



# **10 Lessons 10 Years of Homesteading Taught Me**

By Kaleb Hanshaw

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The truth is, I feel like I fell into homesteading by accident. I wanted to be near my family, pick up a hobby, and possibly eat a BLT with tomatoes I grew.

What did I, someone in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, do to learn something new?

\*Not find a mentor (but I wish I did),

\*Not use a library (but it would have been helpful),

I used...YouTube (even though it can be dangerous 😊)

Inspired by YouTube videos, my hunger for a BLT, and this gentle whisper that this was the life I really wanted, I imagined a homestead of rolling green pastures, bountiful harvests, and a perfect rhythm of self-reliance. What I *didn't* expect was the steep learning curve, the challenges, and the countless lessons that would reshape not just my skills, but my entire outlook on life.

Homesteading isn't just a lifestyle; it's a MINDSET more than function. It is what we call *honorable work*.

If I let ChatGPT write this book it would say “trading your suits for overalls, trading your clocks for peace, or trading the board rooms for the barn stalls”. Well, I didn’t let ChatGPT write this. So, you will get the raw outlook from me, and often very bluntly, with a couple of typos (can’t spell for my life). That is, unless my ultra-talented wife reads through it first.



Over the past 10 years, I’ve learned more than I could have ever imagined. Some lessons came from major “wins”, like raising our first animals or eating our first homegrown meal. Others came from failure, like losing livestock or watching your pigs tear up the neighbor’s heirloom flower beds (sorry, Marshella). Each experience has taught me something invaluable.

This book isn’t about painting an idealized picture of homesteading, the perfect pasture, the jersey cow named Bessie, or the farm-fresh bacon that magically shows up in your skillet. Instead, it’s about sharing the raw, real lessons I’ve learned along the way. These are the lessons that I wish someone had told me when I was starting out. (Thanks a lot, YouTube.)



*This is Brutus. He cold plunges more than I do*

These lessons are the things you don't even think about when you're starting out. My hope is that these stories, insights, and reflections will inspire and prepare you for your own homesteading journey.

Whether you're dreaming of starting your first garden, raising backyard chickens, or creating a full-scale homestead, the steps in these pages are meant to encourage you to take the leap. You don't need to have it all figured out to begin, just a willingness to say *yes* a few more times than you usually would.

In the chapters ahead, I'll walk you through the 10 most important lessons that 10 years of homesteading have taught me. There are plenty of "how to" guides and examples of homesteading techniques out in the world today. I want to talk about what goes unnoticed. The things that may make you want to quit.

Yes, homesteading can be hard. It can be downright impossible depending on some important choices you

make...but oh, it is worth it when you discover the foundational reasons behind *why* you are doing what you are doing. It's about rediscovering wonder in the everyday, embracing the wilderness seasons of life, and finding a community that you depend on. This journey will challenge you, but it will also reward you in ways you can't yet imagine.

So, grab a cup of coffee and settle in. Let's explore the lessons that aren't often talked about that make homesteading one of the most fulfilling adventures you'll ever embark on. Welcome to the journey!





*Just starting out, we had an ugly chicken coup built from scraps, too many roosters, and a \$39 Greenhouse...It may not have been pretty, but it taught us a lot, and most of all...It WORKED*

## 1. **Start Somewhere**

It was 2016-ish. I was a younger whipper snapper. I walked into Tractor Supply, high on confidence and stupidity, with nothing but a dream and a head full of ideas from hours of YouTube videos. I had spent days watching my homesteading heroes - people like the Rhodes family, Joel Salatin, and the Doughertys' - and finally felt inspired to take the plunge. So, I did what any eager beginner might do: I bought 12 chickens on a whim.

I sent my wife a picture of the chickens with the caption, "I did a thing". But there was one small problem. I had absolutely nothing ready for them.

No coop, no brooder, not even a basic plan. That same day, I scrambled to buy a brooder lamp, a stock tank, and anything else I thought I might need. I pieced together a setup on the fly and hoped for the best. This resulted in chicken roommates.



*I cut and taped together two totes and set them in our KITCHEN. I am surprised my wife didn't kill me. She did look at me like our dog, Maggie, was looking at these baby chicks.*

The next day, I decided to level up my chaos and brought home two pigs. My wife really loves me. I just thought I would add that in there. You'd think I would've learned from my chicken-buying spree to plan, but no. Where is the fun in that? I didn't even have a pen for them. Those pigs lived in a dog crate inside our house for a week while I frantically built an enclosure outside. So now we had pig roommates, too. Looking back, I realized it was far from ideal, but it worked, and it kept me accountable to my dream. If I didn't build them a home, they'd be long-term squatting tenants. Trust me, pigs are terrible roommates.

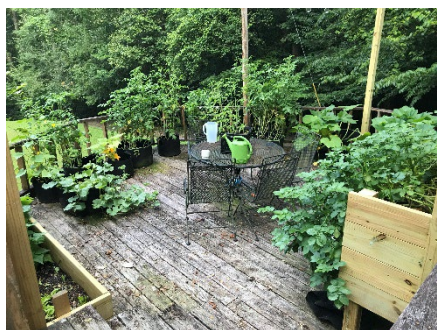
## - *Perfection Isn't the Goal*



Most homesteaders wait too long to start. I'm not saying there's an age limit or a point where it's too late to begin. You can start at any time in life.

The problem is the waiting. We sit on the sidelines, dreaming of the perfect homestead, waiting until we have everything figured out. We tell ourselves we'll start "when the timing is right" or "when we have enough space."

But here's the truth: you're never fully ready. If you're waiting for the perfect conditions, you'll never get started. The most important thing you can do is take that first step.



When I started, I didn't have a top-tier homestead or acres of pristine farmland. I had a small backyard garden with some mobile pots I bought on Amazon. We grew

tomatoes, cucumbers, and lettuce, (The staples of the BLT) and for that season, it was enough. That's

where my journey began. Then it grew bigger and bigger every year. To know being over the development of multiple projects, which has surpassed over the 20,000-acre mark. The point of that is, you have to start and if you wait on the 20,000-acre project, you won't start.



