

## Climbing Mt. Homeschooling

by Karen Braun

I was discouraged about the progress of our homeschooling recently. I dumped my tale of woe to my dear husband (over a Starbucks, of course.). "Nothing seems to be going as planned," I lamented. "How did I ever think I could teach one child how to figure out the area of a circle, while training another to figure out the circular area in the bathroom?" I was having a classic, woe-is-me, meltdown moment.

My husband, the steady one, just listened attentively. Bless his heart; living with me all these years, he has learned it is better to listen than speak at times like these lest my pity party cross over into the dreaded "and it's all your fault" discussion, which I will later regret and have to make amends for. Finally exhausted, I paused for a few minutes to catch my breath.

"Do you know what it's like to climb Mount Everest?" he asked.

"No. You know me. If it has anything to do with athletics, I'm blissfully clueless."

"Well, that's what you're doing."

"Huh?"

"I just read an article on Everest. When you climb Mount Everest, there are times of sheer endurance, moments that test your stamina and ability to climb one foot higher. As you climb higher the pressure intensifies. You're in one of those times right now. But if you keep going you'll eventually get to the next camp. When you do, you'll look back down the mountain and wonder how you made it. But you made it. Then it's time to sit, rest, and acclimate yourself to the conditions at that level. That's just as important as the climb. You need to get used to the air at that level, otherwise your brain can't handle the pressure. Then with a burst of energy you'll tackle the next climb only to be tested even more. The closer you get to the top, the more strength it will take. But God has given us the ability to meet the challenges if we endure the hard times and rest as necessary. The challenge for you is not to give up when it's difficult and not resting so long that you don't go to the next level."

That was the most encouraging thing he could say to me. He didn't try to pretend it would be easy. He perfectly described my attitude and my struggle. He knew I wanted to continue, but the pressure of the moment was causing my mind to go a little crazy with anxiety.

Homeschooling our children is our Mount Everest. My husband is climbing it with me. But his strength gives him the ability to handle the struggles in a much different way. He can't climb the mountain for me. It is something I must learn to do, leaning on him and the Lord for guidance up to the top.

Curious, I decided to Google™ “how to climb Mount Everest”, and here's a paragraph from one of my findings:

In life, and sometimes in death, Mount Everest has had a lasting effect on all of those who have challenged its heights. It can vanquish those who disrespect it, and mercilessly test those who honor it. Yet Everest is indifferent to your presence. Climb it, and you will receive a lifetime dose of humility and exhilaration.

While no analogy is perfect, I think this might describe homeschooling.

It is a mountain to be climbed. We look at the summit from a distance below and wonder, “How am I ever going to get there from here?” We hear the stories of those who have finished and wonder, “Will we finish as well?” “Will my children be all that I envision them to be?” “More importantly, will they become all that God envisions them to be?” Mt. Homeschooling will have a lasting effect on all those who have challenged its heights. I have been tested in ways I never imagined. Even with all the advanced preparation and research, there are always unforeseen challenges. But just like Mount Everest, I know that when I persevere and continue the climb to the top, I will receive a lifetime dose of humility and exhilaration.

*. . . forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.  
(Philippians 3:13b-14 KJV)*

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### **Biographical Information**

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*Karen Braun is engaged in the full-time art of managing her home and home schooling the Braun children. She is known in the homeschooling community as "Spunky" from her popular blog [SpunkyHomeschool](#). Karen has been a guest speaker on behalf of home schooling issues on local and national radio programs, spoken at local and regional home school events, and defended Christian family values on Detroit television news programs. She served as the original blogging editor for [HomeschoolBlogger.com](#) and The Old Schoolhouse® Magazine, where she is still a contributing writer. Karen holds a BS in computer science from the University of Michigan.*