

I was homeschooled in Utah from grades K-12. My parents homeschooled me in order to protect me from the world and train me up to be a “Mother in Zion” in our Mormon faith. According to their interpretation of Mormonism, they were God’s chosen, and in choosing the “higher bar” by homeschooling I thought that we were more godly than basically everyone around us. I believed I was so righteous that God would choose me for his greatest purpose: raising children who would fight for him. I watched my parents as they had child after child after child because they had committed to “provide a body for as many spirits as God had waiting for them”.

My “education” was so lacking, partly due to what I now know was “parentification”; I took on the responsibility of acting as a parent to my siblings and at times even my parents. I was tasked with childcare, partly because my parents had too many kids to take care of on their own and partly because they believed that the primary purpose girls and women serve is to run households.

Parentification ultimately robbed me of an education altogether. I started out with structure and had maybe a few solid years dedicated to my parents teaching my how to read, write, and do math; as the years went by though, and more children joined my family, my parents became less and less able to focus on the needs of their older children, and they basically stopped providing me instruction in all subjects except scripture, early Mormon history, end of times preparation, and homemaking. I remember being told, "Write a verse from The Book of Mormon", or “Go cook something” many times when I asked my mother what I should do for school that day. I was praised for memorizing scripture mastery verses before I even entered the Mormon Seminary program (religious classes for teens) and many of the adults in my life expressed amazement at “how responsible I was for my age” as I took on tasks such as baking bread for my large family on a weekly basis and teaching my siblings how to read & write. Even when I was given the opportunity to attend co-op classes on subjects that expanded beyond the items covered at home, taught by the family members of my homeschooled friends, my parents took almost no responsibility in guiding my learning and the understanding was that my education would only take me as far as motherhood. As a result, by the time I finished homeschooling, I lacked a basic education in science and, especially, math, where my knowledge did not extend beyond arithmetic.

At 17, I should have graduated high school. Instead, I didn’t even try to get my GED - my parents didn't encourage me to either - and I focused primarily on preparing myself for my future husband.

My religious parents and peers did not set me up for success, they stunted me; they didn't shield me from dangerous ideas that would lead to my destruction, they sheltered me to the point that I was entirely unfit to be a functioning adult. If it wasn't for people in my life who noticed the

many red flags surrounding me and helped me to realize that I could do & be so much more, I wouldn't be who or where I am today.

Signed,  
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