Was it ideal back then? No. But it was beautiful in its own way. I learned to appreciate the process, to fall in love with the journey rather than fixating on the destination. Starting small gave me the space to experiment, make mistakes, and grow without being overwhelmed. I am a dreamer at heart. So, that means long-term goals run through my veins. Long-term vision is a must, but day-to-day plans are just as important. I am not saying that you shouldn't dream about the "perfect" set up. You certainly should, but first, prioritize anchoring yourself in the truth that it is a *journey*. Rejoice in where you are going, while doing something to get better every day.

- *The Joy of Starting Small*

If you're feeling the nudge to start your homesteading journey, my advice is simple: start where you are with what you have. Maybe that means growing a few herbs in pots on your balcony or setting up a small chicken coop in your backyard. Even six chickens can transform your kitchen scraps into fresh, delicious eggs.



Homesteading is about more than just what you produce. It's about saying *yes* to a different way of life, a life filled with family, community, and a connection to the land. It's about embracing curiosity and adventure.

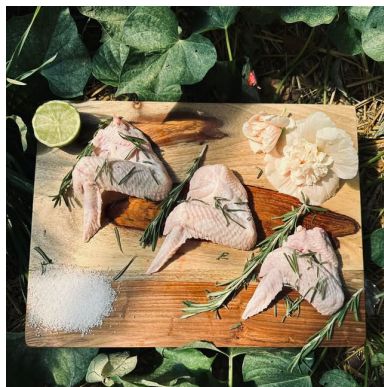
Starting small isn't just okay, it's the best way to begin. Like my homestead heroes say, "Enough should be enough." You don't need 50 acres, a barn full of livestock, or a pantry stocked with hundreds of jars of home-canned food to be an "official homesteader." You just need to take that first step, no matter how small it seems.

When you dive into the complexities of the modern food system, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Suddenly, it seems like everything, literally everything, is bad for you. You'd think that understanding this would be empowering, but for many, it feels paralyzing, especially when the convenience of a supermarket like Wal-Mart is just down the street. Even more difficult, maybe Wal-Mart is your only option where you live.

*Where do we even begin?* We kept asking ourselves as we stared at a box of Fruit Loops because a fruit that is a loop is just a party. But we soon realized it wasn't exactly a friendly breakfast companion.

The answer? Just start somewhere. Each year, we made small changes, replacing store-bought items with homemade or locally-sourced alternatives.

First, it was eggs. Then came meat, milk, bread, produce, and eventually, natural remedies for health. And yes, we even ventured into cold plunging (but we'll save that rabbit hole for another time). The point is, it's a gradual process. It doesn't happen overnight, and that's okay. Take one step at a time, and trust that you'll get there.



How do you get better every day? Myron Golden, a business coach, author, and influencer, says:

“You do not stay the same. You either get better or you get worse. Choose daily, what makes you better.” (Paraphrasing)



I had time to look back at past videos I'd recorded. Back then, I had a desire to educate and mentor people in this lifestyle, even when I was a newbie. The videos are awful. I rolled my eyes at some of the bad advice I was trying to give future homesteaders. Some of these videos were just 7 years old. Imagine that. Looking at where I was to where I am now, a lot has happened in 7 years as a result of just starting somewhere.



- ***Ready, Set, Go***

Think of a runner at the starting line. They've trained, dreamed, and prepared for the race. But nothing happens until the gun goes off. If you're standing at the starting line of your homesteading journey, consider this your signal - *go*.

Take the first step, no matter how small it seems. Buy a few chickens, plant a tomato, build a compost pile, kiss your wife, or pick up random pigs. (Ok, maybe don't do that last one.) Whatever it is, just begin. Over time, you'll learn, adapt, and grow.

Ten years into this journey, I can tell you I'm still not where I want to be. I have big dreams and even bigger plans. But now, I have the wisdom that comes from a decade of experience. The journey has been messy, but it's also been beautiful.

So, what are you waiting for? Start somewhere.

***Time Saver Tip #1*** – Find a Mentor. This will save you money, frustration, resources, and - the biggest thing - TIME. This is the quickest way to get ahead 10 years.

## 2. Chicken Math

If there's one universal truth in homesteading, it's this: one chicken plus one chicken equals 27 chickens, and 27 chickens inevitably lead to 122 chickens...and maybe a goat or two.

(AND PIG ROOMMATES!!!)

Sound familiar? Welcome to the wild world of chicken math. It starts innocently enough. You decide to get a few chickens for fresh eggs, and before you know it, your flock has exploded into a full-blown chicken rescue mission.



### - *The Big Trap: "Bigger Is Better"*

When you first start homesteading, it's easy to fall into the trap of thinking more is better. Social media doesn't help. You scroll through pictures of sprawling farms, herds of livestock, and perfectly stocked root cellars. It's inspiring, sure, but it also plants the idea that you need all that to succeed.

Here's the truth: bigger isn't always better. In fact, starting too big is one of the quickest ways to burn out. This has been the biggest reason people leave this dream behind.

Some of my friends have approached me with big plans, saying, "I think I want to start with some chickens, goats, and maybe a cow. Oh, and I want a massive garden too!"

I usually respond with a gentle reality check.

Do they know how much time and energy it takes to care for goats properly? To milk a cow every single day? To predator-proof a chicken coop? Not to mention planting and maintaining a large garden while juggling a full-time job.

It's no wonder so many people quit before they've even had a chance to fall in love with the lifestyle.



- *The Power of Starting Small*

When my wife and I started, we didn't have acres of land or a big barn. We got our start on 5 acres and began



building our homestead, all while I worked full time. We began with plants in mobile pots. Then we graduated to a 40x40 garden plot. (It ended up being a deer garden...since they got to eat most of it.) I learned how to move pigs rationally, the hard way.



We were living on a very tight budget so my fence posts were made out of trees that I could cut down. This was a lot of work, but it was rewarding to see my kids come alive. They had responsibilities of collecting the eggs, feeding the pigs and chickens, and watering some of the plants.



The best thing we found was family. Through our faith. Through our marriage. Through learning together in Nature's classroom.

If we would have tried to add "all the things" like goats, cows, turkeys, meat birds, sourdough

everything, etc., we would have collapsed under the weight we'd created. And who knows, we may not have found this wonderful way of life that we could never leave.

Something interesting, sad, and heartbreaking happened to our family.

...I don't mean to be a downer, but this proves my next time-saver point...

