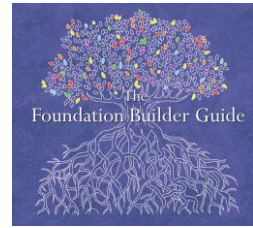


Organic Principles, Environments,
Materials & Skills of Learning



Nurturing through the Organic Environments & Materials

and

Nurturing Our Skills of Discovery

By Katie Hansen

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Nurturing through The Organic Environments & Materials

Look around you. You may not know it, but you are surrounded by *The Organic Environments & Materials*! The soil under your feet, color from sunlight at sunsets or soft wool of an afghan crocheted by your grandmother; the sounds of birds, river flowing or sweet music ringing throughout the hall; hearing a favorite story retold over and over, the *I Love You's* whispered each night or the encouraging words echoed in your heart as a child from your father. I hope you are getting the vision as I could go on for pages. These everyday experiences make small impressions on us whether we recognize it or not. They are nurturing to our souls on many levels, including nurturing to our body, heart, mind and spirit. Take a moment to remember a time you have interacted with any of these natural materials or been surrounded in an environment of loving words or music. Notice what impression it made on you? How did you feel during or after? Did you love it for some reason? Did you want to include those experiences more in your life?

Our responsibility as Mothers and Fathers in nurturing our children is not solely on the nurturing and training of their minds, but also the nurturing and training of their hearts, bodies and spirits - the nurturing of their entire whole soul. Because wholesome nurturing ideals have been waning, from of the cycles of human nature or the breakdown of the family, we on the whole and individually are in much need of having them restored.

As I began creating The Foundation Builder Guide, I identified and organized these following eight environments and called these nurturing principles *The Organic Environments*. To complete the healing and nurturing effect on the body, heart mind and spirit, I added additional materials for a more holistic purpose. I am using the word “environments” and “materials,” but they are simply timeless principles. I found these principles throughout cultures

and their central classics including the Holy Bible. These principles also began to manifest themselves as important parts in the nurturing process as I studied the body and its needs as a Footzonologist and I found they can be used deliberately by us to directly affect the nurturing and growth of the children in our homes.

I have found these *Organic Environments & Materials* encourage real learning because they nourish our very souls on many levels and bring about real movement and growth. They ultimately produce an inward recognition and reflection and an outward releasing and restoring in a very personal way - To the point where we are revealing or restoring our true selves. This growth and movement is essential in our homes, families and communities! Without this growth, we get stuck and remain stagnant, we hold grudges, we are uninspired to learn and progress more and we live with the consequences of fears which hinder our growth. These consequences create a lack of security and safety which is the opposite of the first and foundational *Organic Environment of Nurturing*.

The Organic Environment of Nurturing # 1 - God's Love

My 16 year old son recently spoke about feeling the music of God's love. He related an experience he had while attending a conference on *becoming*. As he sat in this large hall filled with over a hundred youth, he pondered over the possibility of God loving all his children. This amazing feeling of abundance poured over him and filled him with a feeling of love larger than anything else.

Feeling God's love is the essence of this first and essential environment needed for nurturing the hearts of our children. Its immediate consequence is a genuine feeling of **safety** and **security**. Because Christ is at the center of this love, He brings nurturing of love and joy beyond any human capacity to do so. We

are Beings of connection and attachment. We have a great need to know that we matter, especially to our God & Creator. Each and every one of us have this deep need to feel Their love and without it, true nurturing and growth cannot take place which is why God sends us angels in the forms of friends, neighbors or loved ones who lifts us in small ways to help us know we matter to Him. We, as parents, have the responsibility to facilitate our children in connecting with this source of love and healing to unlocking their growth; to weave it through each and every experience and the environments we create or utilize for our children's growth.

