

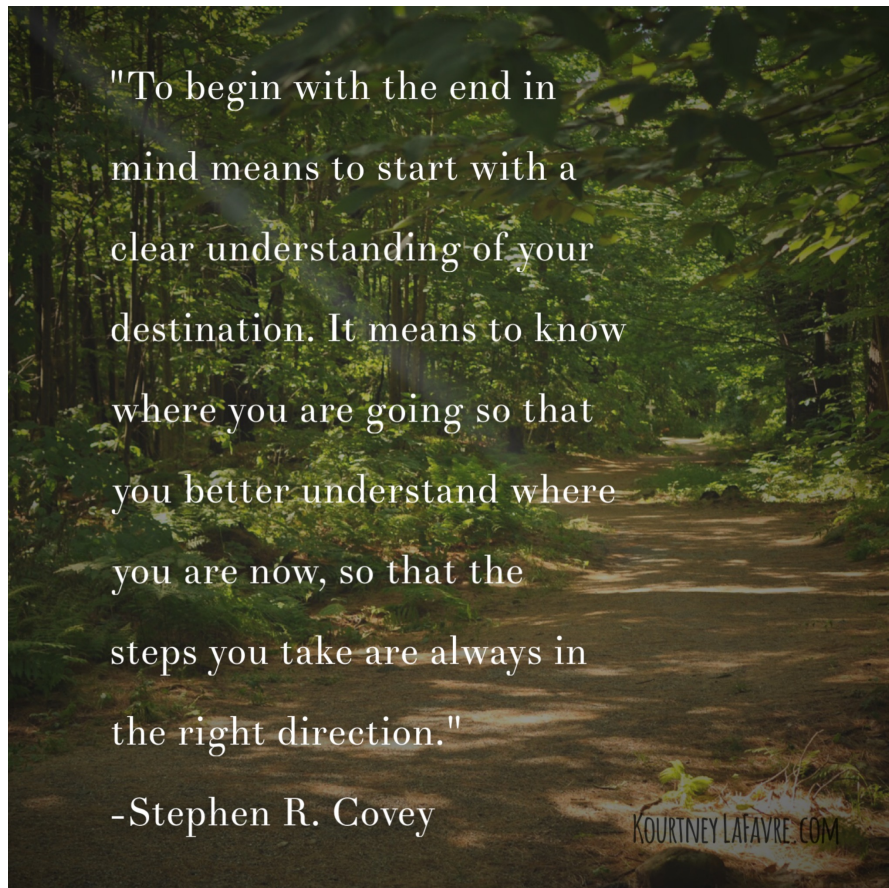
FINDING YOUR WAY:

**A GUIDEBOOK TO CREATING AN
EDUCATIONAL MANIFESTO.**

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Educational Manifesto

Create your own Manifesto which includes developing a philosophy, creating a mission statement, and listing goals.



What is a manifesto? It is a public declaration of intentions, opinions, objectives, or motives. A manifesto is a statement of beliefs and a vision for the future.

To create an educational manifesto, we will focus on three areas: mission, philosophy, and goals. Let's define those three terms before moving forward.

Mission

A mission is an important goal or purpose that is accompanied by strong conviction.

Philosophy

A philosophy is a particular system of thought based on study or investigation; a system of values by which one lives; a basic theory concerning a particular subject; a system of guidance in practical affairs.

Goals

Goals are the result or achievement toward which effort is directed; the aim or end result.

Why create a manifesto?

In order to move forward, create, design, or build, you need an understanding of what the end result will be. When you begin with the end in mind, you can then proceed with a plan that is in alignment with the desired outcomes. A manifesto guides and informs you. It shapes what you do and the decisions you make. It gives you purpose and vision for what you want to accomplish.

An educational manifesto is a cohesive statement of what you consider to be the purpose of education/homeschooling/unschooling. It states your values and theories on children, learning, and life. An educational manifesto solidifies what you hope to achieve. You will gain clarity on your purposes and the desired outcomes. You are embarking on a journey and this will be your guide to keep you in alignment with your purpose.

How will you create a manifesto?

