



A Thomas Jefferson Education Home Companion

Oliver DeMille , Diann Jeppson , Rachel DeMille

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At a time when the American educational system is in crisis and the family is under attack, the tried-and-true principles handed down through the ages, herein called Thomas Jefferson Education, are fostering the revival of a culture of leadership and liberty. As a result, the family is being restored to its rightful place as the basic unit of a prosperous and free society; and the prospects for American education are looking brighter than ever. These incredibly helpful articles read, at times, like a letter from a friend, at times like an entry in a journal of Education or Child Development, and even, at times, like we're overhearing a conversation. But in every case it is relevant, accessible, and empowering.

A Thomas Jefferson Education Home Companion Details

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M says

This book was inspiring and motivational. I appreciated the examples within it, but I wished for more examples of how families "do it." (educate at home) I felt like there was a lot of the "why," and DeMille's philosophies, but I wanted more examples of clubs, "a day in the life"s, etc... to ponder on.

Pamela says

I loved the mix of philosophy and practical application in this book. I came away with a refined vision of the purpose and end goal of education and how to work towards that purpose in my home.

Diann Jepson's tender stories of inspiring her children motivated me to examine how I inspire my children. I especially liked the stories of how she exposed her children to music and ice skating. I learned a great deal about how to inspire, rather than require or even motivate my children to learn. I so appreciated the "peek" into the Jeppson home life and home school. It's wonderful to get to see how other families apply Thomas Jefferson Education in their homes.

My favorite chapter was "Steel to Gold: Motherhood and Feminism," which completely changed my perspective on my role as a woman. The thought that I am raising "the twelve most influential people on the life of [my] yet unborn great-grandchild," broadened my sense of my responsibility to my family and literally gave me permission to be more whole-heartedly involved in my community. I think every woman should read this chapter!

The chapter on mentoring enlightened me on the differences between a tutor and a mentor. My interpretation of this chapter is that a tutor loves a subject, but may or may not love the student while a mentor always loves the student, whether they love the subject the student is interested in or not. The key difference is where the love is placed--on the subject or on the student.

Finally, the last chapter brought the huge task of educating my children into clear reality. I understood completely how I must approach my own education while at the same time helping my children to get theirs. The spirit of balance that Oliver DeMille refers to is going to be essential in my educational journey. This book is a road map that I'll take on that journey.

Karen says

THE DeMilles are inspiring on every level. Dian Jeppson is overwhelming. I'm disappointed that I misunderstood the purpose of this book. I have read the Thomas Jefferson Education, and thought this was the next step in understanding how to make it happen in my own life. If that is where you are at DON'T READ IT! It will disappoint and overwhelm you. I came to discover by the reading of this book that the next book I really needed was "Phases of Learning." That is my next read :0). They reference the phases of learning a lot in this book, and I don't have a good handle on what they are or how they are accomplished. I

hope to find those details in the Phases of Learning book.

Again, I was so inspired by the articles (chapters) written by the DeMilles! They help to put life in perspective and give purpose to what we are trying to accomplish with our children. I LOVED Rachel DeMille's chapter on feminism. I think it should be required reading for every woman. And I recommended Oliver's chapter on attention span to my two oldest children immediately! I knew they would understand what he was trying to say, and be inspired by it as well. (hopefully they will take the time to read it!!)

Rebekah M. says

The two chapters that I took the most from are "Seeing the Whole Picture" and "The Jeppson Plan." I've made my master plan and refer to those two chapters often as I am in the middle of planning my daughter's 1st grade year as a homeschooler.

Mindy says

Our family home schools and after reading the first book on Thomas Jefferson Education, I was hooked! The amazing principles that TJEd is based on continue to amaze me! This Home Companion is perfect because it offers a lot of practical solutions and ideas for ME as a mother to use in MY homeschooling! "INSPIRE, Not Require" is our family home schooling motto. TJEd is based on using leadership, mentoring, principles and values to teach our family! "The core unit of society is FAMILY, and it is in our homes that principles must take root and flourish."

This book resonated clear with me that "there is nothing more powerful in history than being a great mother or father; and...the most important thing we can do in the 21st Century is the hard work necessary to truly succeed in the home."

