

# HEART MATTERS

NON SCHOLÆ SED VITÆ

*Libraries of Hope Newsletter*

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“THERE ARE NO  
MISTAKES. JUST  
PLANT IT.”

## MONTHLY TOPIC

As always, this year seems to have flown by! We are now ready to explore Month 9 topics.

**American History:** This is the month I study the Civil War. Your younger children may not be ready for it, so you can certainly keep reading any of the stories of 19th century Americans, and start introducing them to key figures like Clara Barton, Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee or continue the stories of Abraham Lincoln. I know there's a call to pull down Robert E. Lee statues, but the more I study the lives of these men and officers of the armies of the North and the South, the more I see nobility and faith on both sides. At the end of the war, Lee said, "We form one country now...make your sons Americans." The Civil War is another example of how good is brought forth from the mess. During the course of events, we somehow became stronger as a nation. As we see increased division in our country today, I hope we can learn lessons from the past and that we will find ways other than fighting to solve our differences. I also pulled in the writings of Louisa May Alcott because *Little Women* takes place during the days of the Civil War.

**World History:** The tie in to the World History topics of Latin America comes from the fact that many of the key figures of the Civil War actually fought together in our War with Mexico. Here is where I bring in the study of the stories of Texas -- Remember the Alamo! -- and the bravery of such men as Davy Crockett and Sam Houston. I also tie in the study of the settling of Utah and California as those territories were originally under Mexican rule.

Although Cinco de Mayo isn't an authentic Mexican holiday, it can be a fun way to start out the month. There are ideas for crafts and foods on the Enrichment page or do your own search.

(Monthly Topic cont.) In South America, check out the stories of their freedom fighters. I included many of them in the World History Series book 9.

Nature: You may choose to spend this month studying the human body, although I haven't linked a lot of resources for you. There weren't many public domain sources, but if you do a Google search, I'm sure you'll find tons of resources. Have fun with your little kids exploring their senses and help older kids discover the names of all their body parts and systems, etc. You could also include a study of caring for our bodies through proper nutrition, exercise, and sunshine.

Mother's University: The topic is Language Arts. I know your kids need to learn to read and write. Here is a discussion and resources for unfolding it in a heart-based way. In the revised volume in the Mother's Learning Library, I included a book that traces the origin of many of our words. I found it fascinating! There is also a story approach to teaching grammar and a wonderful book written by Orison Swett Marden on tips for young writers.

Don't worry about fitting it all together yet! We're still planting lots of seeds.

I just added a story about Robert Fulton to MASB 10. Is it coincidence that the two great inventors -- Robert Fulton and Samuel Morse -- studied art and were painters? "Drawing produces exactness of thought."

Art credit: Idealismo y Realidad  
by Juan Comba Garcia



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

--We appreciated all your valuable feedback on the newsletter and are so happy that many of you are accessing it through the app! So we won't worry about looking at how many are opening emails. We are going to try a twice a month newsletter, although we might drop down to once a month over the summer and then pick it up again in the fall.

If you want to subscribe to the newsletter, you can do so on the main page at [welleducatedheart.com](http://welleducatedheart.com). But you can also access it through the app without signing up for it.

--I haven't called much attention to it, but just in case you missed it, in My America Story Book, you'll notice most of the days have a "music" button next to the story. I looked for songs or music that pertain to the story or the particular era we are studying. Just another simple way to add a little music into your day.

--Here is a group chat about WEH-style homeschool: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/293641222208673/?ref=share>. This is to help keep this main group more helpful and welcoming for the broader goal of applying WEH



(Announcements cont.) principles in all kinds of life settings, as Marlene talked about in her post today.

--(From Shannon): Based on my mom's post yesterday, I feel like I really want to spend "ten minutes tending my garden" every day. There are many ways to do this, but I decided to read all of the Forgotten Classics this summer. Before you have a heart attack thinking you'll never be able to do it, know that I can't either. For that reason, for this challenge, I will read just a portion of each book (as much as I can get in ten minutes, or more if I have time). Sometimes I'll read with my kids, sometimes I won't. Many of these books I've read before, but whenever I revisit them I find something new. Each day, I'll post a gem/beautiful flower that I've found during my reading. If you'd like to join me and share the beauty you find as we explore these treasures, please join the 100 Days of WEH group. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/319883591843638>.