Using the questions provided for you, you will reflect on your beliefs and draw upon your knowledge and experiences. You will set intentions and charter a course for the future. Question, think, reflect, and write. You will need a notebook and a pen. Keep the notebook somewhere that you'll have easy access to it and remember its location, so that you can add notes as they come up for you.

These questions and this process are important. The questions can be challenging, but in order to have quality answers we must ask these high quality questions. I have two recommendations for creating this manifesto. The first option is to take at least a week for each of the three sections (philosophy, mission, and goals) so that you have time to think about the questions. Set aside time for you to sit down, uninterrupted, to review the questions for each section. Mark it on your calendar. Get yourself calm and centered ahead of time. You may want to use

calming music, have a cup of tea or coffee, use your favorite essential oils, or meditate before you begin. Read one question at a time. Write the first words or feelings that come to mind. Use the language that you have. There is no need to make this fancy or sound a certain way. Your first writing is your notes, which you will come back to edit later. You are writing for you. Do not be concerned about what others might think or want you to write. It's okay if you don't have answers to the questions the first time. That is why I recommend spending a week per section. If an answer doesn't come right away, you have more time to think about it and the answers may come to you during the week. When you come across anything that piques your interest, add it to your notes. Quotes, images, thoughts, experiences...

If spending three weeks feels like too much for you, another option is to read through this guide and use it as a tool to start thinking and talking with others about these questions. Share these questions with other adults who are involved in your children's lives. This may be your partner, grandparents, teachers, school PTOs, and school board members. Take notes about what comes up during these discussions.

This is an exciting process! Give yourself time. Take what resonates with you and leave the rest. Homeschooling (or teaching) is a lifestyle. Every home or classroom is going to look and feel different. You are embarking on a journey and the benefits to you and your family are immeasurable. The world is yours on this journey and the doors are wide open.

Mission Questions: The what and why

These will be the reasons and purpose you do what you do.

- ✦ What do you consider to be the purpose of education? Think of the big picture, at the end of their "schooling" what will be their biggest take-aways? What do you hope they will be able to do? What skills will they have? What will they have accomplished?
 - ✦ What knowledge, habits, understandings, character traits, and values do you think a person should possess?
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These next questions are included because by thinking about and incorporating everyone's interests and joys, it adds to an environment that promotes passion, discovery, and enjoyment for the whole family.

- ✦ What do you and your children or students get excited about?
- ✦ What activities do you enjoy doing together? Think about what you choose in your free time.

- ✦ What do you want to pass on to your children?
- ✦ How do you want to be remembered? What do you hope your children will remember from their schooling?

Philosophy Questions: The how

These will be your thoughts and beliefs. This is how you are going to achieve your mission.

- ✦ What are the conditions within which you believe children learn best? This is how you picture your home or classroom to be and feel.
 - ✦ Consider the need for structured lessons, free time, or a balance of both? Some other topics to consider: self directed learning, preplanned lessons, instructional approaches or strategies to optimize children's learning. Also think about the qualities of the people involved such as patience, passion, and kindness.
 - ✦ Are there essential features of an effective learning environment? Think about resources and what you will have access to. This includes people, places and things.
- ✦ What is your role in your children's education? What will you do to manage your own needs?
- ✦ What sources and support are needed? (People, places, and things)
- ✦ What will you do to meet the needs of your learner(s)?
 - ✦ Think about different learning styles, strengths, weaknesses, and interests, etc. This is where parents are the experts!

Goals

These are the specific results.

- ✦ You choose if and how to set goals. You may want to set goals yearly or seasonally. They can be broad as in "be exposed to different forms of art" or specific as in "grow a plant from a seed."