I want to FOCUS on the most important mission of my life: MY FAMILY!! There is a TIME for EVERYTHING and I am constantly wanting to make good use of my time! During the CORE PHASE of Learning, which is what my children are in, they should gain knowledge of right and wrong, good and bad, true and false. This knowledge must truly become part of the child! This Home Companion gave me many ideas how to start in the "Core Phase" of Learning and continue into the "LOVE OF LEARNING" and "SCHOLAR" Phases!

Charyce says

I had the opportunity to attend the seminar which accompanied the release of this new book. I could relay to you all the things I realized, but it would fill a whole notebook. So, I will cheat and use this review that says it better than I could:

“At a time when the American educational system is in crisis and the family is under attack, the tried-and-true principles handed down through the ages—herein called Thomas Jefferson Education—are fostering the revival of a culture of leadership and liberty. As a result, the family is being restored to its rightful place as the basic unit of a prosperous and free society; and the prospects for American education are looking brighter than ever.

Regardless of where your children sit to learn, your home can be transformed into a Leadership Education home, a Thomas Jefferson Model environment. A discussion of the implementation of the principles of Thomas Jefferson Education in the home, particularly a microscopic view of the family culture of leadership and learning, is sorely wanting for a generation of parents and mentors who knew far more of the Conveyor Belt than of Leadership Education.

These incredibly helpful articles read, at times, like a letter from a friend, at times like an entry in a journal of Education or Child Development, and even, at times, like we're overhearing a conversation—but in every case it is relevant, accessible, and empowering. This volume offers something new, something which we all need, a view of the Thomas Jefferson Education system from many angles and from education of toddlers to advanced adult learning. Whether you're a parent, teacher, legislator or professor, this book is a must." Vicki Jo Anderson

This book is a must read, even if you are not a homeschooling parent!

I also highly recommend getting your hands on the other articles published by George Wythe College as aids in implementing Leadership Education in your family.

Thomas Jefferson Education In Our Home

Core and Love of Learning: A Recipe For Success

Transition to Scholar Phase

Scholar Phase

Shiloah says

After reading the awe inspiring first book "A Thomas Jefferson Education" I wanted to get started but felt a little overwhelmed and not sure where or how to get started. This book is written by several authors and gives ideas, inspiration (including how to run the home while homeschooling), and more insight into homeschooling future leaders of the 21st Century.

Joelle says

This is a terrific supplement to A Thomas Jefferson Education. My three star rating is due to this note: I caution readers to avoid trying to copy/apply everything in the book. The "Companion" is a snapshot of what others are applying in their homes and is NOT a guideline for every TJED home. Keep this in mind, or you may get discouraged when something doesn't work with your family culture. Use this book as a "menu" of ideas. Choose a few items to try and build from there.

Heather says

I read this book over a year ago and then again last week in an attempt to better understand the Thomas Jefferson Education method. The second time through was better I think. I did understand things that had confused me before.

I think there are some interesting ideas here, but again, I felt like I still didn't know HOW to implement it.

The first time through I thought this sounded very much like unschooling which I can't handle. (More power to you if you can; it's just not me.) The second reading helped me see that they do in fact teach phonics and

math and other subjects. I STILL can't figure out how they work that out if we're supposed to "inspire not require". How then to you teach reading? They totally gloss over this important step and tell you how wonderful it will be once your child ages 8-12 really start to learn on their own and WANT to read and study. But my question is, WHERE DID THEY LEARN TO READ? Because it seems like you're not supposed to have 'formal' lessons in the Core Phase (under 8 yrs old). But then one lady talks about how she has a list of books and subjects and she sits down and reads through them and checks off each subject studied. Is that not a formal lesson? And why would she recommend Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons if you're not supposed to require lessons. These people are so confusing sometimes!!!!

Taking a deep breath now....the second time through, like I said, I found that they do appear to have some sort of structure and lessons. It really does sound Charlotte Mason-y to me. It's pretty much what I've been doing for the last few years.

Anyways, I came away with some good ideas I want to incorporate, but overall found the book frustrating and confusing. But less so than the first one.

Charity says

Do you know that thing where, when you're pondering what direction to take, everything around you seems to be centered around a particular direction or message?

I love when that happens.

We're in the middle of this several-months-long period of job transition and cross-country move that's fixing to shift again as we move into our new home (at long last) next week. My thoughts have been circling for months this idea of what I want to take with me, emotionally and materially, and what I want to leave behind.

