

Giving New Meaning to “Having it All”

Phyllis Sather

I am among a growing number of women who are redefining the term, “having it all.” As of 2007, the number of homeschooled children in the US hit the 1.5 million mark and I am one of the women who have been successfully doing this for the past 17 years. I am investing in the next generation in a way that few other women are.

After marrying later in life I worked in property management to put my husband through medical school. We finally begin our family when I was 40. In an effort to have the four children we hoped for, I had 3 children between the ages of 40 and 45. We were considering home educating our oldest daughter Emily in the fall when Eric, our youngest, was diagnosed with leukemia. This became the deciding factor in our choice, since we knew he would be exposed to fewer illnesses if our daughter wasn't exposed daily to sickness in school.

Now our children are 21, 20, and 17 and have never been in a formal school setting. Learning has become a way of life for our family. Over the years we have seen our children develop relationships with each other that are often relegated to same-age classmates. They have become best friends. In addition, they are comfortable relating to children and adults of all ages.

You might say, “That sounds great for the children, but what about you? Aren't you bored?” My answer would be, “Once in a while I'd like an opportunity to be bored!” My daily life is a whirlwind of activity, not just “busy” work, but things that make a real difference to the people who are most important to me--my husband and children.

We are all delighted to see our children's first steps and hear their first words. I was privileged to see the look of delight on their faces when they mastered the mysteries of reading. I am here to see them master difficult math concepts and explore nature and history, and plan for their futures. As I've encouraged them, they've encouraged me.

When I'm not busy with lesson plans, exploring the latest curriculums, working on high school transcripts, church activities, and investigating home college options for our young adults, I enjoy working with photos and slides, scrapbooking, cross-stitching, reading, travel--ask me about our family trip to China--keeping in touch with my online homeschool support group, and my latest interest--writing. I've always wanted to be a writer.

A few years ago I was teaching my children a creative writing course. One afternoon during a relatively quiet time I wrote a short article and on a whim submitted it to a small town newspaper.

To my great astonishment, they accepted it and paid me!

I was sure this would encourage our children to want to write more, but instead they offered to do more of the housework so I would be free to do more writing.

We never did finish any of several writing courses that I attempted to teach them, and I was very discouraged that none of our children shared my love of writing. Then, as if by some divine plan, they were introduced to fan fiction at about the same time I read an article about how helpful writing fan fiction could be in encouraging children to write. I still had my doubts, but with supervision we encouraged them to write some stories about one of their all-time-favorites, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*.

To my great surprise and delight, I now have two avid writers and Emily is also a freelance editor. The three of us share a love of writing that transcends age and genre. We attend writers' conferences together, talk writing every chance we get, and our idea of a "girls' night" is all of us on our laptops, writing away.

Isn't it just like the Lord? As we go about obediently doing what He calls us to do, He gives us the desires of our heart.

Psalm 37:4 "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

Biographical Information

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Phyllis has been the joyful wife of her best friend Daniel for 24 years and became a stay-at-home mom 20 years ago after retiring from a management position. She has home schooled their three children, Emily (21), Rebekah (20), and Eric (17), for the past 16 years and is now working on "home college". Visit her on the web at www.Phyllis-Sather.com and check out her books in the bookshop.