## WEH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

[How I Learned Geography](#) by Uri Shulevitz -- This is a sweet story about how a poor boy used his imagination to help him ignore the problems in his life.

[Maurice and His Dictionary](#) by Cary Fagan -- It tells of perseverance and family harmony and support through a refugee boy from WWII.

I know we're almost at the end of April but I keep forgetting to post this, my kids love both Babu Yetu and the movie [The Water is Wide](#). I highly recommend both and [this music video](#) of Babu Yetu has footage of African animals out on the savannah so it's a two for one for this month! I love the dancing and cultural dress, too, and the little ones in the video are all so adorable! The movie is based on a true story of a young teacher in the 1960's that went and taught on one of the islands off of North Carolina and it was very well done and gave us insight into a part of African American history that we didn't previously know about. Enjoy!

[Fascinating Animal Book](#)

[Curious Critters](#) by David Fitzsimmons

[Ralph Williston collection](#) -- When I was growing up, I had a Native American (Choctaw) friend in church who used to tell us the stories he remembered growing up. He is older now, but he preserved the stories in a lovely set of children's books. These would go great with your study of Native American cultures.

My children and I watched a movie called [Endurance](#) that would fit very well for the study of Africa this month. It is the story of a world record holder in the marathon from Ethiopia named Haile Gebreselasse. He ran 6 miles to and from school every day and then after school worked on the family farm. This movie has a very good message of hard work and success, it is completely family friendly and shows great views into Ethiopian culture and family life.



**"HOW INFINITELY RICH OUR WORLD!  
MAN, LIVE HE EVER SO LONG, WILL HAVE  
TIME TO BREAK OFF ONLY ONE BOUGH  
FROM AN INFINITE ORCHARD."**

--Newell Dwight Hillis

Art credit: An Orchard in Spring by Monet



Art credit: Moki Courtship by Henry Farney

## WEH IN ACTION

--**The baby woke me tonight** at 1:00 am. Unable to achieve sleep again I opened this book ([\*Our Little Argentine, Brazilian, and Portuguese Cousins\*](#)). It is my first experience in reading the material. What a delight it is to read. The vivid imagery is amazing. The flow of education I am growing as I read of this little boy's life is vast. I loved the large print so it was easy for my tired eyes. I can't wait for morning to share this with my children. I love how I am learning so many new customs, geography and culture just in the first few chapters. THANK YOU so much for this beautiful work of art! It makes me want to look up maps of the region, Google pictures of the tea, the animals, the square tiles. It is an explosion of curiosity.

--**We started doing something** super simple and fun the last few months. We go to <https://www.simplejoyart.com/> and choose the nature subject for that month. Then each one of us, my kids and I, choose a picture to print. Then we look through our poetry books and choose a poem that goes with our picture. We write the poem on the back and put it in our binder in our art section. Fun, simple and includes art, nature and poetry! Just thought I would share, in case someone likes the idea.

--**If any of you with small children** have been debating about whether or not you should invest in the My Book of Delights series I'm here to say that it is so worth it!

My 6-year-old is quite the reader and has been sneaking the stack of them into her room and reading them in the morning while everyone else is still asleep. (Worth the investment right there!)

But we use them almost daily during our morning time. It takes almost no prep. Marlene has done all the work and we simply cuddle up and enjoy.

Here is what we do: It takes maybe 20-25 minutes max. Perfect for my 4- & 6-year-old.

MUSIC-We learn a new song each week and practice it for a few minutes each day.

ART-We pick a couple pictures from MBoD each day to look at and discuss.

POETRY-We learn a new poem each week usually chosen from Favorite Family Devotional Poems from the house of Jacob (which I found as a PDF on this Facebook page) or Poetry for the Well Educated Heart. Then we read some poems from MBoD.