We had to leave our homestead. Sparing a lot of the heart-wrenching details, our house was old. It was a little shack that my uncle built so my aunt could have a baby. It was never supposed to be a permanent living space. It was so well built though, it lasted longer than it was expected to. When we received it, we slapped some paint on it, made some resourceful repairs and added a few upgrades.

This house made me cuss a lot though. Nothing too crazy but not something you wanted your brothers and sisters in Christ to hear. BUT, it was our home. Then all a sudden we had to leave. Our family started to get sick...like a lot....especially my super-hot wife (I hope she reads this 😊). She was really sick. She also was a stay-at-home mom, taking care of 4 young kids and a newborn. We did some investigations and found black mold. Everywhere. I mean



everywhere. We were heartbroken having to leave the homestead we had dreamed about, put all this work into, and even cussed at a few times. What we didn't know is that it would launch us into our destiny as designers and community builders.

We were allowed to stay in a single-wide trailer that my parents owned. It had a backyard about the size of the trailer, then a small extra piece of yard that we dedicated as our children's play area. We let them do whatever they wanted there.



I began my journey from homesteading to permaculture. I get asked what permaculture is all the time. It is hard to not go in depth about what it means to me

because I believe it is the solution to everything in our world, yet still I need a simple way to explain for those that don't have that same passion....yet. So here is my simplified explanation:

Permaculture is a way of designing land and human systems so they work like healthy ecosystems instead of fighting against nature. Instead of constant inputs like fertilizer, irrigation, labor, you design things harmoniously so that water, soil, plants, animals, and people support each other over time. The goal is systems that get more productive and resilient as they mature, not ones that burn out.

Once you really see landscapes this way, you start realizing how many problems can be solved just through better design. That's where good permaculture design becomes incredibly valuable.

So, here we were with a very small space and with that homesteading itch still lingering like never before.

Permaculture opened up a way for us to create food systems that were not overbearing, time consuming, or required a lot of outside inputs. Best of all, proper design helped utilize this small space for full productivity without compromising its ability to be healthier every year.



We live on just 0.03 acres. And yet, we still managed to grow 60% of our own food. That's a lot from a little, right? Would you believe we had chickens? Would you believe we had two pigs? (Tim and Al.) We even



got some rabbits for the kids to take care of and then utilized their manure for our gardens. The best part, our

neighbors didn't even know we had all of these animals until I told them. My dad, who was against this at first, grew to really enjoy it. He still says he didn't, but you don't buy bags of apples for pigs you "don't enjoy."

How did we do it? By starting small and working with what we had. We learned to grow food in portable pots that we could move around until we found the right setup. We raised a small flock of chickens. Each season, we learned something new and added to our skills.



Small steps are powerful. They allow you to gain experience without becoming overwhelmed. They also teach you one of the most valuable skills in

homesteading: adaptability.

- ***Be Realistic***

Before diving headfirst into homesteading, ask yourself a few questions:



- How much space do you have?
- How much time can you realistically commit?
- Do you have the resources to maintain what you're planning?
- Is your plan good? (may have to ask someone)

If you only have room for six chickens, start there. If you're interested in gardening but don't have a yard, try growing herbs or vegetables in containers on your balcony or front porch.

Homesteading is a journey, not a race. It is also a way of life and not an actual activity. There isn't a measure for what you accomplish. For example, it doesn't mean you are a homesteader because you now have a dairy cow. It doesn't mean you are a homestead because you can produce such and such percentage of your food for the year. You are a homesteader when you start building home itself. I know homesteaders that do not have any livestock, but they have positioned their family to live in such a way where their home is the heart of everything.

It's better to start small and succeed than to bite off more than you can chew.



## - *Invest in Knowledge and Community*

One of the best ways to avoid being overwhelmed is to learn from others. Find a local homesteading group, attend a workshop, or volunteer at a farm. The knowledge and connections you gain will be invaluable as you begin your journey.



You don't have to do everything, all at once. It's okay to take your time and grow into your homesteading lifestyle.

## - *Content Matters*

Good content has the power to inspire, connect, and move people to action. It goes beyond just providing information - it resonates on a deeper level, sparking curiosity, stirring emotions, and challenging perspectives.

I'll never forget the first time I watched *The Biggest Little Farm*. It shifted my perspective entirely.

Then there was Paul Gautschi in the film *Back to Eden*, whose words, despite the old-fashioned soundtrack, carried a powerful and inspiring message that stayed with me. Whether it's a YouTube channel or a heartfelt documentary, good content has the ability to spark something deep within us. Seek out the stories and voices that resonate, the ones that remind you of who you were always meant to be, and let them give you permission to step fully into that vision.

- *Avoid Chicken Math Burnout*



Chicken math is real, and it's fun to joke about. But when your flock gets so big that you start to dread taking care of them, it's no longer fun or sustainable.

Remember, homesteading is supposed to bring joy and fulfillment. If you find yourself overwhelmed, it's a sign to scale back, reassess, and simplify. It doesn't mean you failed, it means you need to readjust for the sake of the home.

By starting small, setting realistic goals, and focusing on learning and growing, you'll build a homestead that works for you. And it will keep you from getting trapped in the narrative that "more is better."

### - Follow the Design

This might be the simplest piece of advice, but it's also the most important: don't rush into fixed decisions. Resist the urge to think, *I need a barn here or the chickens have to go there*. Instead,



start by observing. Take the time to see what nature is already doing on your land. Where does the water naturally flow?

Which areas get the most sunlight? What paths do you instinctively take that might suggest the need for a road?

It's tempting to dive right in, but trust me, you'll save yourself a lot of headaches by taking it slow. And yes, I know this might sound ironic coming from the guy who bought chickens and pigs with zero preparation, but hey, that's why you're reading this eBook, right? You have the chance to start smarter than I did.

Thoughtful planning is what allowed us to grow 60% of our own food while raising pigs, rabbits, and chickens. The secret? Design. Becoming a Permaculture Designer changed everything for me (but that's a story for another day). For now, the takeaway is this: develop a plan, whether it's on your own or with the help of a professional. And if you need some guidance well, I might know a guy. (Shameless plug)

[Thewildc.com](http://thewildc.com)

***Time Saver Tip #2*** – Start small, trust the process. One very helpful tip is to create/find a design. Having a design will keep you from wasting a lot of time and making a costly(financial) mistake. Permaculture design matters. Design through that lens. Learn more at [thewildc.com](http://thewildc.com)

### 3. Invest

If there's one piece of advice, I wish I had understood earlier in my homesteading journey, it's this: investing in yourself is the most valuable step you can take.

