5 secret shortcuts for a fulfilling unschooling experience

Introduction

As parents practicing alternative education methods like homeschooling, unschooling, or self-directed learning, we share common reasons and goals. We also encounter similar challenges. In this handout, I'll share my personal insights after seven years as a full-time mom and extensive reading on parenting, personal growth and education topics.





Let me introduce myself briefly: I'm **Sylvia Brinded-Püls,** a mother to two unschooling girls and the founder of A Place To Be, a community for families who don't send their kids to school.

For more about me and our project, visit our website or listen to my podcast.

Challenges

Now, let's discuss the challenges most of us face when granting our children absolute freedom in decision-making. We recognize it's best for them, but it's difficult to let go of our beliefs about how children learn and should behave. We want them to become kind, fulfilled, respectable adults who can integrate into society without conforming to the system.

Providing resources and learning opportunities is easy in the 21st century.

The real challenge is overcoming our conditioning.

We hear voices in our heads, like "They shouldn't spend so much time on screens," "They did it



wrong again!" or "Other kids can already read." These thoughts stem from our childhood experiences. Our inner dialogue reflects early conditioning, often marked by a lack of unconditional love, connection, and belonging.

As mentioned earlier, giving material resources isn't the issue. It's the love, connection and sense of belonging that is usually harder to give as we think..



If you´re not connected to yourself, it will be tricky to connect to others, including to your kids. If you lack self-love, the love you give to your children will be limited to the one you received. If you feel you don't belong, your kids will sense this and may experience the same.

Here are my five secret shortcuts to help you provide your children with the best childhood experience: learning freely and feeling loved, connected, and like they belong, regardless of the path they choose.

At the end of this pdf you will find a summary of each of the 5 secrets with a short ´how to tip´.

Secret #1: Hold your inner child



Whenever you feel an emotion rising within you, pause for a moment and **imagine holding yourself as a baby**, toddler or child and calm yourself down. Unless your kid just punched you hard in the face, just for fun, chances are there is no rational reason to be angry. The anger you´re experiencing is coming from an invisible wound

created in your childhood that has been ´touched´ (triggered) by your child.

Keep in mind that, unless there is real danger, the fear you feel is coming from past experiences. Unless somebody just died, the sadness you feel is most likely your inner child crying for love, connection and belonging. Even when somebody ´made you happy´, it's you as a child feeling happy that you finally received some long-needed love that we all need for survival but as most of us did not get nowhere near the unconditional love our physiology required, we tend to get emotional and overreact when our children (and other people) trigger our childhood wounds.
So, take care of your inner child when you feel an emotion coming up and your kid(s) will appreciate it unknowingly.

Secret #2: Love, connection and belonging towards your children



When we wake up in the morning, I have found the best way to start the day for us is to **cuddle, talk, tickle, laugh, play cards** and then everybody does what they want (usually they play, go to the pool, craft, watch something etc.). Before going out I ask them if they want to come along or stay. When I go out alone I **make sure to be emotionally and mentally available** when I´m back to reconnect if they need to.

Secret #3: Hugs



Hugs are closely related to secret number 2 but here is what makes the real difference: When your kids come to you for a cuddle, hug, to breastfeed etc, it usually doesn't last THAT long

but sometimes, when we´re absorbed in a task that we think is important (work or household) or that we actually enjoy doing, we might try to get out of the hug quickly to get back to our task. From now on, **try to be the one to hold on as long as your kid wants to hug, cuddle or breastfeed and only let go when he or she is ready to leave**. They are most likely filling up a little hole that has been created in their early years because we weren't able to give them 100% unconditional love just like our parents couldn't. These hugs won't last for too long, taking you away from chores, and they will get less and less anyway so enjoy them as long as they last. People and connections are more important than things.

Secret #4: Look after yourself



Life as a mother can be extremely busy and we tend to try to get as much done in a day as possible. Then we get worn out, tired, overwhelmed which leads to stress,

less patience and not being able to give our families the time, love and connection that they need and deserve. Therefore it's important to love and connect to ourselves on a daily basis. Whenever I find myself thinking stuff like I could fit emptying the dishwasher and brooming the balcony before we go out (no emergencies), I **take a deep breath, go into the bedroom and just lie on the bed for 10-15 min, doing nothing or listening to a guided meditation**. This short time really helps to restore my energy and balance to enjoy the next few hours with my family and friends or doing what I have to do.

Secret #5: Be with your community as much as possible



One reason I built APTB was because it would **make life for the whole family so much easier**. The girls can go out and play with other

kids, be with trusted adults, learn freely and come back to us whenever they feel like it. I can also follow my interests and don't have to drop them off and pick them up later. This **natural separation** that happens is of a big advantage for us because it's my **kids who decide how long they're comfortable with being away** from me. I get to spend some time alone or with friends which makes it easier to stay relaxed and patient all day and when we meet again we're happy to see each other.

Recap:



If you **focus your attention on healing your inner child**, it will be much easier to see your kids as equals and to support them in their self-directed learning ventures without too much interference from your conditioning. And you can always own up to a mistake and apologize ;-)

Secret #1: Hold your inner child

When you feel angry, sad, annoyed, fearful, etc., remind yourself that your kid is just triggering your childhood wound and imagine giving yourself as a child a hug.

Secret #2: Love, connection and belonging towards your children

Start the day by connecting with your family on a deep level (cuddles, talking, laughing etc) and make time in the day for moments of connection.

Secret #3: Hugs

When your child hugs you, stay in the hug until she is the one letting go first.

Secret #4: Look after yourself

Take breaks during the day to restore your energy and balance.

Secret #5: Be with your community as much as possible

Meet friends often because it takes a village to raise a child.

Thank You

I hope my secret shortcuts will be of great use for you and your family and that I´ll see you at A Pace To Be one day.

Please also check out the free courses on parenting and healing your inner child we have on our website in the Member´s Area and don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

All the best and a big warm hug!
Sylvia

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