

Start Slow

January, 2023

~ FREELY

Homeschool Support Bundle

START SLOW

This January Ebook edition is filled with inspiration and tips to help and inspire you in your homeschooling journey

AT A GLANCE

on page

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU

FIRST, DO THE WORK YOURSELF

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Hello

Welcome to the January issue of the Freely homeschool support bundle.

The theme for this month's bundle is "Start slow".

When we think of the start of a new year, we get filled with excitement, hope, and ambition to make it our "best year yet". We imagine ourselves more organized, more fit, more... Everything right!?

That's because the new year represents something to all of us. A fresh start. "A fresh start" is exactly what I had planned to name this month's theme but then I dug into that more and it didn't sit right with me.

Whilst a fresh start is nice, what's nicer than starting slowly and purposefully? Rather than rushing around making changes and creating unrealistic goals and expectations of ourselves and our kids in the name of "fresh starts", let's be kinder to ourselves this year. Let's work with what we have. Making small, purposeful changes to create lasting long-term benefits.

So what does that look like? Grab your favorite drink, take a seat, relax your shoulders, maybe take a deep breath, and let's explore this!



TIFFANY BOYD
CO FOUNDER OF FREELY

Big Hugs, Tiff



NEW YEAR, NEW YOU?

Have you ever found yourself caught up in the "new year, new you" thinking?

I feel like it's even more of a trap in the homeschooling world because there is just so much that we feel we could improve on.

The concept of a fresh start entices us to entertain the notion that when that clock strikes 12 and we begin a new year we magically become a new person! Old habits are gone and replaced with new and better ones.

We push ourselves to accomplish more, we pull our kids into this whirlwind of new routines and chore charts.

We tell ourselves and our kids that its going to be better than ever!

Until it all comes crashing down. We are met with resistance to the schedule, tears over the changes made, and a whole lot of burnout.

We find ourselves wondering how the heck we got to this place and we feel more disheartened than ever.

If this sounds a little familiar, know that you are not alone. It's so incredibly ingrained in everything we see from December to January that we can't help but fall victim to this in one way or another.

It's okay to want change. It's healthy to want to set goals for the future, let's explore some gentler ways to make changes.

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU?

Instead of setting unrealistic goals for yourself and your homeschool, try setting smaller, more achievable goals that you can realistically weave into your day.

Here are some ideas:

- Taking a few minutes each day to practice deep breathing or stretching exercises.
- Try incorporating physical activity into your day in small ways rather than a full commitment to a gym membership. You can join in that game of catch with your children, or do a quick yoga challenge together. Just create the goal to move!
- Instead of trying to cook hot meals 3 times a day, create easy platters that everyone can enjoy whilst still working on that project, and there's no big cleanup required!
- Instead of trying to do everything yourself, try to involve your children in tasks like meal planning and grocery shopping. This can not only help lighten your load but also give your children valuable life skills.

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU?

- Rather than focusing on perfection, try to be more forgiving of yourself and your children. Remember that you're doing the best you can, and that small mistakes or setbacks are a normal part of the learning process.
- Remember to make time for yourself, even if it's just a few minutes of quiet time each day, take time to relax and recharge, this can make all the difference to how you feel about homeschooling.
- When planning your homeschool weeks, remember to plan fun! Talk to your children and get them involved in the planning, it's a great way to connect with them and they'll appreciate the opportunity to contribute.

To help you along the way, I've created a seasonal bucket list for inspiration to add some excitement to the season. You can find the link in the "resources you'll love" section.

FIRST, DO THE WORK YOURSELF

We've been doing this homeschooling thing for a while now, and yet, with each year that passes I'm humbly reminded that I don't have it all figured out.

What worked the previous year may not work the next. There are times my children look at me as though I don't know them at all!

"Mum why would you think I would want to do that?!" And as their independence shows up in the form of strong opinions and questioning everything, I sometimes feel a little in over my head!

We really are on this journey WITH our kids, It's not a predictable job, we can't compare ourselves to a school teacher, dealing with the same age year after year.

Our children are learning and growing at a rate that really only allows us to learn on the job as we climb the mountain with them.