This book is full of this idea. In a series of essays, Oliver and Rachel DeMille and Diann Jeppson write about the importance of applying the principles of Leadership Education and practical ways of doing so. At some points, the book is a little slow-going, and some of Diann Jeppson's essays, rather than helping me see TJEd as more doable made me wonder if I was up to the task (Jeppson offered practical advice, but reading it felt overwhelming at times).

The most powerful essays for me were those that dealt with the leaders of the past and what we can learn from them as we try to improve our own education so that we may give our children the opportunity to be leaders. Rachel DeMille's "'Steel to Gold': Motherhood & Feminism" lit a fire under me and helped me see the importance of my role as a parent (when often the gifts I have to offer as a stay-at-home mother are undervalued in our culture). She helped me begin to place myself in history, which helps ease some of that feeling of loneliness as I take less-traveled paths.

And the last five essays were just incredible. They dealt with the fallacies of education, like that education should be fun ("No nation focused on unearned fun will pay the price to fight a revolutionary war for their freedoms, or cross the plains and build a new nation, or sacrifice to free the slaves or rescue Europe from Hitler, or put a man on the moon. We got where we are because we did a lot of things that weren't fun."). They addressed the principles of "liber" and "Public Virtue" and how they were embodied by the Founders.

And they pointed out how those we consider great leaders (Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Churchill, etc) spent years reading and studying and discussing before they acted upon what they'd learned and changed the course of history.

Then there's the Epilogue, which most directly relates to the quest I've been on these past months. A mother struggling to apply the principles of Leadership Education while raising six children (with a seventh on the way) uses the metaphor of the handcart, used by many Mormon pioneers as they crossed the plains to Utah, to illustrate the idea that those who follow this path are educational pioneers (debates about mismanagement of the handcart parties aside). She talks about the difficult choice of what to put in your metaphorical handcart and what to leave behind, knowing that everything you carry with you, you'll be pushing with your own power for thousands of miles, and everything you leave behind might be something you needed to take along to ease your journey, or even to make it to your destination.

This is the choice I'm trying to make as we settle into this new phase of our life. What's important to me? What will I need for this journey? What things no longer serve me that I'd like to leave behind?

This book not only helped me to see more clearly the path I'd like to take my children's education (and my own). It helped me see that the path I choose for our family's education is the path I choose for our development as human beings and as citizens of the world.

K. says

[

I have mixed feelings about this book. I really love Diann J. in person, but as an author, what she says seems exhausting. That's not to say every one of her ideas isn't great, because they are, but sometimes I think she makes it harder than it needs to be. I can't imagine having the time nor inclination to hover over a just waking child's bed with a pretty book ready to read to her the moment she becomes somewhat coherent. But then again, I haven't yet dealt with a reluc

Nola Redd says

When I first decided to home school my children, years ago, I took the time to ponder what I really wanted for their education. Because my oldest was only three when I made my decision, I had time to research, read, and think about this. Ultimately, I decided that my biggest priority was that they develop a love of learning, a desire to embrace knowledge. From there, I had to figure out the best way to instill that desire in them. Four years after I began this journey, I borrowed a copy of "A Thomas Jefferson Education" and realized that its methods embodied virtually everything I wanted for our home school plan. And while that book was more concept-oriented, "A Thomas Jefferson Education Home Companion" gives you the nuts-and-bolts application of the teaching.

I really enjoyed the essays within this book. The three authors split them up amongst themselves, and I quickly got a feel for the different voices. For me, the best way to study the TJEd methods was to see how other families applied them, and what that meant for daily life, and this book is chock full of those applications.

Of course, examples are not the only things in the book. Oliver Van DeMille especially penned a number of concept-based essays. The one that stuck out the most to me was the one that pointed out the shrinking attention span in our nation.

Another essay I enjoyed was about feminism and statesmanship. So many stay-at-home-moms – myself included – tend to look inward once they become mothers, and tune out the outside world. This article really inspired me to continue to nurture and lead, and to not shelter myself completely from the things going on around us. I also really appreciated the points made about self-fulfillment, and how so many women think that this is an either/or scenario. I think Jeppson provides ample proof that it need not be, and again, this was something I needed to hear.

