

## The Freedom of Non-Attachment

Erin Scherger, Herndon

The second noble truth of Zen Buddhism informs us that “Attachment is the root of all suffering.” I think about this often: in the context of our current volatile political climate, while practicing and teaching yoga, while considering my ever-changing role as a parent of young adults, and yes, while homeschooling.

From a young age, we learn that attachment is desirable. Our attachment to our friends and families provides us with stability and a sense of belonging. When we share, they share with us. When we are kind, they are kind in return. Actions have predictable results—and help us understand the world around us. And we learn that if we practice those actions, we may secure what we want. We become accustomed to this semblance of order.

As adults, many of us bring order to our lives by making plans and setting goals. When the plan comes together, when we achieve our goals, all is well. But what about when the plan *doesn't* succeed? What if we don't attain our goal? What if the outcome is different than what we envisioned? This deviation from our expectations, our attachment to our vision of how things *should* be, can leave us unhappy, frustrated, anxious, or perhaps even angry.

As parents, we are not immune. We can become so set, so attached to how we are doing things, to how we want our children to be, to *who* we want our children to be, that we can lose sight of the current reality, lost in a fog of “if only” and “should.”

As the end of the school year and evidence-of-progress evaluations approach, it's a natural time for us to take a reading on the health of our homeschools. But, are we too attached to the outcome, to proving to others (family, friends, future college admission teams) that our homeschools are successful? Are we pushing our children to excel in ways that are not appropriate for their ages or abilities? Should we be less attached to our vision of their progress?

Of course, non-attachment does not equate disinterest; it does not equate giving up. So, what if your child is *not* performing as expected? Perhaps a change is worth considering. Take action! Don't know how to begin? Let us spark some ideas.

Are you too dedicated to your schedule, the curriculum, the subjects you want your children to take, to your method of homeschooling? Give yourself the freedom and permission to change these or other aspects of your homeschool. Are you or your child feeling stuck? Take a virtual field trip with us and explore new places or unusual animals to pique your child's interest. Learn strategies for dealing with anxiety, or read how one teen tames her inclination toward procrastination. Do you need ways to differentiate between a child who is progressing on their own timeline versus a child who may have a learning disability? Does your child really just need access to accommodations while taking tests? Find these topics, and more, within these pages.

A well-known yoga teacher named Judith Lasater likes to say, “Yoga is not about touching your toes; it's what you learn on the way down.” It's not about whether you can achieve the most Instagram-worthy pose; the benefits lie in the cultivation of your relationship with yourself and thus with others.

Likewise, it's not about the stanine your child earns on the standardized test, the grade on the report card, the SAT score, the college they are accepted to, the personal choices they make as young adults. Give yourself the freedom to release a limiting vision and glean the benefits of a more enjoyable relationship with your child and their relationship with learning.

*Erin Scherger is in her 15<sup>th</sup> year of a six-month homeschooling experiment. She lives in Herndon with her homeschooled high-school daughter, her husband, and a hamster; her homeschooled son is off to college, choosing his own adventure.*

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Photo by Rachel Spigarelli



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