After this realisation a little while ago, I found myself on a research spiral to learn everything I could about parenting styles, emotions, and anything that can help me better prepare my kids (and me!) for the teen years ahead.

FIRST, DO THE WORK YOURSELF

During my deep dive into all things parenting teens, I kept noticing an underlying message in all the great books and resources from experts and psychologists.

It wasn't until I came across "The gifts of imperfect parenting - raising children with courage, compassion, and connection" by Brené Brown that it clicked.

She writes: "You can't give children what you don't have yourself, no matter how much importance you place on it." For instance, you can't raise children to be more resilient to shame than you are yourself.

If you're like me, and you grew up in the 90s you might feel a little resistant to this message. For me personally, this was a scary realization because I knew I had a bit of work to do on myself.

But it starts with us. The best way to help our kids is to do the hard work on ourselves. They are watching, listening, and taking it all in.

FIRST, DO THE WORK YOURSELF

The real beauty of this book for me was how Brené explains that we don't have to fix ourselves, it's actually the "working" on ourselves that kids learn from most.

They see that we are striving to learn, to do, and be better and THAT is where the magic happens.

It is my hope that my children do not think of me as the perfect Mother. It is my hope that they see me actively doing the work to love, accept, and better myself. They see that there is no one way to do things and that we are all perfectly imperfect.

Imperfect parenting is featured as this month's book pick. You can find out more on page 13.

SLOW + STEADY

Start slow. Slow and steady. Here are a few reasons why it could be good for your homeschool:

1. **Allowing time to adjust:** Starting the year slowly can give your kids time to adjust to any new routines or schedules. It can take time to get back into the swing of things after a break.

2. **Reducing stress:** Allowing everyone to ease into their new responsibilities and commitments can be especially beneficial for those who are feeling overwhelmed or anxious about the start of a new year.

3. **Building momentum:** By starting slowly and gradually building up to a full routine, we can establish a strong foundation and create momentum for the rest of the year. This can help to set the stage for the months ahead.

4. **Balance:** Starting the year slowly can also help to foster balance in our lives by allowing us to prioritize our commitments and focus on the things that are most important to us. This can help to prevent burnout and ensure that we are able to sustain our efforts long-term.

HOW TO INTRODUCE NEW RHYTHMS + ROUTINES

Creating new rhythms to our days can feel like swimming against the stream. Often because we are so excited to "fit" it all in we completely overhaul our days and it feels like we are stepping into someone else's life.

Starting slow isn't just beneficial to our kids in helping them adjust, it's beneficial to us, as the ones implementing the new habits.

Here are some great approaches:

ROUTINE: Sometimes you just need a place to start. and Freely Homeschool Planner makes it easy to prioritize 2-3 things each day as a focus. The routine tracker built into "My Week" helps with the gentle reminder to add something. This is perfect if you're the type of home educator that finds it hard to focus and keep track of goals, interests, and commitments for each child.

FOOD: Need I say more? I've lost count of the number of times hunger has messed with our homeschool days. If your family is like mine, you are well aware of second breakfasts! Do yourself a favor and prepare food in advance! Want to make it even easier? Prepare a platter that everyone can share.

HOW TO INTRODUCE NEW RHYTHMS + ROUTINES

TIMING: Timing is everything in our house. I have one late sleeper and one super early riser. I make the most of the early hours and start my one-on-one time with coffee in hand and soak up that quality time with my early riser. When my late sleeper wakes, I get to spend one-on-one time with them while the other child's cup is already full and happily plays alone (most of the time!) Take a step back and look at the span of your day. Move things around and take a different approach!

