

A Former English Professor Explains Why She Homeschools Her Children

Twenty years ago, Rosaria Champagne Butterfield was an up-and-coming professor of English literature at Syracuse University. While specializing in Critical Theory, she also headed up Syracuse's Center for Women's Studies.

Through various events, however, Ms. Butterfield left her position at Syracuse and eventually began homeschooling her own children, all of whom are adopted.

Given her success at the university level, Ms. Butterfield has naturally been subjected to questioning by those concerned that she is “‘wasting her life.’” Butterfield challenges this assumption, however, by offering two positive benefits she has discovered in homeschooling her children.

The first is her children's solid foundation in basic grammar. Butterfield relates the following story in her book, [*The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*](#):

“Recently, my son had a friend over after school.... My son has been homeschooled his whole life. His friend has always attended public schools. Here was their conversation:

Public School Boy: ‘All the girls at school like like, the boys. It is gross!’

Homeschool Boy: ‘Like, like? I don’t understand.’

Public School Boy: ‘You know, l-i-k-e, like.’

Homeschool Boy: ‘You mean ‘like’ is both a verb and an adverb?’”

Butterfield goes on to explain that both boys are in the same grade, yet one has a solid grounding in the parts of speech

and proper grammar, while the other only understands “the blossoming sexual desires of eight-year-olds.”

In addition to a solid grounding in grammar, Ms. Butterfield recognizes that homeschooling turns her children into “keepers of the culture,” largely because their minds are filled with facts which they can apply to the world around them. As evidence of this, Ms. Butterfield relates an incident that occurred in their local courthouse:

“When we stepped into the courthouse, Knox, seven at the time, spotted a replica of the Magna Carta on the court room wall. He turned to Mary, four at the time, and said, ‘Cool! The Magna Carta.’ Together they sang the history song about the Magna Carta that they had learned....

In front of me, two social workers turned to each other and whispered, ‘Homeschooled.’”

Explaining the significance of this incident, Ms. Butterfield notes:

*“My children showed that they are keepers of the culture. They knew the significance of a cultural icon and could place it in history. Yes, they were once orphans. ... **But even at four and seven, they knew that ideas have shape, form, and significance. The world is not swirling around them in the chaos of feelings and impressions.** They memorize it. They steward it.”*

Ms. Butterfield’s observation that today’s society operates in a “chaos of feelings and impressions” is becoming truer every day. Given this, do more of us need to consider giving our children the type of education which will ground them in the ideas and solid facts upon which they can build a stable, successful, and capable future?