

Student Name

Instructor Name

English 312

Date

Home Schooled

As a kid I never fully understood why my mom chose to home school my siblings and me. I felt as though I was missing something by not going day in and day out to a classroom with all my friends to learn from a teacher who did not also give birth to me. Instead I would wake up, do my chores, and then begin learning from my mom alongside my brothers and sisters. There was a point in my home schooling years where I openly disagreed with my mom's decision to keep us kids home because I, being an all-knowing sixth grader, thought it wasn't fair that my friends got to hang out with each other all day while I was stuck at home. I can clearly remember trying to convince my mom to let me go to school, and not wanting to hear or understand her reasons for educating me herself. I'm grateful to my mom and for the time and energy she put into providing me with a wonderful education, but I wanted to know why she insisted on homeschooling us. During my interview with her she described her educational experiences as a child and her view on the importance of family time as being the reasons why she felt inspired to home school her children.

My mom is a strong believer in the importance of gaining a good, quality education. She was the valedictorian of her graduating high school class, and earned the Flinn Scholarship which got her a full ride education at Arizona State University where she graduated Summa Cum Laude with a degree in biology and participated in numerous research projects. She told me that at the time I was supposed to go to kindergarten she wasn't happy with the elementary schools in

the area, and she said, “I thought I could do a better job than any other options that were open to us at the time. Academically I thought we could do more.” She quickly clarified, so I wouldn’t think she had something against public schools, that her parents were public educators, so it wasn’t like she had something against the whole institution. She said, “I just felt like I could have done it just as well.” Her parents both taught at public schools, and she had experience as a teacher’s aid and research assistant at the university, so she valued the opportunity to teach her own children and guide our learning in her own supervised way. She told me she wanted to make learning interesting and cultivate a love for it instead of a disdain.

My mom grew up in a very small town where the education system was not as rigorous as it was in other cities. She explained to me that there was a lot of “backward thinking” and that the teachers weren’t all that qualified. She remembers sitting in a desk listening to a teacher drone on, while hardly getting anything out of the lesson. She told me, “I learned the most when I spent long hours reading at home. I would come home from school and pull out my water colors and paint for hours, or I would read with my mom often together, and to me those were the things I felt like were more meaningful.”

My mom is very much an advocate for learning and discovering on your own instead of having someone tell you everything you should know. To her, being creative and discovering new things was something that could not be done in a classroom, but rather happened in nature, with your family, or exploring things in your free time. As she reflected on her childhood she said, “I remember ditching school, going to the river and sitting and bird watching because I was just so bored sitting at school. I’d rather be out in nature and felt like I got more out of it rather than listening to a teacher drone on from a textbook.” Some of the most prominent memories I have from my years being home schooled are of the field trips we took to museums, on nature

hikes, or to historical sites, and I realize now that my mom was trying to promote learning through discovery and experiences rather than in a classroom.

I also asked my mom if she was afraid to send us kids to school because of any “bad influences” we might encounter, because through a lot of my childhood I thought she was trying to protect us from something by keeping us home. She responded by saying, “A lot of people home school because they are afraid of outside influences, but for me it was more academic and I hate wasting time. I just didn’t think you needed to be sitting in school for hours and hours when I could be teaching the same material in a more interesting way in less the amount of time.” I know that if there is one thing my mom loathes it is busy work. She values the time we are given in the day, and believes that we should be as efficient as we can with that time.

As well as valuing time spent learning educationally stimulating things, my mom also values time spent with family. She expressed, “I felt that the public schools had a monopoly over family time, and I didn’t like that idea. And as time went on I realized that that was a great benefit of homeschooling: that you guys were home more.” She recalled that her mom homeschooled her little brother for the first couple years of his education due to medical reasons, and said that she saw how it strengthened their relationship. She told me they, her mom and her little brother, were always really close, and expressed that she wanted that same relationship with her own children.

My mom was always understanding of my desire to experience public school, which is why she allowed me to make my own decision in attending high school, but she will always hold high her values of education in the home and learning alongside family. Her learning experiences as a child, as well as her view on the worth of spending time as a family have contributed to her strong conviction toward home schooling her children. Even though I may not have fully

appreciated her efforts and inspiration to home school me at the time, I now recognize the personal benefits of her decision as I received a priceless education and developed a cherished relationship with my mom.

Work Cited

Interviewee Last Name, First name. Telephone Interview. 5 Jan. 2016.