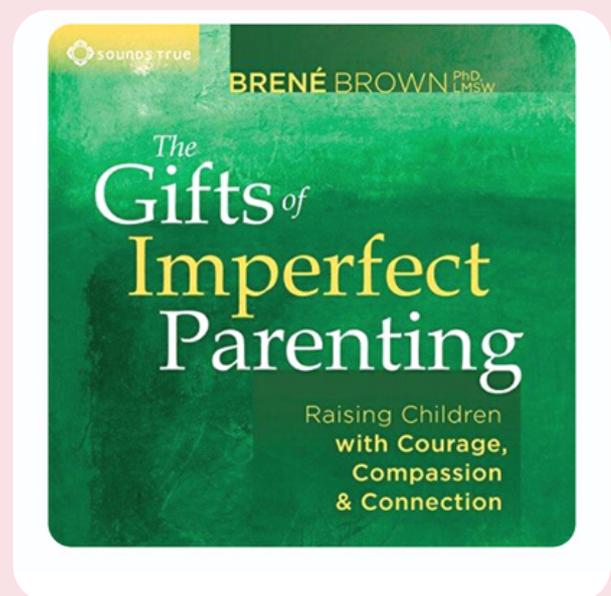
ORGANISE: Implementing a new routine can be exciting, change is refreshing! But if you aren't organized and not familiar with the new curriculum, and didn't pre-purchase the science experiment supplies, it's going to feel like a false start. When I prepare a new curriculum I enter and upload it straight into Freely and I go ahead and add anything that I need for lessons to my "to purchase" list so I know when I'm at the shops next I can go ahead and pull it up on my phone and know exactly what I need to buy!

Resources you'll love!

I am always on the hunt for the best and most helpful homeschooling and organisation resources and here are my top picks for January!

BOOK OF THE MONTH

I've lost count of the books I have read by Brené Brown. This one is powerful. Full of thought provoking case studies with a dash of her own life experience.



OVER ON YOUTUBE

Did you know I have a youtube channel? I'm sharing my tips for creating new rhythms and routines in your homeschool. Watch here!

Resources you'll love!

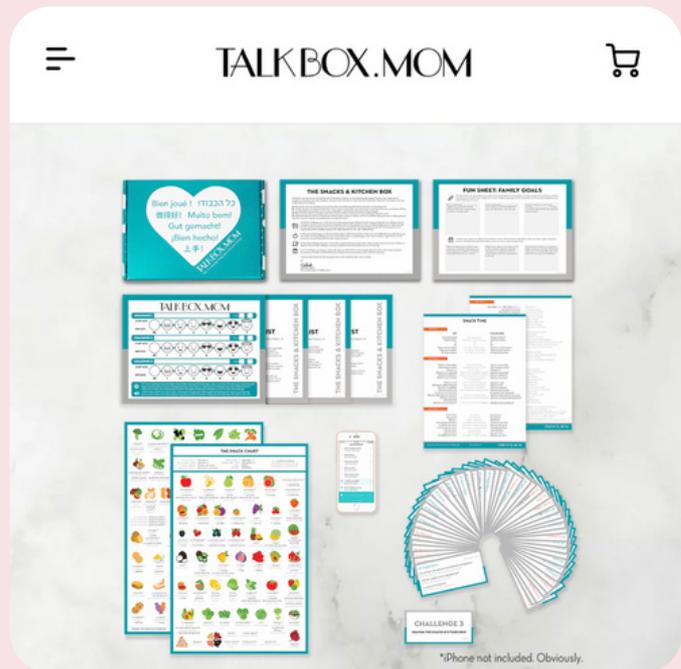
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TALKBOX.MOM

Talkbox.mom has been a favourite addition to our homeschool this year.

We've always struggled with learning languages but the [talkbox.mom app](#) allows you to incorporate a new language into your home life. It's seriously fun!