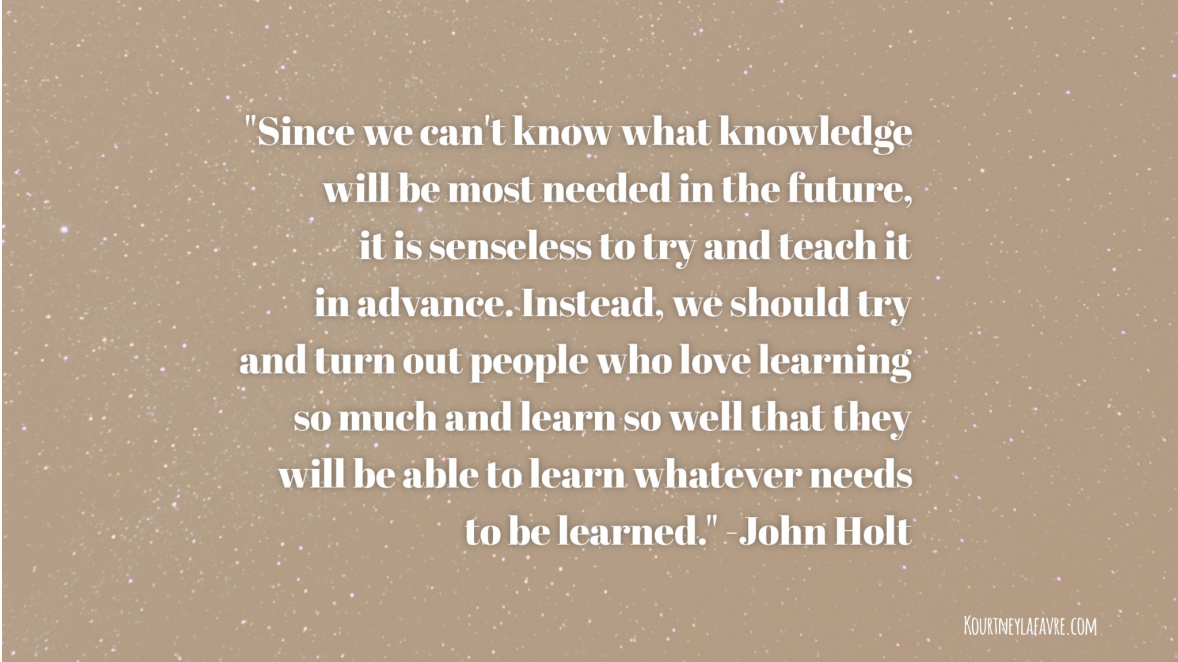
If you are feeling stuck or unsure...

Try picturing your child in the future. What will they need to be successful? Who will they be?

Write a letter to your child. Tell them your hopes, wishes, and dreams for them.

Reflect back on your own schooling and educational experiences. What was most helpful to you? What didn't help you? Was there anything that caused negative experiences that held you back? Was there anything from your schooling that helped you, healed you, uplifted you? Is there anything you wished you had but never got? Was there anything that helped to prepare you for what you do now?

Think about the teachers in your life who made an impact on you. What was it about that person that left a lasting impression? Consider the experiences you've had that were "game changers" for you. Why and how did these experiences change you and your thinking and understanding?



"Since we can't know what knowledge will be most needed in the future, it is senseless to try and teach it in advance. Instead, we should try and turn out people who love learning so much and learn so well that they will be able to learn whatever needs to be learned." -John Holt

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Remember you have complete freedom here. You do not have to replicate school at home. Your home, community, and the world are your classrooms.

Example words and phrases.

- We will support and encourage the development of social, emotional, physical, intellectual, spiritual development.
- We will recognize and support our child as an individual with unique strengths and weaknesses.
- I (we) will foster a caring and supportive attitude and an environment that is engaging and responsive..
- Our role is to support, guide, and encourage our children to recognize their strengths, improve the skills needed for success, establish and demonstrate habits and values...
- Develop traits to act with thoughtfulness for all humanity.