STORIES-We read a story or 2 from MBoD and/or Stories and Rhymes for Young Children from Forgotten



(WEH in Action cont.) Classics.

I WAS spending a bunch of time find stories and poems and art to enjoy with my kids until My Book of Delights came along. Now I choose a song and poem to learn and I'm done. So grateful for this series.

--When I became a parent, I believed that a true education must be rigorous. I remember being worried because my sister, whose children are much older than mine, never gave her kids tests, and I couldn't imagine how they would ever succeed. My heart is filled with gratitude, because after finding educational philosophies like WEH, Waldorf, and unschooling, I completely changed my tune. My 13-year-old asked to take a Chinese BYU independent study course. This week, she not only took her very first final, but her first ever test, and she also received her first straight A. I am so grateful I was taught that a love for learning is so much more rewarding than rigor. I'm also very grateful for the amazing parents and mentors in this group that support me on this journey. It would be so lonely to do on our own.

--Just read *Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Beecher Preachers* by Jean Fritz. I came to learn that Harriet didn't trust Abraham Lincoln because he wasn't making a big enough effort during the Civil War to bring emancipation, but she believed that instead he was putting too much energy into preserving the union. She didn't agree and she was an influential lady! So she decided to visit him and have a "point blank" conversation. Long story short, in every way she felt ready to meet and speak with him... until she saw his eyes. Jean Fritz writes, "They seemed to hold all the sadness of the world in them. When he listened, he seemed to

understand. When he spoke, he spoke from the heart..." The author goes on to express the humanity and understanding Harriet discovered, which then disarmed her. "She believed all that he said, and whatever he did in the future, she would trust him."

I liked getting to know Abraham Lincoln from Harriet's old perspective and from her newfound point of view. I think this is what Marlene is trying to get us to do -- to engage with great lives and get to know them through different eyes (and many stories), perhaps differently than we've known them before, just like Harriet did. I liked engaging with Harriet Beecher Stowe and Abraham Lincoln in this way this month.

It seems I can only manage a little bit at a time when it comes to sitting and reading, but when I do read heart-filling stories, it does its work.

--This is my second year home-schooling and I love it, but it's hard. My daughter is constantly fighting me on doing lessons, reading, just all the things. It's sooo hard! It takes ALL day to get done! Her friends who go to public school get home at 4:00, so she has to be done by then in order to go play with them. Often we are scrambling to get done by 4:00 and sometimes her friends come to play and she's still working on the last lesson. It really doesn't need to take so long!

Almost two weeks ago I saw a post here where a mom expressed similar concerns -- the children just don't want to do their lessons and it's soooooo hard! She shared that a thought came that she needed to touch their hearts first, then work on school lessons. She gave it a try and miraculously it worked! The kids were more willing to do their

school work. I figured, what do I have to lose? I know it could get worse, but I want it to be better so I may as well try.

Oh. My. Goodness! It totally works!!!! My kids have been so much more cooperative, my daughter is willing to do her school work and we get soooooo much done in a day! It's crazy! I was lucky if we could get Math & LA done in the 8 hours we have before her friends come to play. Now, we are doing gospel study, fun things, Math, LA, Geology, Cooking, outside play, piano practice, time to eat, AND we have at least an hour left over before friends! I am astounded!! We have more love and laughter and joy in our home and between each other. Everything isn't perfect, but this is so much better than what I was trying to do before.

I heard a quote recently -- God does impossible math.

Yes, yes He does! I thought if we didn't get all those seemingly important core subjects done we'd be in a world of hurt and we needed to get them done first. Now I see that my kids need to really feel my love for them first thing in the morning, they need to see me having fun with them and enjoying them and not worrying so much about those core subjects. Then they cooperate and are willing to do what is not as fun because we have had fun and they know they are loved. Now we get soooooo much more accomplished with time to spare. God does impossible math. When I look at all we are doing in a day, it seems like it shouldn't be possible. And I thought that before -- no way we can get all this done. But it works. I feel He led me to that post and touched my heart, giving me courage to just give it a try and look what happened! God does impossible math!