When most of us think about investments, we picture buying things like stocks, land, animals, tools, or equipment. While those are important, the most critical investment you can make is in your own knowledge, skills, and growth.

#### - *A Lesson in Investing*

I remember the first time I truly invested in myself. I signed up for a three-day workshop on butchering pigs. It cost \$1,000 which was a huge expense at the time, especially for



someone trying to live simply. But I wanted to learn how to process a pig from start to finish: from raising it, to butchering it, to curing the meat.

I hesitated before paying that money. Was it worth it? Could I afford it?

That workshop changed everything. Since then, I've raised and processed countless pigs, taught others the same skills, and even applied those lessons to other areas of my homesteading life.

That single investment has paid for itself many times over, both financially and in the confidence I gained.

### - *Why Investing in Yourself Matters*

When you invest in yourself, you're not just gaining knowledge, you're building a foundation for the future. That foundation is what holds all of the weight. This will help you keep up with your dreams.

You invest in the initial knowledge, or mentorship, so that when the time comes and your heart says *yes* to all the wonderful things that this life may bring, you will be able to handle the weight of abundance. You're equipping yourself with the tools to succeed, adapt, and thrive.



Here's why that matters:

1. **Confidence:** Knowledge reduces fear and uncertainty. When you know how to do something, you're less likely to feel overwhelmed or intimidated.
2. **Skill Building:** Homesteading requires a wide range of skills, from gardening to animal husbandry to preserving food. Each new skill will bring equity to your community.
3. **Generational Impact:** The skills you learn can be passed down to your children, your community, and even future generations.



- *Ways to Invest in Yourself*

Investing in yourself doesn't have to mean spending a lot of money. Here are some ideas:

- **Take a Workshop:** Find a local class on gardening, animal care, or food preservation.

- **Attend Conferences:** Many farming and homesteading events offer hands-on learning and networking opportunities.
- **Learn Online:** While nothing beats in-person experience, online resources like YouTube, masterclasses, or eBooks (like this one!) can be a great place to start.
- **Hire a Mentor:** If there's something you're serious about learning, consider hiring someone with experience to teach you.
- **Read Books:** There's a wealth of knowledge in books on permaculture, sustainable farming, and homesteading practices.

- ***The Ripple Effect***

When you invest in yourself, you're not just helping yourself, you're benefiting everyone around you. The skills you gain can be shared with your family, friends, and community. You become a resource, a teacher, and an example for others who want to live this lifestyle. You will save 10 years for the next generation of homesteaders coming after you.



It's easy to fall into the mindset of putting yourself last. As homesteaders, we tend to focus on our animals, our crops, and our families before we think about ourselves. But here's the thing: you can't pour from an empty cup. By prioritizing your growth and education, you're better equipped to care for everything else.

- *Plan Your Year*

If you're serious about investing in yourself, start by making a plan. Ask yourself:

- What skills do I want to learn this year?
- What resources or classes are available to help me achieve those goals?
- How can I set aside time and resources to prioritize my learning?



Write down your goals and commit to them. Whether it's learning to raise chickens, bake sourdough bread, or design a permaculture garden, every step you take is a step towards a more fulfilling homesteading journey.

### ***Time Saver Tip #3- Invest in yourself***

Take a percentage of your income (1-10%) and invest it in yourself every month. This needs to be a section on your budget. This is where you will build the skills that will bring back 20x a return on your investment.

## **4. Self-Sufficiency is Overrated**

When we first started homesteading, one of our main goals was to become completely self-sufficient. We wanted to grow our own food, homeschool our children, and rely on no one else for survival. If we wanted to disappear in the wilderness somewhere, we could. It sounded perfect, freeing even.



But here's the truth we discovered along the way: self-sufficiency is overrated.

### **- *Survival vs. Thriving***

There's a big difference between surviving and thriving. Survival means meeting your basic needs: food, shelter, water. Thriving, on the other hand, is about living a fulfilled, abundant life.

If you try to do everything on your own, you may survive, but you won't thrive. Homesteading is hard work. If you're trying to manage it all by yourself, every chore, every project, and every responsibility will lead to burnout and isolation.

I have a biased belief that our need for self-sufficiency comes from our fear of belonging. What do I mean by this? Have you ever been in a lineup, maybe as a child, to be picked for a team, or ever had to partner up with a fellow classmate to complete a project at school? I don't know about you, but there was this intense fear of being left out or looking stupid, and that hurts a lot. Of course, this stems from self-love, confidence, and all that jazz. But it still hurts....

I think we try to self-preserve by saying, *I'll just do it myself*. If I do it myself, I won't have to go through the fear of rejection or have to put in actual effort to build life with other people.

It takes effort to build community. Real effort. With that comes real discomfort, real disagreements, yet real joy.

We weren't designed to do life alone. That's not how we're built.

## - *Community Dependency*

Instead of striving for self-sufficiency, I encourage you to embrace something far more rewarding: community dependency.

Yes, it sounds counterintuitive. Isn't homesteading about independence? In some ways, yes. But true independence doesn't mean cutting yourself off from others. It means having the freedom to live the way you want while being supported by a network of people. I don't like to use the phrase "like-minded" people. I actually think this can be dangerous. Of course, there are some foundational similarities that matter. It helps when others are homesteading as well, but it also really helps when they aren't but might be into business or ministry instead. Do you see where I am going? You need people in your tribe that will challenge your belief systems. Truth can withstand any question and will in fact, become stronger in the process.



Cults form when everyone is the same, and because that is so unnatural from the original design, hierarchy will develop, which becomes destructive.

Find the people...

*that when the dust settles, after disagreements, conflicts, a hard day's work where you almost cussed but didn't because you love Jesus more than me,*

...those people are still there.

In the Bible, Psalm 133 describes how good and pleasant it is when people live together in unity. That sense of connection and collaboration is essential, not just for your success as a homesteader, but for your happiness.



***- More Examples of  
Why Community  
Matters***

No one is an expert in everything. We all have strengths and weaknesses, and community fills in the gaps.