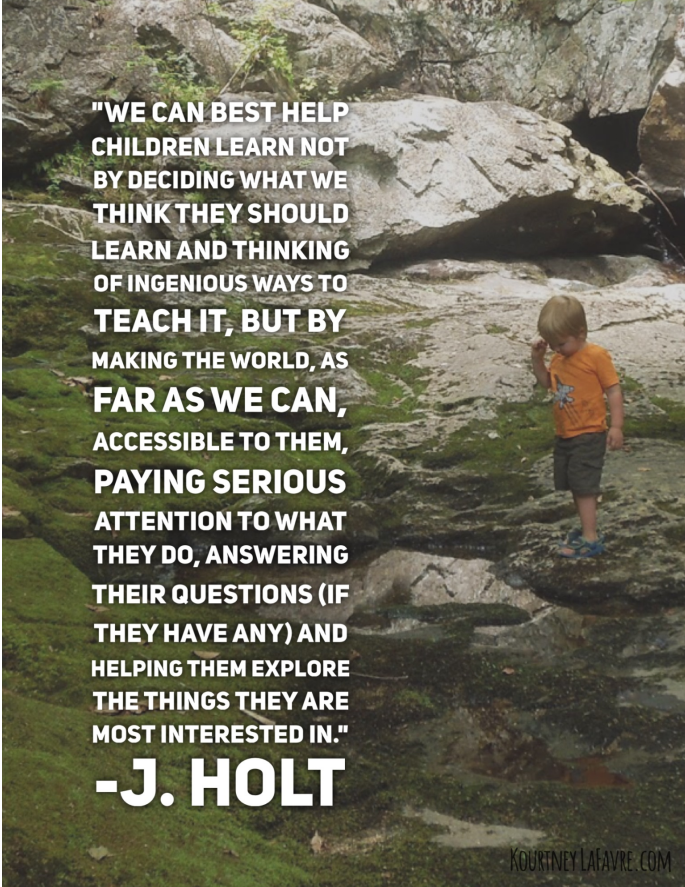


- Recognize and follow their passions.
- To ensure the safety of developing bodies and minds.
- We strive, we hope, we encourage, we guide...
- Children should be supported to take risks, ask questions, be creative, be free.
- Children should be met where they are then guided and supported to the next level.

- Observe and provide resources
- Empower to make thoughtful decisions and choices
- Encouragement to seek out answers and resources.
- Enable their abilities to learn, make connections, build relationships, seek out information and experiences



- Optimize their full potential
- Discover their gifts
- To do what is right, not what is easy.
- To be life-long learners, problem solvers, risk takers
- Personal growth and development
- Meet the needs of the whole child
- Be confident and creative builders of their future
- To meet challenges with openness, possess a willingness to problem solve
- View challenges as an opportunity to learn and grow (obstacles or stepping stones?)

- Recognize, respect, and value cultural differences.
 - To become personally fulfilled- whole people who are socially and morally responsible
 - Pursuit of happiness and fulfillment
 - Developing the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to be life-long learners. Develop critical thinking and analytical skills
 - Understanding social media, pros and cons
 - Have exposure to...
 - Value imagination and creativity
 - To be able to read, write, and communicate with clarity and accuracy.
- 
- "WE CAN BEST HELP CHILDREN LEARN NOT BY DECIDING WHAT WE THINK THEY SHOULD LEARN AND THINKING OF INGENIOUS WAYS TO TEACH IT, BUT BY MAKING THE WORLD, AS FAR AS WE CAN, ACCESSIBLE TO THEM, PAYING SERIOUS ATTENTION TO WHAT THEY DO, ANSWERING THEIR QUESTIONS (IF THEY HAVE ANY) AND HELPING THEM EXPLORE THE THINGS THEY ARE MOST INTERESTED IN."**
- J. HOLT**
- KOURTNEY LAFAVRE.COM
- Respect the individual, inspire and encourage
 - Build the foundation necessary to reach their potential
 - To provide an individualized education or experience that addresses unique needs, cultivates the development of the individual, promotes building of character
 - Enabling them to contribute to their communities in meaningful ways
 - To know happiness comes from within
 - To be questioners, to scrutinize, to use discernment
 - Recognize beauty in its many forms.
 - Critical thinking and analytical skills

Create Your Statements

Once you have answered the questions, your next task is to create your statements. Use your answers and notes to guide you. Your mission statement should be concise, a few sentences that sum up the reasons why you are choosing to homeschool, to unschool, or to teach. Try to blend realism with optimism. It should serve as inspiration and also be reasonable. The philosophy statement should summarize how you are going to achieve your mission. The goals are the specific results. It may be helpful to set goals yearly, seasonally or monthly. The goals can be larger ideas or small specific goals. If you have more than one child, you may want each child to have their own list of goals.