(WEH in Action cont.) --**A happy find today:** reading in Catch the Vision book 2, Marlene talks about going for the gold in notebooking. Facts can be found in a moment. The need to memorize every little fact is gone. It's available to us at our fingertips. Now is the chance to go for the gold. Make sense? I love the idea! I will become a "gold searcher." So exciting to think about looking at stories a bit differently now! Yay!

--**I was putting the baby** down to sleep when I heard a big crash. Turns out my daughter was doing a headstand in her room where there was a very limited amount of open space. And well, she landed on a box of legos. I told her, "If the only way you can safely do a headstand in an area is to come out of it perfectly, then its probably not a good place to do it." And then I had this flash of application. How often do we as parents and homeschoolers do this same thing? We attempt a challenging endeavor with no cushion room for mistakes, running late, an emotional day, layering and learning curves?

If the schedule you have created requires you to be on time to the minute -- you're setting yourself up to fail.  
If the routine you have created requires you to do more than one new habit -- you're setting yourself up for overwhelm. ETC.

If the only way you can successfully do (*fill in the blank*) is to do it perfectly, it's probably not a good plan.

Just like my daughter needed a lot of room around her in order to practice her headstands safely, we need to surround ourselves with flexibility, forgiveness, time and patience as we practice implementing a heart education. We aren't going to come out of our efforts perfectly and that's ok. Just set yourself up in a safe space so you don't get hurt.

--**As part of the rotation** study for Africa, I planned that we would plant a tree after we read the Wangari's Trees of Peace picture book. (We live in a desert.)

Although we have not finished studying some more things about Africa, until now it has been enriching, and has touched my kids hearts reading about David Livingstone and some other things.

Also we have learned some words in Swahili, so we made some batik shirts with an African design and with a word that we liked most about in Swahili language. Here are the meanings in English.

Hakuna matata = no worries

Jabali = Strong as a rock

Jambo = Hello!

Nzuri = Beautiful

Werevu = Intelligent

"We shall never properly develop the higher natures of our little ones while we continue to fill their minds with the so-called rudiments. Children will educate themselves under right conditions. They require guidance and sympathy far more than instruction."

--Anne Sullivan, Helen Keller's teacher

Art credit: Children Painting Spring Flowers  
by Viggo Johansen





## MARLENE'S MUSINGS

--I had a wonderful friend bring her strong-armed sons and husband over for the weekend who dug up my flower beds and got them ready for planting. I grew up with flowers and gardens and a mother and father who were amazing at growing things, but unfortunately, I never took the time to learn from them. So my friend is trying to teach me.

I had to smile as I watched the tables turned on me  
-- anything sound familiar here?

We sat around my kitchen table late into the night while I poured over her big thick book of potential flowers and plants and shrubs to plant in my garden. All the choices were overwhelming! And I wanted to plant them ALL right now. So since I was overwhelmed, I wanted her to tell me the RIGHT ones. And she said, "What do you like?" And then when I would pick one, she'd say, "Well, let's look and see if it will grow in the conditions you have." And we'd look at soil needs and sun requirements, etc.

And then she said, "You know, Marlene, there are no mistakes. Just plant it. And if you don't like it, or it doesn't thrive where you plant it, you can take it out or move it or plant something else. You'll learn from your experience."

As we talked, I realized there was just no getting around the homework. I was going to have to take the time to study the individual plants and how to care for them and make my own decisions if I wanted a garden. And I do want one! There are no shortcuts. My friend lives several hours away and will soon be moving across the country. I can't depend on her to hold my hand. I have to be independent. She shared with me a couple of her favorite resources, oriented me to how to look things up, and now I have to do my part.

We recently bought the house across the street that already has a lot of plants in place, and watching her clear back the dead growth and fluff up the mulch, showing me how to divide and replant plants and bulbs gave me confidence that I was going to be able to do it, too. It was one thing to read about it; much more helpful to watch her in action and doing it myself solidified the learning.

