

# HEART MATTERS

NON SCHOLÆ SED VITÆ

*Libraries of Hope Newsletter*

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“BY SMALL AND SIMPLE MEANS, GREAT THINGS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED.”

## MARLENE'S MUSINGS

--I had an interesting dream the other night. And it applies to you.

I dreamed that I had been asked to conduct an orchestra by a well respected member of my church. I said I didn't know anything about conducting an orchestra, but he assured me that everyone already knew their parts and had practiced them. I just needed to conduct the beat.

So, reluctantly, I agreed to go. It was at a military academy type institution and a huge crowd had gathered to watch the performance. The orchestra was not what I expected. Instead of strings and woodwinds, it was entirely comprised of loud, brass instruments.



Art credit: Children's Concert by George Iakovidis

With not a little trepidation, I stepped in front of the orchestra to lead. I did the upbeat and then a four beat pattern. But no one played. I had made eye contact--they were watching me--so I tried again. Still nothing. I thought maybe they were just waiting for me to establish the tempo and they would start on the next pattern. But again, nothing. And a fourth time, nothing.

(*Marlene's Musings cont.*) Now I was embarrassed and the crowd was restless and started leaving. I had clearly failed.

But as I woke from the dream, these words were impressed on my heart: "You are not asked to lead the loud brass of the earth nor to please the masses. They will not follow your leadership. But that doesn't mean you have failed."

And I felt a sense of relief in being content serving in small, quiet musical settings.

I love the personal and intimate feeling of this group. I feel like you are friends. Just because the 'masses' of peers may not get what you are doing nor follow your leadership doesn't mean that you have failed or that you are wrong.

Just keep playing your part and I'll keep playing mine and I believe under the leadership of the Master Conductor, beautiful music will begin to be heard in the world. In His timing.

By small and simple means, great things will be accomplished.



**"[H]ISTORY CANNOT BE CORRECTLY TOLD BY A SIMPLE RECITAL OF FACTS...  
TO THE IGNORANT CROWD, THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD PRESENTS A  
CONFUSED CHAOS; BUT TO MEN OF THOUGHT, IT APPEARS AS A MAJESTIC  
TEMPLE ON WHICH THE INVISIBLE HAND OF GOD IS AT WORK."**

**--J.H. Ward**

## WEH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

### NATIVE AMERICANS:

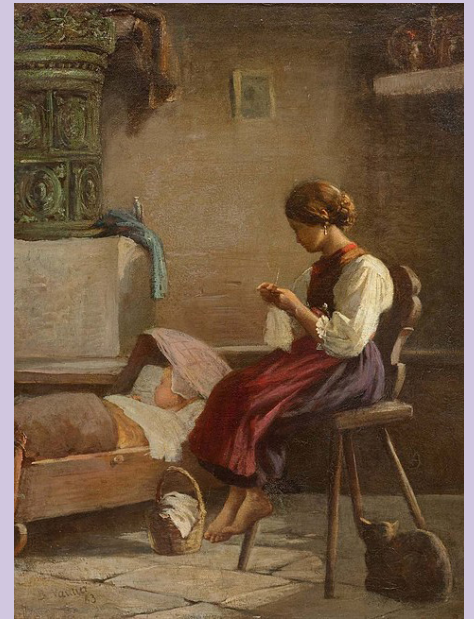
[He Walked the Americas](#) by L. Taylor Hansen

This is a lovely collection of Native American legends of The Prophet, The Healer, The Mighty, Mahnt-Azoma, TI-Acoma, Kate-Zahl, Wakea. It includes art, textiles, and architecture from North America to South America and Polynesia. Originally published in 1962.

### GENERAL:

[Jane Eayre Fryer](#) books

Can I just put in an appeal for the books by Jane Eayre Fryer, all available on Archive or Gutenberg? Some have also had a recent reprint. Fryer was a Home Economics teacher in the early 1900s. She wrote story books to teach children how to do housework, cooking, first aid, knitting and crochet, sewing and gardening. I have been following the knitting book, making clothes for my niece's 18-inch doll. The patterns are incremental, simple but make up beautiful vintage pieces. The house book has instructions to make a dolls' house which I also made and the gardening book has flower bed plans. Fryer also wrote three books on civics. These are very much in line with WEH principles. I just wanted to share in case anyone is looking for something useful for practical life.