The Organic Environment of Nurturing # 2 - Creation & Nature

When we go outdoors and explore through *Creation & Nature*, we soon find a connection with our Creators. Once we have felt it, we long for more and that connection can continue as we utilize Nature's *materials* to create long-lasting beauty in any season. It also brings a completeness in our life. For example, when we take flax or wool and weave it into a beautiful tapestry or form kernels of wheat into delicious loaves of bread, not only do those materials last in our homes, but we can find it brings us great satisfaction. I believe we are naturally drawn to these materials and have a strong sense they are nurturing to our souls. When we honor that, we desire them to be more of a part of our life. From my own life, I know using *materials* from the *Organic Environment of Creation & Nature* has provided me with many needed skills and the whole process of using them has brought me joy. The hours I have spent in my kitchen with my children gathering whole grain, legumes and honey to store and then learning how to use it in our meals has been immensely nurturing and satisfying.

In addition to using *Organic Materials of Creation & Nature*, may I share the nourishment I have gained in my heart and mind from discovering my Creator through simple patterns, shapes and numbers everywhere on the mountain? I awoke one morning in 2011 with direction to teach my first Hebrew class through hiking

and was inspired to add shapes and numbers. As I shared the stories of the principles and asked them to observe and explore the numbers associated with the principles on the mountainside, it was revealed to me and all participants, the higher intellectual truths of Creation. This nurtured a strengthening of my ability to believe and developed a much deeper connection to Christ.

Naturally, these opportunities spark new cycles of learning and growth and we may even identify these higher truths as geometry, astronomy, geology, botany and other scientific and mathematical studies and add them more passionately to our nurturing tools. Yet, most of the time all this is done in the quiet chambers of the mind of an individual. Some children or adults may never make obvious discoveries as others, yet, the nurturing of *Creation & Nature* allows us to make our own connections and gives us our own God-given agency to discover, or not. But it always invites us closer to come learn more another day.

The Organic Environment of Nurturing # 3 - Symbol & Story

Symbolic language & stories have been around since the beginning of life. They are packed with meaning and poetry. Each individual can find personal meaning and connection through symbolic language and stories because of the truths and meaning they convey to all levels of spiritual maturity, while also protecting God-given agency. The imagery of symbolism has the power to convey important truths through many languages and cultures with great power and impact. For example, the symbolic Ancient Hebrew Alphabet are pictures illustrating stories which have come from before 2500 B.C. and are like envelopes holding many different additional messages.

Nurturing stories carry with them meaning on many levels as well. When you hear a great story from the experience of a friend or read a great biography, do you connection with it? This happens because the whole human brain, right and left, is active, with

synapses firing all over connecting our verbal and linguistic abilities as well as our visual and spatial, to say the least. They make deep impressions on us. Stories touch us on those deep and inner levels. Not only do good stories transfer good moral virtues in a poetic and symbolic way, they speak to our whole soul by transferring the soul of the character or author into our hearts and souls and the hearts and souls of all listeners. Reflect on the power of story in your life. Which stories have most impacted you?

The Organic Environment of Nurturing # 4 - Body & Movement

All *Movement* is a part of organic life. In every living creation there is movement through cycles and changes. The cycle and movement of creating honey by bees, the movement of the moon and its effect on the seas, the paths of heavenly bodies in the sky, the repetitions of the history of man, the successive pulses of music, the movement of blood entering and exiting the heart or the changes from mediocrity to greatness in human kind. This motion is manifested everywhere. Movement continues growth and health and when there is a ceasing of movement there is stagnant energy and death. When the body is engaged in movement, congested emotions are able to flow outward and be released thus keeping a whole social-emotional health.

Last summer I put together a Mother's Retreat and provided this important environment to show the participants the effects. Our presenter shared her experience with *Body & Movement* and then we got out her custom adult sized hula hoops. With a little music and hooping, there was a shift. Walls came down and we were smiling and laughing. A friend, who attended, related how she incorporated this movement with hoops after a stress filled dinner with her in-laws, "Suddenly there was not only movement of the body, but movement between hearts too."