She also warned me that as much as I was going to want to do it, to not try and plant everything this year. It was far better to have a general plan and get to know a few plants this year, and then add in a few more next year, and so forth.

She also said that one of the most important gardening lessons she learned was to every morning, take about ten minutes and walk around her yard, not worrying about pulling out every tiny weed, but rather clearing out those that were starting to get a little big, paying attention to signs of disease, or nutrient or water deficiencies, bugs, and taking care of them while the problem was small.

I saw for myself what happens if you wait when we went to the house next door. My 80-year-old neighbor has mostly spent his time away from home for several months to tend to his wife who is on hospice care. The garden area in front of his house had become choked with weeds and we decided to go and clear it for him. It was really hard work digging out those weeds that had gotten such deep roots!



Art credit: Gardening by Victor Gabriel Gilbert

(*Marlene's Musings cont.*) Finally, I thought of comments from many mothers in various groups who say they are looking for an open-and-go curriculum so they don't have to think about what they have to do every day. And I realized that has been my approach to gardening in the past. I just want to plant the seeds and sit back and enjoy the flowers. But gardens and children have to be tended daily. We have to be aware of what's going on and make corrections and adjustments. And every plant's needs are different. There is no such thing as hands-off gardening.

Although my friend could only spend a couple of days with me, the gift she gave me was the feeling that I can do this. I'm excited!

Now I have to be patient and give myself room to grow. I think of the line in the movie *This Beautiful Fantastic*: "You can't speed grow a garden."

So while you're trying to figure out this whole WEH thing, I'm going to be trying to figure out how to grow some flowers. It appears we are both going to be applying the same lessons.

--**When I started this group** several years ago, I envisioned it as a place for members to share what they were learning -- primarily from the Mother's University -- about using the arts to cultivate hearts as well as sharing things they were learning and doing as they worked through the rotation schedule. It was not meant to be a homeschooling group -- the things that would be shared could apply to anyone, although I knew that it would appeal mostly to homeschoolers. And there's nothing wrong with that.

As our group has grown, I am watching a tendency towards it becoming a clearinghouse of sorts for sharing favorite curriculums or asking questions that might be better served in groups that are dedicated to homeschooling practices.

May I offer a gentle reminder as to the purpose of this particular group. If you have not yet begun your journey through the Catch the Vision course, I invite you to do so. Please visit the homepage at [welleducatedheart.com](http://welleducatedheart.com) and watch the introductory videos to orient yourself. And you will see where to start from there.

The truth of the matter is -- while I love your children, I am more interested in nurturing your heart. And whenever you pose a question of what to do with your children, my first reaction is to tell you to tend to your own heart and then you will see clearly how to help your own child.

I had an interesting dream last night...I was asked by a well known figure what the secret ingredient to what we are doing was. I thought for a moment, and answered, "Love." Now that I am fully awake, I would answer the same. Thank you all for being here and bringing your love and wisdom.

--**Many of you have wondered** why I don't include topics from the last 100 years of American and World History. My main reason is I am limited to works found in the public domain.

But that actually works to our advantage according to this statement in this month's Mother's Learning Library about the study of history:

"Recent and contemporary history is perhaps the most difficult of historical studies, and for this reason have little appropriateness to children. The history of a hundred years ago can be much more easily understood by children than the current events of today. It takes a very wise and experienced scholar and man of the world to judge correctly any of our present political and social controversies. We may say, on the one hand, that it involves the whole purpose of the course in history to bring the child to a point where he can get an intelligent insight into the present life of the people, but on the other side it may be said with equal truth that it is no part of the business of children to solve our world problems. It is the province of the course of study in history to put children in possession of those facts of our historical growth which will bring them to the threshold of the present with an intelligent equipment for these modern problems. We may say, therefore, that the schools can spend little time in discussing our present political and social problems." (pp. 54-55)



## MOI MINUTE

For years now Jen and I have struggled to explain what MOI is exactly. We feel it so deeply but we can't transmit it as well as we'd like.