Art credit: Knitting Girl at the Cradle by Benjamin Vautier

## WEH IN ACTION

--I just feel like shouting from the rooftops but I am an introvert so I will just share it with you all. Well-educated heart has literally changed my life. I thought I had stumbled upon it randomly, but now feel like it was heaven lead.

Little by little over the last year and a half I have implemented these tools and climbed on this journey that I felt like might just be an unreachable dream. I let my kids watch a lot of TV before, I was constantly unsure of myself and my homeschooling abilities and I felt like I was constantly running as fast as I could with nothing to show for it. Slowly I have come to grasp the vision, which all along has been my own and well-educated heart has made it clearer and has helped me see how attainable it is!

I have always struggled with playing imagination games with my kids and the more I tried to force it, the more I hated it. I have never really

loved classical music or even been able to listen to it for very long. As I started to slowly get more used to music by listening to Pirates of the Caribbean, Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, and other familiar classical music, I started to have my heart softened.

One day while my kids were playing I was listening to that music and my imagination came to life, we played pirates and I saw their play being elevated by me joining them! I have always wanted to be that mom, and I am still not the best, but I now have the tools I need to get better! I have always loved stories and poetry so those have naturally drawn me in and opened my heart more. I have felt so much more joy as I have implemented these tools, and my confidence is soaring! I am not as far as I would like to be, but this journey is so beautiful! I did not think life could be this good. So I guess I just want to inspire hope, the little things truly make a HUGE

difference. Don't force it, find the familiar, and let God guide you!

--**What I learned today!** I like posting here because we are all learning together. And I figure I am not the only one who struggles with these things. And I find great value in learning from your experiences as well!

Recently, I have felt frustrated with how we use our time. While I don't feel like skill work (like math and language arts) are the most important parts of our day, my husband and I still feel they are necessary things to learn and so I consistently aim to do them. We tend to do them first thing after our morning routine to "get them out of the way" so we can spend the rest of our day on things that matter most to us. We had been trying to do one lesson from both our math and language arts curriculums and that was taking up a lot of time to me, about 2+ hours. Even though I

(*WEH in Action cont.*) appreciate what these TGATB curriculums have to offer, that was way more than I would like. I started to get antsy about my kids not doddling and wanting them to focus more. Wanting them to be faster at their morning routine (that they were pretty efficient at already). I was just full of discontent and restlessness. I was caring so much about what TIME we were getting done with things--I wanted to be done by 10 so we could move on. I knew that I shouldn't be so focused on time because it shouldn't matter, but it did!

Recently, after tiring of seeing the glazed eyes and moans when it was time for lessons, and relistening to Marlene's podcast on the escape room and giving freedom in learning, I decided to let them choose how much they were going to do and which lessons. Sometimes my 6-year-old will do 3+ math worksheets because she is having fun and already is familiar with the material. Today she did one and then spent time making up leprechaun names. I let her skip ahead and we don't have to go in order just because the curriculum is presenting it that way. She finds what she is interested in learning that day.

My 9-year-old has been enjoying the writing project ideas from Bravewriter. Recently she started on one where you get to create an imaginary country. It had a whole list of geography terms that you were supposed to look up and draw a picture of to make flashcards. It has taken her about a week but she has chosen to do this for her language arts time every day on her own terms. She is excited and boy have we both learned a lot of geography terms I had heard of but never understood. She has learned to use the dictionary better and compare terms that are similar.