Be creative and free with this process. You can have a list, a paragraph, a collage of words, or whatever feels good to you. Have an official copy for yourself. You can make an art piece with the whole statement or just words and phrases. Have a framed copy somewhere in your home. I encourage you to share it. It may seem too personal to share, but I think you may be surprised by the benefits of sharing. Sharing helps you to connect with like-minded individuals. It helps others to think about these important questions too. You'll also impress people! "Wow! You wrote this?" "Yes. Yes I did."

Use your notes and the example words and phrases to piece together your statements.

Here are some sample fill in the blanks:

- ✦ We believe the purpose of education is ... Another important purpose is ...
- ✦ Children learn best in an environment that ...
- ✦ The essential features of an optimal learning environment are ...
- ✦ As a parent/teacher I am committed to....
- ✦ Our children will be encouraged to...

How will you use your manifesto?

You have gained clarity on your purpose and identified the desired outcomes. No matter where you are on this journey: considering an alternative educational choice, just starting homeschooling, a veteran homeschooler, or a teacher, this manifesto will serve as your guide. Use it to inform and shape what you do and the decisions you make. If you are unsure of a choice before you, then you can return to your manifesto and use it as a filter. For example, if you are trying to choose a curriculum, look at the proposed results of that curriculum and see if

they are in alignment with your mission. Check to see if the methods used in that curriculum support your philosophies. If part of your philosophy is to let children follow their interests, would this curriculum choice allow for that? If it does not, then it's probably not the right choice for you. If you are a teacher, does your school align with your manifesto? If your children are in a school, is the school in alignment with your philosophies and mission? If it's not in alignment, have you considered the effects of staying in a system that does not fit the needs of your children? What are the long and short term effects of not getting the support you need or possibilities to build on strengths?

Your manifesto will serve as a blueprint for your children's education.

An educational manifesto will help you evaluate where you are now. For example, if you hope to take weekly field trips and excursions, does your current schedule allow for that? If not, then you know you need to make some changes. If you are hoping for your children to have a strong science background but your own knowledge is limited, what will you do to support science development? Learn along with them or seek out professionals in that field?

This is also a tool for accountability. To assess if what you are doing is going to bring your children and family to your desired destination. A manifesto helps you stay on track. It will also help you to say no to anything (people, place, things) that are not in alignment with your mission and philosophy. One of the statements I hear most from people who are just starting out (or burnt out) is that they are so overwhelmed and they don't know where to begin. This manifesto is where to begin. Return to it to remind yourself why you are doing this and to turn away the endless options that will not serve you, your children, and family. If you are feeling pressured to do certain activities or make specific choices, you can easily say no if it does not support your mission. If you are in the "burnt out" category, return to your manifesto for inspiration and reminders to keep you fueled to reach your goals. If where you are now is not in alignment with your mission and philosophy, what do you need to do differently? What changes can be made to your schedule, home life, support team, etc?

A manifesto will be your fuel and your light for this journey. Step into your position as your children's expert. You have established a creed by which you will educate your children and you can now move forward with passion and purpose.



A final reminder: It's okay if you don't have all the answers all the time. There are so many resources available to you. Seek out support when you need help. Friends, family, professionals, businesses, libraries, teachers. If you stay committed you will find a way. Don't throw away something amazing and beautiful because of a limiting belief that if something isn't momentarily working, you should forget it and just do what everyone else is doing. Keep your manifesto at the forefront of your journey. Laugh, learn, be joyful. And always choose love. I believe in you, and your children believe in you.

*With love,
Kourtney LaFavre*

<http://kourtneylafavre.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/kourtneylafavre.writer/>

Instagram: @kourtneylafavre

Join the private support group on Facebook: Choosing Homeschool

It's an inspirational and empowering community for those who choose alternative methods of education, whether you are new to homeschooling, a veteran, or considering a different choice. This is a safe place for asking questions, receiving guidance, sharing triumphs and adversities, all in an uplifting environment.

“Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible.”

~Tony Robbins