Not only does *Movement* help our *Body* release emotions, but it gets us breathing at a full capacity. This *Organic Material of Breath* is Life which appropriately brings *Movement* and flow. What could be more nurturing than that?

The Organic Environment of Nurturing # 5 - Language & Words

The power language and words have over a mind is astounding. Comprehending language and meanings of words can bring clarity and understanding, uplift, enlighten and literally can unlock chains of spiritual captivity. Studies have shown that the vibration of positive thoughts and words can even lift debilitating disorders such as depression. Words are a common form of communication from The Divine source into our minds.

As I went to work creating and teaching the Foundation Builder Guide and incorporating this principle of *Language & Words* each month with Mothers and their children, very often another word would come into my mind. God was teaching me new aspects of the principles through *Words*. I am sure this is a common experience, but how many of us recognize *Language & Words* as a teaching environment of the Spirit?

The spiritual and internal process of language is happening in many ways before words ever are spoken or written. We, as parents, have the power to nurture a healthy & sound relationship with language, words and early writing. This may look like doodling, sketching, storytelling, studying words, journaling, as well as recording your child's dictations and narrations. You may need to gain a relationship with an Organic Material of paper and pen first in order to show them the possibilities. Get into a routine with your own writings. I highly recommend "morning papers" where you write whatever comes to your mind when you awake each morning. This has brought me excitement about using paper and pen and recording the *Words* which enter my mind. Make it

exciting! Use color, fabric, paints, scripture phrases and make it personal.

The Organic Environment of Nurturing # 6 - Play & Project

The work of a child is play. It is through the play of children and adolescents that their brain develops fine and gross motor skills, language, social health, emotional well-being, personal awareness, problem solving, creativity and learning ability. It is through play, relationships are internalized and real learning occurs. Play is an essential environment for children and adults, and as the individual grows, play often takes the form of projects. Personal Projects allow for an individual learning process which is essential for self-education and discovery. Through projects and play, we learn real skills like ownership, work and stewardship, self-honesty and justified self-esteem.

When I have had the opportunity to learn through projects, I never forget those skills and my process of becoming aware has increased and confidence boosted. One time, I spent days learning to sew authentic cotton pioneer clothing while serving as a docent at This is the Place Park with my little family. The service or project provided me with a great and necessary reason to learn. Even though I spent hours learning how to sew bonnets, shirts, bags, toddler clothing and even my own 1800s time period dress, I loved it! This grew my confidence with new sewing skills as well as increased my will to work, feel ownership and stewardship in different areas and helped me discover many things about myself.

When my children decided they wanted to live outdoors after we read of a boy who tried it for a year, it was a lot of fun for them to play that for a day or two. I guarantee they could describe that learning experience in detail because of the amount of personal

ownership they felt which gave them a stronger drive to work and succeed.

Play & Project nurtures in us the ability to work, build, create and overcome real life challenges and problems anywhere from feeding a family to learning to working with others in our families and communities.

The Organic Environment of Nurturing # 7 – Rejuvenation

Rejuvenation is easily overlooked, but occurs regardless for life to survive. It is patterned after the rest we enjoy on the Sabbath day; the importance of our weekly feast at the feet of the Master and our need for self-government and renewal. Parents provide the *Rejuvenation* when they protect sleep and rest times, teach stillness and breathing techniques, provide food that nourishes the body and soul, and direct their children to the Source of all peace and completion.

When Jesus of Nazareth shared His most powerful sermons by the shores of Galilee, he saw the need to not only nourish their minds with truth and hearts with the Spirit, but also to provide and bless fresh loaves and fishes to nourish their bodies and at appropriate times sent them home to rest. He knew the importance of a proper balance for us to have balance and get the quiet time to let everything find a place within. He also withdrew himself often into the wilderness to pray. How can we bring this essential balance in our day or week? Is it possible a day of rest is a Universal Law helping us do just that?