Even though words are hard there are a few things we know for certain: MOI was created to tend to the hearts of mothers...our hearts. MOI is meant to be something that grows outward from the hearts of mothers together. And, MOI itself is a growing thing.

Our Cedar symbol beautifully represents this growth pattern of deepening our roots, increasing our inspired growth and cultivating an encircling reach. That pattern isn't sequential as much as something that is happening all at the same time.

The process of opening our hearts creates energy — this is the feeling of MOI that we don't have words for — but that energy bubbles and flows everywhere — it flows to us and through us. You'll know it when you feel it. The interesting thing is that the opposite is true too; a closed heart depletes energy. Because this is a living, growing thing you'll find that you want to keep fueling your heart and opening it. The arts are the keys to that.

It's easy to box MOI into one idea. To most people that looks like a monthly MOI meeting. But we want to keep sharing with you that MOI isn't about building something...it's about becoming something. How you interpret that and make that work in your life is inspired growth.

Because freedom and discovery are such an integral process we only have a few parameters for keeping MOI "MOI". We put them on the Getting Started page on the website, but essentially they say that we're focused on cultivating hearts and specifically learning how the arts open up an even greater capacity to do that.

While our every tendency is to focus on the hearts of those we love -- especially our children -- this journey begins with our own heart.

It might all start with a question: "What am I needing right now to open my heart even more?"

Listen for an answer.

Then... find a way to begin to fill that need.

Shannon recently shared an idea on Facebook that so perfectly illustrates this. (*See the last bullet point in the "Announcements" section to see Shannon's post.*) She was sparked by something her mom shared and decided to cultivate something more in her own life and learning. She made a very small and simple plan and then invited a few others to join her.

### **This is MOI.**

Shannon's personality is in her plan:

- She's given it just the right amount of structure to honor agency and yet still keep it simple.
- It's meeting her own need but she's invited us along and created a place and opportunity for sharing with each other.
- Each of us will get out of it whatever we're able to put into it.
- When it all winds down the next question might naturally be: what do we want to do now? It might end there or we might adapt to something new together.

What are you needing to cultivate your heart right now?

Love,  
Marley

## KRYSTAL-SPLAINING

I just wanted to provide a voice for those here who think they don't "fit the mold" or who think they can't benefit from this philosophy because they don't homeschool (or whatever other reason). I don't homeschool my children. Largely because, well, I don't have children. I don't share a lot of the same beliefs or faith that I assume many here hold. I've never really been what one would consider heart-driven. I'm (technically) a lawyer and got a joint business degree—very mind-based fields. I'm probably a smidge more "progressive" than many here (in the political sense, not a literal one). In short, I don't feel like I fit the mold here much at all.

Yet, even though my participation here has largely been due to that naughty f-word ("force"...not the other one) since it's literally my job, I constantly find myself touched by the materials here. As I edit audios and books and podcasts, add fine art and songs to the websites, type out inspirational quotes and poetry or create the newsletter, I can't help but feel something ignited inside of me. This has been especially true with My America Story Book this year. You can't help but get inspired by these people who have faced unimaginable hardships, and come out stronger for it. People who wanted to change the world, and gave their all to do just that.

I'm not trying to shape anyone's destiny. I don't have some big goal I'm working towards. I don't even know if the inspiration I feel inside me will ever benefit anyone outside of me, though I hope some day it will. But I do know I absolutely benefit from having taken part in it. It somehow provides a calm reassurance against the constant barrage of insanity that is our world. It provides a light to life in a sometimes very dark world. It provides ... dare I say ... hope? Hope that people can be better than what the media shows. Hope that one person with their heart in the right place and a strong determination to do right can effect massive change.

So I guess I'm just saying that this philosophy really is for anyone who wants to add light into your life. But you don't have to take my word for it. Try it for yourself. Don't know where to start? I'd recommend My America Story Book. It's intentionally set up to give you daily access to snippets of all the parts of a WEH way of life: art, music, poetry, and, of course, stories. (Well, nature is another major part of it...so maybe read some of it outside!)



Art credit: Girl in the Hammock by Winslow Homer