Today after my youngest had completed the amount of math and LA she wanted to do, she was scrolling through Simple Joy Art on the computer while I was studying the Capture the Vision books and my other daughter was creating her geography flashcards. I looked up and saw that it was 12:45 pm! And guess what? I wasn't even sad about it! And I realized that it was because of a few things:

1. My kids were passionately engaged in learning and meaningful activity. It wasn't something that I was trying to make them do and I couldn't wait to be done (I don't like being task master). There was a feeling of lightness in the air. They were getting to choose. They were enjoying themselves and I was enjoying witnessing it.
2. I, MYSELF, was engaged passionately in learning! I was being productive and driven. I was having a blast being inspired! Who cares what time it is? This type of engagement feels GOOD! and I didn't need it to stop.

Some mornings when I have put my kids lessons before my own study or working out, I feel that antsy feeling because I want to be progressing with things that fill me up too! This then leads me to need to be fulfilled through my kids, which then makes me pressure them into being unrealistically faster and doing more in their lesson to make ME feel productive, not because they are actually engaged in learning.

So my aha moment today was something Marlene has taught and something I already know, but have forgotten

“So it is. One man walks through the world with his eyes open, another with his eyes shut; and upon this difference depends all the superiority of knowledge which one man acquires over another.”

--Charles Kingsley



Art credit: Two Girls Picking Flowers in a Forest in Springtime by Hans Andersen Brendekilde



IN THE 15TH CENTURY,  
ULRICH VON HUTTEN,  
A GERMAN KNIGHT,  
EXCLAIMED: “WHAT AN  
AGE! STUDIES FLOURISH,  
MINDS ARE AWAKENING;  
IT IS A JOY MERELY  
TO BE ALIVE!”

I HOPE WE ARE SAYING  
THE SAME THING TODAY!

Art credit: New Body Armor by Franz Meyerheim

(*WEH in Action cont.*) since I had my newborn 4 months ago. When we focus on OUR HEARTS FIRST, everything goes better! When I am engaged, it sets an example of what it looks like to be passionate. My attitude and demeanor is totally different. I feel more fulfilled and my kids automatically get more heart-based learning because it's in my own heart and mind and I want to share.

I think I'm walking away from this morning with a deeper understanding of what an atmosphere of true learning FEELS like. It can look SO MANY DIFFERENT WAYS.

Yes, as parents we need to keep track of routines and schedules and find balance in our day--so I will still be keeping an eye on the clock. But not because I can't wait for what I am doing to be over. Hopefully it's to see how much more time we get to work on it.

--A few months ago on a hike we discovered a tiny and very old cemetery. My 8-year-old son made a print of one of the headstones and has kept it in his room. Today he runs downstairs SO excited almost yelling, “MOM he was a soldier under FRANCIS MARION!!!! The Swamp Fox! He served under someone that knew GEORGE WASHINGTON!”

It was such a fun discovery for him and so fun to connect something that he loves so much (history) to something tangible in his hands. It made it all so meaningful for him!

Thank you again Marlene for all your work on My America Story Book. My whole family has learned so much! It has been such a wonderful learning tool in our house.

--This is the WEH philosophy wrapped in a story. Beautiful.

The Pearl Necklace

Jenny was a bright-eyed, pretty five-year-old girl. One day when she and her mother were checking out at the

(*WEH in Action cont.*) grocery store, Jenny saw a plastic pearl necklace priced at \$2.50.

How she wanted that necklace, and when she asked her mother if she would buy it for her, her mother said, “Well, it is a pretty necklace, but it costs an awful lot of money. I’ll tell you what. I’ll buy you the necklace, and when we get home we can make up a list of chores that you can do to pay for the necklace. And don’t forget that for your birthday Grandma just might give you a whole dollar bill, too. Okay?”

Jenny agreed, and her mother bought the pearl necklace for her. Jenny worked on her chores very hard every day, and sure enough, her grandma gave her a brand new dollar bill for her birthday. Soon Jenny had paid off the pearls.

How Jenny loved those pearls. She wore them everywhere--to kindergarten, bed and when she went out with her mother to run errands. The only time she didn’t wear them was in the shower; her mother had told her that they would turn her neck green.

Now Jenny had a very loving daddy. When Jenny went to bed, he would get up from his favorite chair every night and read Jenny her favorite story. One night when he finished the story, he said, “Jenny, do you love me?”