The Organic Environment of Nurturing # 8 - Music & Sound

It has been said that music is the language of heaven and it holds the Universe in perfect balance and order. Music is an essential part of nurturing the souls of our children. It is almost like it

capstones all the other *Environments* along with God's loving security and is glue which holds everything else together. Music is known to increase memory and concentration, strengthen the auditory cortex which increases reading abilities, utilize both hemispheres of the brain simultaneously to increase the brain's effectiveness to connect learning, increase spatial-temporal reasoning as well as communicating to the heart what the brain cannot understand among many other things.

When I was 19, I received a quiet invitation within to join a choir, so I did it. For the first time, I felt I could find a note I could sing along with my congregation. I began to blossom in all areas in my life. The singing nurtured me. When I hit a broken place in years ahead, a dear friend shared some simple gospel guitar songs with me which I loved and I began playing in my home. Again, I noticed this music was involved in bringing me out of my pit and I knew music had to be a priority in our home and education.

On a physical level, simple sounds, such as bird calls, flowing brooks or ocean waves have been shown to soothe nerves and nurture the body's endocrine system.

Nurturing our families through *Music & Sound* is a wise practice of parent. It can so easily be incorporated into all things in the home & family life. Listening to classical music, playing an instrument, gathering to sing folk songs morning, midday and evening, taking a moment to enjoy the sounds of nature, incorporating rhythm, bedtime lullabies and joining a choir are just a few things we could do to bring the environment of *Music & Sound* into our lives.

Which *Organic Environment & Material of Nurturing* has called to you the most today? Pick one and try it. These simple truths can have a great power in our lives and may even feel magical. The true source of this unseen power is in our Creator's Universal Laws in Creation which nurtures and helps to unlock the chambers

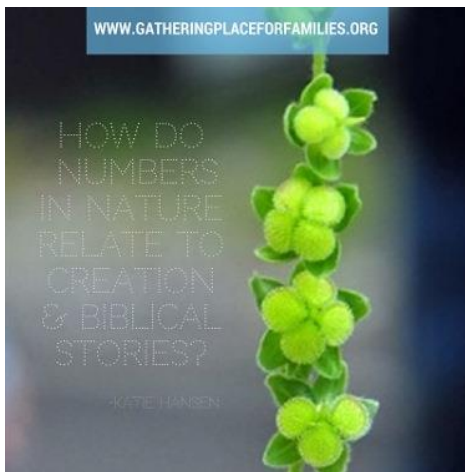
of our heart and soul. If you have a great desire to nurture the growth of your children and families, the more you incorporate these *Organic Environments & Materials of Nurturing*, the more effective you will be at facilitating nurturing from our Savior and Redeemer, the One True Source of all nourishment of body, heart, mind and spirit.

Nurturing Our Skills of Discovery

Many times when we look at our role to nurture and teach our children, we put the nurturing home and family in one compartment and academic teaching in another, separating them into different categories, when in reality they go hand in hand. To nurture means "to promote growth through education and instruction; to feed, to educate; to bring or train up." Instead of looking at the false, adopted definition of our role to nurture, we must wake up to the fact that God is calling us to really understand our role and step into real life-giving nurturing and teaching that builds character and nurtures the soul. From this point of reference, we can start to seek for answers about how to teach our children in God's agency-protecting ways. When coming from this perspective, our efforts in teaching will then take on far more weight and eternal consequence in their lives.