- Maybe your neighbor is great at fixing machinery, but they struggle with gardening.
- Maybe you're skilled at raising chickens but don't know the first thing about canning.
- Maybe someone has a really good idea but have no idea how to tell it on social media

When you work together, you share knowledge, skills, and resources. You trade eggs for produce, lend tools, or offer advice. You celebrate each other's successes and lend a hand during tough times.

During COVID-19, the Amish community thrived because of their strong communal ties. They relied on each other for support, shared resources, and continued to live their lives with purpose and connection. Their example is a powerful reminder of the strength we find in unity.

It is quoted that they would rather die of covid in community, than be treated alone in a hospital. Wow! They understand the necessity of community.



### - *Avoiding Burnout*

The biggest mistake new homesteaders make is trying to do it all. They aim for total independence, growing all their own food, raising livestock, homeschooling, making their own clothes, and avoiding grocery stores entirely.

It's an admirable goal, but it's also unrealistic. And when they inevitably burn out, they start to resent the very lifestyle they were so passionate about.

The key is balance. Embrace help when you need it. Build relationships with others. Let go of the idea that you have to do everything yourself.

- ***Thriving Together***

All my introverts, you are going to hate this and possibly me. You are not an introvert. I know, you are disagreeing with me as we speak. Being an “introvert” is simply letting yourself off the



hook. I believe everyone was created with the design to connect with others. Scripture displays this design, as well as in nature. We could write an entire series of book on just the networks of trees and how everything has its place in perfect design. Your preference to be a loner, just means you are out of practice. Get it out of your head on how an interaction is “supposed to go”.

I am talking to you. Yeah you. The one who accidentally tells the cashier you love them because you are socially awkward. It is ok. Interacting with people doesn't have a definition. Just put yourself in the position to grow in this area.



Homesteading isn't just about growing food or raising animals. It's about building a life filled with purpose, joy, and connection. And that life is better when it's shared.

Trade the dream of self-sufficiency for something even better: a thriving, interconnected community. Because in the end, it's not just about surviving. it's about flourishing

***Time Saver Tip #4*** – Practice being friendly. Go out of your way to have one new conversation a day in public, send a few texts every morning encouraging people in your life, schedule a breakfast or coffee with someone you want to get to know better. Send me an email, I like making new friends.

## 5. **Throw Away the One-Size-Fits-All Mindset**

YouTube is an incredible tool. I've spent hours watching my favorite homesteaders, the Rhodes family, Roots and Refuge, Hollar Homestead, and many more. Their videos are inspiring and full of valuable information. But there's one trap that comes with all that inspiration: the idea that if you follow their exact blueprint, you'll achieve the same results.

Spoiler alert: that's not how it works.

### - *Homesteading Is Personal*

No two homesteads are the same. What works for one family may not work for another, and that's okay. The way someone raises cows, manages their garden, or builds their coop might not be practical, or even possible, for you.

Homesteading is deeply personal. It's about stewarding the land, animals, and resources that you've been entrusted with in a way that makes sense for your unique situation.

When my wife and I started out, we had to figure out what worked for us. We didn't have a large piece of land or a barn to fill with animals.

We had a tiny backyard and some portable pots.  
And you know what? That was enough.

- ***Learn, Don't Copy***

This doesn't mean you shouldn't learn from others. It is quite the opposite. Books, videos, and workshops are invaluable resources, but instead of copying someone else's methods, use them as a starting point to figure out what works for you.

For example:

- If you're raising chickens, learn about different coop designs, but build one that fits your yard and budget.
- If you're starting a garden, experiment with different layouts until you find the one that's easiest for you to maintain.



This is about trial and error. It's about adapting to your environment, your resources, and your goals.

- ***Avoid the Trap of Judgment***

One of the dangers of the “one-size-fits-all” mindset is that it can lead to judgment, of both yourself and of others.

- You might feel like you're failing if your homestead doesn't look like the ones you see online.
- Or you might judge others for making different choices, like vaccinating their animals or shopping at grocery stores.

Here's the thing: homesteading is about freedom. It's about creating a life that aligns with your values and priorities. That might look different for each of us, and that's a good thing.

The worst thing you can do is force your way of life onto others or let someone else's methods make you feel like you're not "doing it right."

### - *Embrace Your Convictions*

Homesteading often brings strong convictions. You might feel passionate about homeschooling, organic farming, or raising grass-fed livestock. Those convictions are valuable, and they can guide your decisions.



But remember, the best way to inspire others isn't by preaching - it's by living your life fully and authentically. Let your actions speak louder than your words.

When we first started homeschooling, I struggled with this. I believed so strongly in the benefits of homeschooling that I couldn't understand why anyone would choose traditional schooling. But over time, I realized that every family is different. What works for us might not work for someone else, and that's okay.



Instead of focusing on what *others* are doing, focus on living your convictions loudly and joyfully.

### - *The Beauty of Individuality*

Homesteading is not a one-size-fits-all journey. It's a tapestry of unique experiences, challenges, and successes. Embrace the individuality of your path and let go of the pressure to conform to someone else's blueprint.

Learn from others but make it your own. Celebrate the differences, and use them to grow, not just as a homesteader, but as a person.

***Time Saver Tip #5*** – Everyone needs a vision board in their home. Put your goals, dreams, ideas in front of you all throughout the year. As you plan your homestead, put up pictures of that chicken coup you really like, or that garden archway that really spoke to you. You may not duplicate it perfectly, but it will give you the framework to develop, uniquely, what you really want.

## 6. **Live Loud: Another Chapter on Community**



If you were to ask homesteaders, especially those in rural areas, what they long for most, many would give the same answer: community.

There's a deep, innate desire to be around people who inspire you, people who challenge you, encourage you, and celebrate life's journey alongside you. But finding that community can feel like a daunting task, especially in the solitude that often accompanies the homesteading lifestyle.

### - *Finding Your Tribe*

When my family first started homesteading, we felt incredibly isolated. We loved the lifestyle, working in the fields, caring for our animals, building things with our own hands, but something was missing.

Our kids were overjoyed whenever someone came to visit, treating each guest like they were royalty. Acting almost like they have been stranded on an island and have finally found rescue. That longing for connection wasn't just in our children; it was in us too. We wanted to raise our kids alongside other families, share meals with friends, and worship together in community.

