fun to read and daydream about all the spectacular adventures our family can have eventually. I love the idea that if you set your kids loose to explore their interests, you can suddenly find yourself with a juvenile expert on fly fishing or theatrical make up or competitive swimming. It's interesting to wonder what kind of passions Penny will eventually have.

I'm knocking off a star because the writing was often more than a little clunky.

Shel says

As I was reading this book I kept feeling as if I could be the one writing it! It was fantastic, an easy read and really gave me lots to think about. I loved that it was written by a teacher and I thought it gave it an interesting perspective! I did find it interesting that most of it seemed to be about her son, while her daughter was not mentioned nearly as much. All in all a great book and I recommend it to anyone considering unschooling/homeschooling, family, friends of people considering it or doing it or anyone who wants to know more about the topic.

Michelle says

As a parent who's been thinking about whether I'd be "good enough" to homeschool my son, I found this book to be a very encouraging and confidence-building read. It contains reassuring personal anecdotes from the author's own experience as a homeschooling parent, as well as helpful advice at the end about navigating the bureaucratic university channels for a homeschooled child who is interested in college.

Gabi Eyerman says

I learned a lot about unschooling, so much that I wish we could eventually evolve to that level of homeschooling. A great read and lots of great resources, though many may seem outdated, education really doesn't change much, when it's good.

Janette says

Alison has experience working as a teacher and helping blind or vision impaired students learn and adjust to classroom settings. I felt her insight into schools, and how they fail individual children, was very valuable. If a teacher has a class of 20+ students and one or more of those students needs additional help or would understand the subject matter if presented in a different way, does the teacher stop the 19 or so other children just to help the one who needs it? NO. If you don't learn the way the teacher is presenting the materials, or can't keep up with the pace, you are told you're the one at fault, you're slow or stupid, not good at _____ (math, reading, science). Perhaps the school or teacher will offer after school tutoring. Maybe you have an involved parent who's able to assist you after school and you're able to keep plodding along....Most teachers aren't able to be flexible to individual needs or are unwilling. They have to keep the class in order, force children to listen and learn, and everyone must stay at the pace the teacher sets. Alison describes the frustration of school bells (which, to be honest, during a boring class you were just aching for the bell to ring weren't you?) and how they could interrupt a great flow of learning. Not only does she describe her experiences teaching in public schools but she describes coming to the decision to homeschool her children by a particular method known as "unschooling". What she describes in her book about unschooling her two children is about how they become individuals with diverse and unique talents that were self-discovered and not forced upon them. They lived rich lives full of varied experiences and were members of the community, unafraid of addressing adults and seeing them instead as peers.

Alison also admits to the hardships behind homeschooling and particularly unschooling. She's honest about it but always comes back to her feeling that homeschooling is best for their family and children.

This book did not come across as being preachy but persuasive. It balanced idealism with reality and would be a great book to read for anyone interested in learning more about unschooling or even homeschooling for that matter.

Willow says

a very enjoyable read. mckee is both a teacher within the school system and an advocate of homeschooling, more specifically, unschooling. she takes the reader through her family's journey of unschooling when it was a fairly new and radical method. her observations and recounting of experiences are very honest. her comparisons between her experiences as a teacher within the school system and with her children at home lead one to look at homeschooling as not only a more hands on approach to raising your children, but a more compassionate and thorough way to approach learning. i highly recommend this book for anyone interested in learning more about homeschooling/unschooling.

Sara says

This is the honest account of one family's path to life and learning, complete with doubts, mistakes and regrets. The McKees decided to homeschool (and basically unschool) their two children back in the days when it was still illegal in some states to do so. Both parents having been through the traditional schooling system (and Alison still a teacher within it when her children were small) and having few role models/support, they struggled mightily to support their children's learning outside of school. They loved the idea of allowing them to learn without curriculum and tests, but had to talk themselves (and one another) down off the ledge constantly because they were anxious that their kids weren't learning the "right" things at the "right" times, or were "failing" when they lost interest in a topic, or whatever. The title reflects the strongest theme in the McKees story, which how the adults learned to "unschool" themselves - trust their children, shed expectations, and watch them grow. Highly recommend.

Phoebe says

The author just talks about her experience as a teacher and also a home schooler, and, in so doing, blew my teeny mind.

Roxane says

Just finished reading the book Homeschooling Our Children, Unschooling Ourselves by Alison McKee. I found it to be an honest and open look at one family's experience with homeschooling/unschooling. I found many parallels to my own family's experience over the last 20+ years. I loved how open the author was about her doubts and setbacks over the years. The paradigm shift is huge for those of us who were public schooled as children and perhaps more so for those of us who were also public school teachers. This book was also very good at showing the rewards and benefits of child led learning. A very good read!

Angela says

This was a very personal insight book into the real life of a homeschooling/unschooling family. It discusses challenges, achievements, mistakes, and successes. Very interesting advice and very heartfelt from the author about trusting your children and what to do when you just feel like they are not learning! I enjoyed the discussion on "self-taught" readers and the discussion about the 2 siblings being very different and having contrasting learning styles. Interesting to hear about what her children's interests were and what she did to encourage them.