In my early teaching experiences, I discovered I had a gift of teaching, but also soon realized I was heavily dependent on the controlling methods of classroom management I had learned in practicum and substitute teaching. After receiving my teaching degree in 1995, subsequent marriage and first couple children, I began to notice for me as a mother and teacher, at times I was heavily dependent on controlling the physical environment. I sometimes found myself resorting to manipulation, coercion and compulsion, methods which had been modeled for me my whole life through government institutions and generational patterns. It wasn't really until my physical home environment was

uncontrollable after a move to a fixer upper during a pregnancy, that I began to discover the lack of order in my inner foundation. As I began recognizing this dependence on external order, I called out to God for help and direction. As I obeyed this direction, I realized how vital agency was in my own learning process. I was now more aware, seeking for help, asking questions and noticing, therefore, ready for more answers. I saw how having this awareness and order within changed my ability to teach. This awakening process, created in me a yearning and a determined desire to really learn how to teach in a Christ-like way; a way which would not only defend the agency of my children and others, but also strengthen their internal foundation. So I began a focused search to learn more of His ways. I learned that agency-based teaching and nurturing is about showing, not telling; inviting, not demanding; guiding, not revealing. It opens the space for ourselves and others to grow and learn at their own pace and readiness level. This way ultimately develops and nurtures true self-reliance.



As I searched, I found myself exploring definitions of words in the scriptures and then inviting others to search and find for themselves. A scriptural-based pattern emerged after doing a study of many words. I called it The Skills of Discovery. One morning after being asked to teach at an upcoming retreat, I awoke with this interesting idea. I

saw myself hiking up the mountain while teaching the Hebraic principles with their coinciding mathematical shapes, numbers, and Biblical stories. As I began implementing these classes, I found that the most effective way to teach these principles was through inviting the participants to discover the answers for themselves.

Since then, I have been using this formula and have found that each individual, when they believe it is possible and apply themselves to the process, is able to find personal meaning and connection and to increase in their ability to be taught by the Holy Spirit. It is so much simpler and more natural than fear-based ways. As you practice this way, you will find that it will remove the stress and worry and open up a "coming home" experience for yourself and your children.

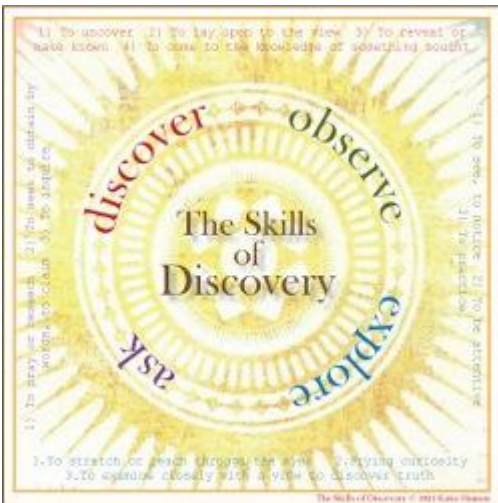
I share this in hopes to not only help you expand your understanding of what it really means to honor the agency of others, but also to increase your personal discoveries by using your own intuitive abilities as well as to nurture and invite your children to do the same, thereby, enabling us and our children to feast from the spirit in all that we learn.

It is simple. First, try it for yourself. In order to model and teach this to our children, we must first experience it for ourselves. Start observing, exploring, asking and you will begin discovering. As you observe - be attentive, see, notice, practice, and explore - stretch and reach through the eyes with prying curiosity to examine closely with a view to discover truth, you will probably ask yourself questions like, "Why is that?" It may start with a simple "wondering" such as this. Then, these small and simple observations, explorations of ideas, thoughts and questions you ask, will bring about small and simple yet powerful answers and discoveries for you. I promise.

Many times, a question will come to my mind. I'm glad for the assistance and I entertain it. I ask myself, "How is that possible?" "Am I finding anything?" "How is that?" "Why?" or "What is going to happen?" Each time I do this, my subconscious brain is set to



work searching for the answer. Over time, I find things related to these questions along the way, tuck them into my open filing cabinet in my brain and I allow more exploration until I find the answer that resonates with me, The Spirit and God's Word. Eventually, the answers come with two, three or many witnesses to verify. I am patient with understanding that I will not usually find the answers at once, but when I do, I am assured I have received truths which empower me. The wonderful thing about these discoveries is that when we compare them back to sound timeless principles and they still are valid and ring true, they will be discoveries of truth and will add to the building of our inner foundation.