But how do you find that? How do you discover your tribe?

- *Live Loudly*

One of the best pieces of advice I've ever heard came from Joel Salatin. He said, "If you want to find your tribe, just start, and they will find you."

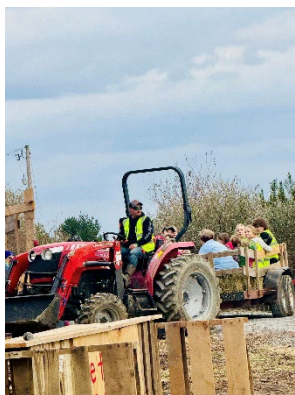


I added to this and coined the phrase, "Live Loudly."

Living loudly doesn't mean being arrogant or boastful. It means showcasing your life, your values, and your passions in an authentic way. It's about being open and visible, inviting others to see what you're about. It is more about you breaking out of your fear of others' opinions.

To your surprise, you will find that others want to be near you.

Here are some ways to start living loudly:



- Share your journey on social media or in local community groups.
- Host workshops or events at your homestead. **EVEN IF ONLY 1 PERSON SHOWS UP!**
- Attend local farmers' markets or community gatherings.
- Volunteer for events or organizations that are in your community.

When you put yourself out there, you're creating opportunities for connection. You're giving others a chance to see who you are and what you care about. And in doing so, you're attracting people who share your vision.

- *The Value of Connection*

I believe the struggles my family faced in those early years of isolation were preparing us for something greater. Those seasons of loneliness taught us to value connection deeply.

When we finally began to build a community, we appreciated it so much more because of what we had experienced. We didn't take it for granted. We treasured every shared meal, every collaborative project, every moment of fellowship.

If you're feeling alone on your journey, take heart. Start living your life loudly. Step out of your comfort zone and engage with the world around you.

- *Your Tribe Will Find You*

It's easy to feel discouraged when building a community takes longer than expected. But don't give up. Keep living your convictions boldly and authentically. Keep showing up, connecting, and sharing your story.

Eventually, your tribe will find you. And when they do, the connections you make will be all the more meaningful because of the journey you've taken to find them.

So go ahead, live loudly, and let the world see the beauty of your homesteading life.

### ***Time Saver Tip #6 – What is Stopping You?***

Really. Ask yourself. What is keeping you from starting? What is keeping you from making that post? What keeps you from hosting that event?

More often than not, when we are really honest with ourselves, the answer is in between our ears. It is in our own heads. Maybe we are afraid or just waiting for the perfect timing. There is not one. So, here is challenge to you - schedule something for next month. This can be a get together with friends, a workshop, a homestead Q&A on Instagram live. Who cares if nobody even shows up. Keep living loudly.

## 7. Friction Causes Forward Motion

“I’m just not a confrontational person.” How many times have you heard or said those words? For most people, conflict and challenges are uncomfortable, something to be avoided whenever possible.

Here is a true nugget of wisdom: friction is necessary for growth. Without friction, there’s no forward motion.

### - *The Role of Friction*

Think about the wheels of a car. They need the friction of the road to move forward. Without it, the car would spin its wheels, going nowhere.

Homesteading works the same way. The hard seasons are what push you forward.

- Maybe your family thinks you’re crazy for starting a homestead.
- Maybe unexpected costs pop up just when you think you’re getting ahead.



- Maybe balancing a full-time job with the demands of homesteading feels impossible.

Whatever form it takes, friction is part of the journey.

- ***Growth Through Struggle***

When my family began this lifestyle, there were moments when I questioned everything. Was this the right decision? Was I on the wrong path because it wasn't easy?



But looking back, I see how those tough times shaped me. Each challenge taught me something new and helped me grow as a husband, father, and homesteader.

The struggles taught me patience, humility, and adaptability. They forced me to look at problems from different angles and find creative solutions.

I absolutely, positively, without a doubt love the short film, “The Biggest Little Farm”. It is a journey of a family that wanted to start a farm with methods that were in harmony with nature and not against it. All natural, all organic, just applying nature’s patterns.

A key lesson in the movie is about perspective, especially in terms of friction. A “disaster” would happen in the film and instead of responding to the devastation, they observed patiently, ultimately finding that the real solution to the “disaster” actually elevated the entire farm and helped solve multiple problems.

- *Embrace the Hard Seasons*

It’s tempting to view tough times as setbacks. But what if we saw them as opportunities instead?

Here’s how to embrace seasons of friction:

1. **Pause and Observe:** When things get hard, stop and assess the situation. What’s causing the challenge? Maybe the problem is “gifting” you a solution.
2. **Communicate:** Overcommunicate with your family. Share your frustrations, but also your hopes and goals. Work together to find solutions.
3. **Give Yourself Grace:** Nobody has all the answers. It’s okay to make mistakes. Learn from them and move forward.

The worst thing you can do is let frustration make you feel stuck. Friction doesn’t mean you’re on the wrong path, it means you’re moving forward.

- *The Gift of Humility*

One of the unexpected gifts of friction is humility. When things don't go as planned, it's humbling. But it's also an opportunity to become more teachable.

If you approach challenges like a sponge, ready to absorb lessons instead of panicking, you'll come out stronger on the other side. I am still learning this so I think we will never leave this classroom. I think it is just important that we get ourselves in the chairs.

- *Looking Back*

Years from now, you'll look back on these seasons of friction and realize they were the moments that shaped you the most. They're what gave you the resilience, knowledge, and confidence to keep going.

I can honestly say I'm thankful for the hard times. They made me the homesteader, father, and husband I am today. Without them, I wouldn't have found the freedom that I now have.



- *Keep Moving*

Just like a car can't move without its wheels meeting the road, you can't grow without challenges. Friction might not feel good in the moment, but it's what propels you forward.

Embrace it. Learn from it. And know that each struggle brings you closer to your goals.

*Time Saver Tip #7 – Look How Far You Have Come*

I just did this exercise. I went back and looked in my phone 5-10 years of old videos. You see, I always wanted to be on YouTube to teach so, I made these videos although I never posted them. Even though I let fear keep me from doing posting, I am glad that I didn't. That is weird coming from me, the "go for it" guy, but these videos were awful. I didn't know anything compared to what I know now. (In my very humble opinion.)