One thing I noted in other reviews of this book: other reviewers think that it may be difficult for a new TJer to NOT conveyor-belt their kids after reading this book. I agree that many of the concepts and applications are suggestions and examples, not must-dos. I was fortunate enough to have worked out most of my plans and desires for home schooling beforehand - and having them closely align with a TJEd - so this was less a problem for me. I've studied enough to know that I cannot implement every good idea, because they won't necessarily work with my family. But someone new to home schooling or a Thomas Jefferson Education may need that reminder – so consider yourself reminded! You can't do it all, but you can find what works for you and tweak it to your family.

Overall, I really enjoyed this book. I read it, pen and notebook in hand, and took copious notes. It was kind of nice to “study” it after reading “A Thomas Jefferson Education” because I was geared up to take notes and ponder what I was writing down. Again, as long as the reader remembers that a TJEd is *not* a conveyor-belt education, and we should *NOT* seek to duplicate everything we read, they should be able to get a lot out of this book. (Oh, yes, and also remember that a new Hser is NOT going to duplicate the patterns that a ten+ year veteran has perfected.)

Jenny says

I have mixed feelings about this book. It's great for people who are already advanced in applying the TJEd philosophy. I do not recommend it to people who are new to leadership education. It's too tempting for newbies to use this book in an attempt to create a TJEd conveyor-belt at home.

I love the chapters by Rachel and Oliver DeMille. In fact, the chapter entitled "Steel to Gold: Feminism vs. Stateswomanship" is not to be missed. If this article were not already available on the Internet for free, I would recommend this book to others based on that chapter alone. It's absolutely fantastic.

The chapters by Diann Jeppson are helpful, showing how she applies the principles of leadership education in her home and community. I do have one major concern. Because this book is co-authored by the DeMilles, families new to leadership education may think that Jeppson's style and method are necessary to properly applying the principles.

The way a few chapters are written, the book appears to promote a TJEd conveyor-belt at times (if that were even possible). Having heard Diann Jeppson and the DeMilles speak many times, I am well acquainted with their ideas. Neither Diann nor the DeMilles seek to promote a conveyor-belt application of the principles at all. I think the problem lies in how certain sections were written. If those sections were re-written, I would

wholeheartedly recommend this book to everyone.

Amyde says

This is a re-read. While I am aware of some controversy surrounding this method - like anything else I read I extract what serves me and leave the rest. The fundamental idea of teaching through mentoring methods is useful.

Alexis says

This book was excellent...thanks to the chapters written by Oliver and Rachel DeMille. The chapters written by Diann Jepson, while helpful; I believe unintentionally took on a sort of holier than thou tone. Jepson is essentially too good to be true. She embodies the homeschool mom I would love to be, but practically speaking an attempt to emulate her style will likely leave me with tremendous feelings of guilt and despair and my children feeling inadequate and frustrated.

The first few chapters were noteworthy in so far as they continued where "A Thomas Jefferson Education" left off with further reasons why an education in the classics is of fundamental importance and although a daunting task, it is a challenge that ought to be taken to heart. Towards the middle of the book I had hoped for a well laid out recipe for introducing a TJed into my homeschool complete with practical application steps that I could immediately seize and work with. Unfortunately I was left wanting. I did gather some important take aways and an inspiration to work toward establishing our own local "Mom School," ala Diann Jepson. Reading these chapters, I began to languish, and nearly tabled the book altogether. Happily today when I picked it up again, I had arrived at the final three chapters, which I found thoroughly fulfilling. I closed the book glad to have read it, and I will use it as a resource for designing my own, as well as my children's Thomas Jefferson Education.

Page 169 outlines how the schools of ancient Greece and Rome maintained their business edge in times of moral decay and rampant materialism [sadly, products of public school education, like myself, will see more than a few familiar traits:]

1. "Free the student from the necessity of any prolonged or strenuous mental effort.
2. Give him a reasonable assurance that the school is helping him toward a career.
3. Confine moral discipline to the amnities, paying special attention to dress and grooming. The student will have his own sex life anyway.
4. Keep him busy with fun and games--extracurricular activity is the thing.
5. Allay any subconscious feelings of guilt due to idleness and underachievement by emphasis on the greatness of the institution, which should be frequently dramatized by assemblies and ceremonies: an atmosphere of high purpose and exalted dedication is the best insurance against moments of honest misgivings.

"Here, then, was the secret of order and stability in the ancient schools."