I encourage you to use this simple formula with yourself and then, when you are ready, invite others to do the same.

Ask yourself or others: "What do you see? What do you observe? What do you notice? Could this be connected to another principle? Let's explore it. What seems to be in contradiction?" (When

you observe concepts which contradict, there probably is something you need to be exploring there.) Or say, "Let's explore some more."

Asking questions will set our brains searching. It is how our brains are made! We have a small gland in our limbic brain which loves story. If there is an untold story, it will search for anything to complete that incomplete cycle, even if it is false assumptions. Remember the lady who saw the laundry of her neighbor hanging and it looked really dirty? She concluded her neighbor didn't know

how to do laundry until her husband washed her very own windows! Keep that part of our brain open by guarding against those times where our brains want to finish the story of another with our story. Keep the mind open by practicing observing, exploring more and asking. In the case of this story, we could ask, "Is that laundry dirty?" then keep on observing and exploring until we find the truth. Many times such as this, we may settle on what we want to think, which may bring comfort and justification to us. In circumstances with our fellow brothers or sisters, let's just keep on observing, exploring and asking until we get the correct verification. Challenge those assumptions!

Because these Skills of Discovery are natural intuitive abilities, we will probably be using these skills without acknowledging their validity. Each personal "wondering," pondering and discovery may seem unimportant to many or unrelated to real life. But, if we could see it all as practice and very personal, we will be nurturing those God-given skills which he asks us to use to seek Him further and learn all that He has for us to learn.

Start practicing using your Skills of Discovery in everything you do, as well as encouraging your children to do the same. It is the only way to test this. You may have to catch yourself using them because they really are already a part of you. Have you tried using them in the Word? Probably. Practice more. Check the context of a scripture; the chapters or verses before and after. When you observe repeated phrases, begin counting and ask yourself if there is a reason or connection with that which you are finding. God has probably left a pattern there! Try looking up words in the dictionary or index when necessary, or even when not?, then wait to see if there is more to discover. Practice it with the books you study and the context in which you find yourself? I bet there is a lesson in the situations you find available in your life. God always has hidden messages in the situations surrounding us or the people we meet. Remember, there are no coincidences. If you are not sure about that, you will soon begin to be as you continue to apply these principles in your life.

When we put our Belief into these Skills of Discovery, and choose to trust this process, we truly learn line upon line. It is a faith-filled journey moving forward towards hope to receiving light and truth. When we search, dig, explore and ask, seek, answers come to our minds through the Holy Spirit. Once we are aware of the connections we are making, we will be able to nurture, guide and mentor our children with these skills in mind. As our ability to guide them is enhanced, we will be more effective because we will be creating an environment which nurtures and protects their agency, by giving them the space to grow and develop at their own pace.

As we take this journey of learning how to use our God-given intuitive abilities to discover truth, and invite our children to do the same, we will be modeling our Savior's way and receiving "all things that we should do."

Now go, Believe and Observe, Explore, Ask and Discover!

Katie grew up exploring and discovering the woods, ponds, creeks, and fields in the Baltimore, Maryland countryside. After moving west and graduating college in Elementary Education from USU, she found her personal call to teach her own children. Through this call to work, learn and grow as a wife to Michael Hansen and mother to 6, she has come to understand what a true education is and discovered her love of pattern seeking, teaching and building community. Katie is a Footzonologist, Hebraic principles-based Mentor & Teacher, trained Mentor through Leadership Education Mentoring Inst. and author of her upcoming book Celebrating Our Original Culture & Story: The Hebrew Way. She is currently sharing a family program called The Foundation Builder Guide: A Mother's Guide to Developing Education on Foundational Principles, through her online Membership Site and Unlocking the Chambers Retreats and Family Celebrations. You can read more about her on her blog: The Gathering Place- Sharing Aspects of the Hebrew Way