This look back was powerful though. It let me see what had been produced in me in such a short time. It makes me excited for the future. Growth does and will happen if you stay the course. So, here is the exercise. Pull out your phone, photos, videos, whatever you have and just look at your life 5-10 years ago. Look how far you have come.

## 8. Embrace Your Wilderness

“Wilderness season” is a phrase often tied to spiritual growth, a time in life filled with trials, uncertainties, and transformation. For homesteaders, stepping out of the systems of society and into the raw, untamed rhythm of building a new world can feel like its own wilderness. But here’s the thing - what we often view as a harsh, punishing period might actually be a gift.



The wilderness isn’t about enduring an endless struggle or proving your worth. Instead, it’s a homecoming, return to the original blueprint for life. It’s about reordering, slowing down,

and reconnecting to what truly matters.

### - *A Biblical Perspective on Wilderness*

Scripture is full of wilderness stories. Adam and Eve were sent into the wilderness after the fall, Israel wandered for 40 years, and even Jesus spent 40 days there before beginning His ministry.

The common thread? Transformation. These wilderness experiences weren't about punishment; they were about preparation and reconnection.

For homesteaders, the wilderness is where we relearn the simple, ancient rhythms of life. It's where we reconnect with the land, slow our pace, and begin to see things as they were meant to be.

- *Reframing the  
Wilderness as a Gift*

Imagine the wilderness not as a gauntlet to survive but as an invitation to a slower, richer life. Here, chaos starts to fall away, priorities realign, and clarity emerges. The wilderness strips us down to the essentials, making space for growth.



Instead of fighting against this season, what if you welcomed it? What if, like a long-lost friend, the wilderness was your guide back to simplicity, connection, and home?

This may be counterintuitive compared to the previous chapters but if you are in this season of life, I encourage you to *not* live this season loudly. There is a lot of junk that needs to be ripped out of and that pain can often lead us to be abusive in our actions, words, and emotions.

It is best to do this in the wilderness. But take heart, that season will not last forever. You will know when it is right to come out.



- *Preparing for the Promises*

Think about a young child dreaming of playing in the NBA. If that child were thrust onto the court at five years old, they wouldn't be ready. The dream is valid, but the timing isn't. Growth and preparation are

necessary first.

The same goes for homesteading, or any dream. Sometimes we're eager to dive in, but the wilderness seasons are there to shape us, so when the time comes, we can thrive. It's about more than achieving a goal; it's about becoming the person who can steward that goal well.

- *Learning Through the Journey*

My wife has long dreamed of guiding others toward natural health and wellness. This dream emerged from her personal struggle with the mold toxicity from our previous homestead, a journey marked by questions and challenges.

Why wasn't healing coming as quickly as we hoped? Why was the struggle so prolonged?

It is our human nature to want to have an answer to a problem, right? Even if the answer is wrong, it gives us this sense of being in control. In my

wife's case, it was easy to say that the reason she was not getting better, or healed, was because there was something wrong with us, or we haven't done enough repenting.



But in that season, we discovered deeper truths about trust, faith, and God's goodness. The wilderness wasn't about proving ourselves worthy of healing; it was about learning to rest in God's presence and timing, finding joy even when the outcome wasn't yet visible.

- *Embracing the Wilderness as Home*

The wilderness teaches us to release control and trust the process. It's not a place we need to fear or escape. In fact, when we stop resisting, the wilderness starts to feel like home, a space where life regains its natural order.

So, the next time you find yourself in a wilderness season, pause. Instead of asking, “How do I get out of this?” ask, “What am I being invited to learn here?” You might just find that this is where the real magic happens.

God is better than we think. He not only wants to fulfill the dreams and desires in your heart but also to prepare you to handle them with grace and wisdom. The wilderness isn't a detour; it's part of the path and may even be the destination where your desert turns into an oasis.

Celebrate this season. See it as a time to reconnect with the land, slow down, and rediscover joy in simplicity. When we stop striving and start trusting, the wilderness transforms from a place of struggle into a place of beauty, a homecoming to the life we were always meant to live.

### ***Time Saver Tip #8 – Pray***

I know it seems like a simple tip, but it is your life source. I think we need to relearn what prayer is. I believe we think prayer is communicating our wants, needs, and desires to Yahweh. There is truth in this, but it is not the whole truth. Prayer is not simply us approaching with our lists, trying to get His attention or change His mind. Prayer is finally taking the time to agree with His perspective. You still can come to Him with your lists but come in a way where you want to listen to His response.

Maybe, just maybe, it could be possible that you have some things wrong. This takes the act of prayer from a religious duty to a thriving relational spring. My tip for you is to pray to listen, not just to check off the box of duty.

## 9. Find Your Wonder

Our third child, Rebekah, has taught us more about life than we ever expected. From the moment she was born, she brought a unique perspective to our family. She is the reminder to find joy and beauty in the simplest things. That's why her middle name is Wonder.



Rebecca's curiosity is boundless. She marvels at ladybugs, feathers, and anything else that catches her eye. While this may sound romantic, it often clashed with our busy, fast-paced lifestyle. In the hustle of running late to events or managing daily chaos, her ability to get lost in the moment could be frustrating. Yet, those interruptions became some of the most profound warning signs for my restless heart.

- *Rediscovering the Joy of Wonder*

One evening, I was rushing. Rebekah was up in the hills, pretending to be Peter Pan, completely immersed in her imagination. I called her several times, urging her to hurry up, but she was lost in her world. My frustration grew. “We’re going to be late!” I thought.

And then, in the middle of my exasperation, I heard a quiet whisper from Yahweh: “She’s in Neverland.”

That moment stopped me in my tracks. I realized that in my rush to get to the next thing, I had forgotten how to fly, how to marvel at the small, magical moments that make life beautiful. Rebekah showed me what I had lost but could participate in again.



- *Why Wonder Matters*

As homesteaders, it’s easy to get caught up in the grind, this never-ending list of

tasks, setbacks, and hard days. There will be moments when you lose an animal, make a costly mistake, or feel the weight of it all.

Without wonder, those challenges can become overwhelming.

Wonder is the fuel that keeps you going. It turns the mundane into meaningful things and transforms hard work into something beautiful. Without it, the day-to-day can feel like a series of tasks to survive. With it, every moment becomes an opportunity to thrive.