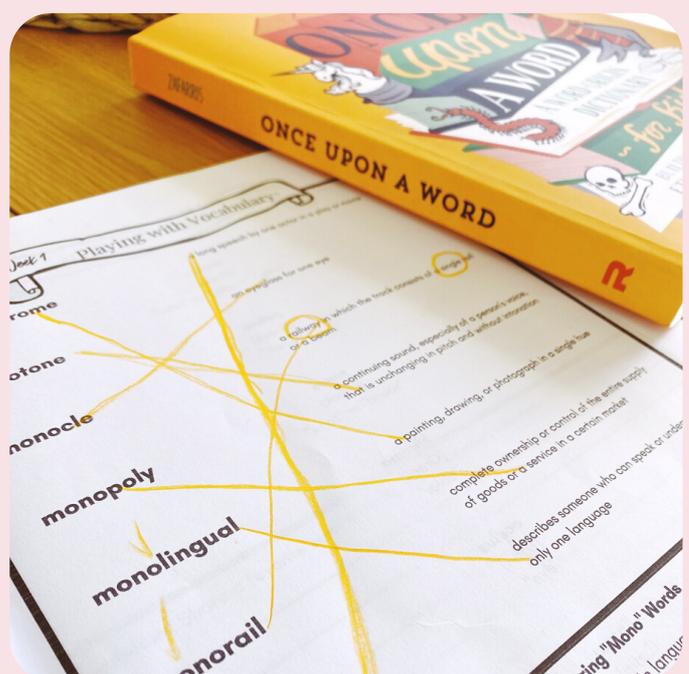
[Click here](#) and use `hinterlife20` for \$20 off your first box!



BLOSSOM & ROOT

It's a creative, secular, and diverse curriculum that, to be quite honest, has been the source of the absolute most joy we have ever had sitting together and learning as a family.

[Click here](#)



The background of the image shows the silhouettes of three children jumping joyfully in a grassy field. The scene is set against a warm, golden sunset sky. The children's forms are dark against the bright, hazy light of the setting sun. One child is on the left, another in the center, and a third on the right, all with their arms and legs raised in mid-air.

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“If children feel safe,
they can take risks,
ask questions, make
mistakes, learn to
trust, share their
feelings, and grow.”

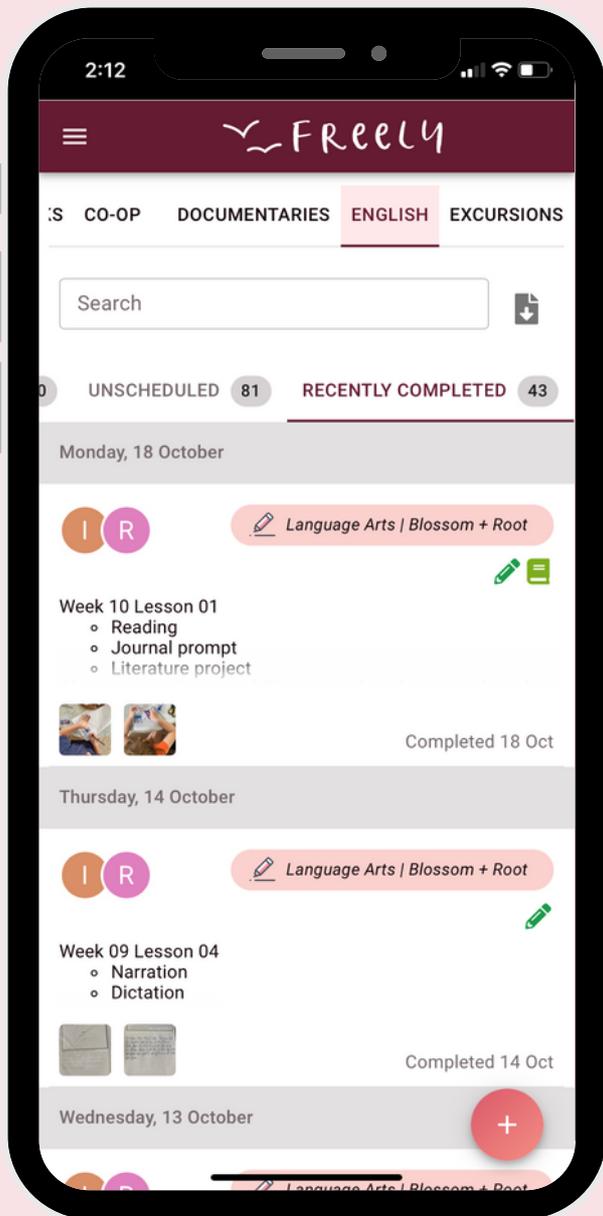
— Alfie Kohn

Simplify

Your homeschool

Start your
FREE
Trial

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♥ Use any curriculum

♥ Flexible & easy

♥ Everything in one place

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