“Oh yes, Daddy, you know I love you,” the little girl said.

“Well, then, give me your pearls.”

“Oh! Daddy, not my pearls!” Jenny said. “But you can have Rosie, my favorite doll. Remember her? You gave her to me last year for my birthday. And you can have her tea party outfit, too. Okay?”

“Oh no, darling, that’s okay.” Her father brushed her cheek with a kiss. “Good night, little one.” A week later, her father once again asked Jenny after her story, “Do you love me?”

“Oh yes, Daddy, you know I love you.”

“Well, then, give me your pearls.”

“Oh, Daddy, not my pearls! But you can have Ribbons, my toy horse. Do you remember her? She’s my favorite. Her hair is so soft, and you can play with it and braid it and everything. You can have Ribbons if you want her, Daddy,” the little girl said to her father.

“No, that’s okay,” her father said and brushed her cheek again with a kiss. “God bless you, little one. Sweet dreams.”

Several days later, when Jenny’s father came in to read her a story, Jenny was sitting on her bed and her lip was trembling. “Here, Daddy,” she said, and held out her hand.

She opened it and her beloved pearl necklace was inside. She let it slip into her father’s hand. With one hand her father held the plastic pearls and with the other he pulled out of his pocket a blue velvet box. Inside of the box were real, genuine, beautiful pearls.

He had them all along. He was waiting for Jenny to give up the cheap stuff so he could give her the real thing.



Art credit: Young Woman with a Pearl Necklace by Jan Vermeer van Delft

## KRYSTAL-SPLAINING

This was something I posted in the Facebook group a couple years ago in response to one of my mom's posts encouraging you all to set sail on an unknown journey and I periodically get requests to repost it. So for your reading pleasure (or whatever), again:

I don't chime in much in discussions here because I don't have kids of my own, so I don't feel like I can have a meaningful opinion on this matter. But reading through comments here over the years and talking with my mom extensively on the issue, I have some thoughts that maybe someone might feel useful. So here you go.

Marlene is my mother. I work with her, doing a lot of the nuts and bolts stuff of Libraries of Hope. But I have probably given her more push-back on the ideas of Well-Educated Heart than anyone else. (Sorry for all the grief I give you, mom!) I'm more of a pragmatic (mind) where she's clearly entrenched in heart. So for years we've debated the practicality of implementing her vision in today's world. She has struggled again and again with trying to find a way to help you mothers catch the vision of what's possible. And I've always argued that our society is so set on academics and making sure kids meet certain markers by certain deadlines, that you mothers are up against an entire world telling them that doing anything else will result in utter failure for your children. That's a really tough hurdle to surmount. And I know from personal experience that many of you get most of that push-back in your own home and families.

But here's how I've reconciled things in my own mind. This is not a curriculum. She has consistently pushed back against all the pressure to turn it into a curriculum. This is...something entirely different. It's a completely different way of looking at things. It's not about gaining an education to someday get into college and someday get a job. If that's your whole goal, I'm sure there are plenty of other wonderful programs out there. If, however, you want something that will bring life and light to your and your children's world, this is the place for you. She's creating a philosophy that will nourish parts of us that STEM alone won't.

However. If, like me, you have a hard time ignoring the pressures of the world (or your husband...), that doesn't mean you have to completely throw this out. The more my mom has developed and honed the WEH, the more I've seen that it really is largely about you. It's about feeding your souls. And as you do that, as you implement more art and music and poetry and nature into your daily life, it will trickle down to your kids. Include them where you can and as they want to be included. Just give them the opportunity to experience life, rather than spend 15 years stressing out about academics. So if you can't bring yourself (or aren't allowed) to take your kids into the unknown, start with you. WEH wasn't a thing until after we'd all grown up and moved out of the house. But I've watched my mom spend years enriching her own life with these resources, and in turn my sisters, and in turn their children.

You know you and your children best. Just do what you can, at whatever level you're comfortable doing. Whether that's memorizing a new poem once a week or proverbially setting sail for a new route. But do something. Start somewhere.

Art credit: The School Walk by Albert Anker