- *Finding Wonder in the Everyday*

How do you cultivate wonder in the midst of a busy life? For me, it begins with faith, family, and union with Yahweh. That may not be your cup of tea, but the reality is, I believe Wonder only exists within this Divine Dance. He is closer than you think He is.

Here are a few practical ways to rediscover your sense of wonder:

1. Practice Gratitude: Start each day by listing what you're thankful for. Gratitude shifts your perspective, helping you see the beauty in what you already have.
2. Celebrate Small Wins: Take time to enjoy the simple victories - a new sprout in your garden, the first egg from a chicken, or a sunset after a long day.

3. **Slow Down:** Urgency can rob you of joy. Set aside the phone, turn off the TV, and savor the quiet moments.
4. **Let Your Kids Lead:** Children are natural explorers. Let their curiosity guide you. Join them in chasing butterflies or digging for worms in the compost pile.
5. **Be Present:** Homesteading is full of treasures waiting to be noticed, the way leaves fall in autumn, the sound of rain on the barn roof, or the first ripe fruit of the season.

- ***Wonder vs. Grit***

You might be thinking, “I don’t need wonder to push through tough times. I have grit.” And while grit can help you survive, wonder is what makes life joyful. This book isn’t about just surviving; it’s about thriving. Wonder transforms hard days into opportunities.





### - *Reclaim Your Sense of Play*

Rebekah reminds me daily that life isn't meant to be rushed. Sometimes it's okay to pause, to climb a hill and pretend to be Peter Pan, to find magic in the little things. Her perspective has taught me to see homesteading not just as a lifestyle but as a playground of possibilities.

So, ask yourself: What brings you joy? What makes your heart light up? Do more of that. Reclaim the parts of yourself that have been lost in the hustle. And when life feels heavy, find your Neverland. Let it teach you how to fly again.

### - *A Lifestyle Fueled by Wonder*

Homesteading isn't just about growing food or raising animals. It's about cultivating a life rich with meaning, beauty, and awe. Wonder gives you the strength to keep going and the joy to celebrate every step of the journey.

When the hard days come, and they will, lean into the beauty around you.

Embrace the blueberries you grew, the sunlight filtering through the trees, or the laughter of your children. These moments aren't distractions. In fact, they're the essence of the life you're building.



So go ahead, slow down, be curious, and let wonder lead the way.

***Time Saver Tip #9 – Find Neverland***

This is going to be a strange request, but here we are. I want you to watch the movie “Hook” with Robin Williams. It was my favorite childhood movie. It holds some truths on finding your childlikeness again.

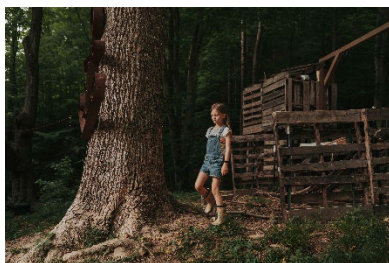
## 10. **Enjoy the Journey**

Thank you for choosing to read this eBook. I hope it has inspired you, sparked new questions, and maybe even nudged you closer to your dream of homesteading. Whether you're already living this lifestyle or still dreaming of walking into your local Tractor Supply to buy your first six baby chicks, let me end with this: enjoy the journey.

You've likely heard the saying, "It's not the years in your life that count; it's the life in your years." Or, as some put it, the dash between the dates on a tombstone is what really matters. That's the essence of homesteading. It's about more than the destination. It's about the everyday joys, challenges, and moments that make up the dash.

### - *More Than a Mantra*

"Enjoy the journey" isn't just an encouraging phrase. It's a way of life. It's about finding joy in the process, not just in the end results. Yes, you'll have goals, whether that's growing enough food to feed your family, raising your first livestock, or preserving a pantry full of canned goods. But those goals are only part of the story.



The journey is what shapes you.

The challenge is believing this right now, and not 20 years later.

One of my favorite TV shows is *The Office* and there was a quote from Andy in the finale, **“I wish there was a way to know you're in the good old days before you've actually left them”**. This would be the goal, right? How do you do this? I believe it is hidden in daily thanksgiving.

Homesteading is messy, unpredictable, and often humbling. But it's also full of beauty, growth, and connection. The key is to shift your focus from the “what” to the “why.”



### - *Finding Your Why*

Everyone needs a “why.” Why do you want to homestead? Why does this dream matter to you? Without a clear understanding of your why, it's easy to get lost in the day-to-day grind.

For me, the why is deeply tied to faith, family, and living a life of purpose.

I want my children to grow up knowing where their food comes from, appreciating the land, and understanding the value of hard work. I want to create a legacy not just of skills, but of wonder, gratitude, and connection. I want to live my life following every magical whisper that Yahweh chooses to send my way.

Your “why” might look different, and that’s okay. What matters is that it resonates with you. Take time to reflect on your reasons and let them guide you.

- ***Simplify, Start Small, and Keep Going***

If you’re feeling overwhelmed by where to begin, remember this: you don’t need a sprawling farm or years of experience to start homesteading. Begin with what you have and grow from there. Maybe it’s a small garden on your balcony or a backyard chicken coop. Maybe it’s learning to bake bread from scratch or trying your hand at composting.

Small steps lead to big changes. Each skill you learn, each new experience, brings you closer to your dream. You don’t have to have it all figured out. The most important thing is to begin.

And don’t be afraid of mistakes! Every homesteader has a story about the time they planted their crops too early or learned the hard way that chickens can and will escape.

These moments aren't failures, they are lessons, and they're part of what makes this journey so rewarding.

***Time Saver Tip #10 – Take Action***

Don't wait, take action. Develop a plan. What can you do today, tomorrow, next week? My tip: Join our online community. It is FREE. Here you will find homestead and permaculture education, Q&A's with us where you can ask your specific questions.

Join here -

<https://www.skool.com/wcuncensored/about>

If you are reading a physical copy, don't type all of that, just go to our website, [www.thewildc.com](http://www.thewildc.com)

You will find the community there, with other resources.

Now, my final message:

## **Keep Going**

So, here's my final encouragement: keep going.

Follow the whisper of your dreams. Step into the life you've imagined, not with fear or hesitation, but with courage and wonder. And most importantly, enjoy the journey.

We'll see you at  
The Wild Country

Welcome to the  
family!

