**Re-Frame Failures**

Recently, I posted my top 10 tips for home-schooling success, whether it’s just helping with homework or being full-time home school teacher to your kids. Now I am elaborating on each item on the list. Parenting tip #9 is this:

# Re-frame failures to be also

blessings in disguise.

The famous inventor, Thomas Edison, tried 999 different metals and elements, failing each time, before he found tungsten for the source of light in an electric light bulb. Talk about persistence! Instead of saying to himself, well there’s another one that doesn’t work, he re-framed each failure as getting him one step closer to success.

An old adage is this: Get knocked down seven times, Get up eight. Each time your child gets knocked down with schoolwork, he shows endurance by getting up again.

Jared got home from school, looking dejected, and found his mom at the computer. Mom noticed his mood and asked, “Hey, baby, what’s wrong?”

“I just can’t do it!” He exploded with tears before throwing down his English essay, displaying his failing grade.

Mom gathered her 10 year old son in her arms and let him cry. “Aww, you really tried hard to do the best you could. It’s disappointing when you don’t get the good grade you expect.”

“She’s just mean, Mama,” he whimpered into her shoulder.

Jared’s mama let him vent for a while, active listening his feelings. As he settled down, she asked, “Hey, let’s sit down for a while. I’ll get you a soda and snack, and let’s see how you can fix up this essay to get a better grade for the next one.”

Kids can wallow in self-pity for a loooong time, if we let them. After they’ve gotten it all out, redirect them to a more positive approach to learning. When failures are framed as blessings in disguise, there is always hope.

When I was at Wake Forest University, waaay back in the day, my freshman English professor gave two grades for each assignment, the first for content and the second for grammar. At first, I frequently got A/F grades. As he proofed each paper, he put the grammar error listing in the margins for us to look up and correct. We then turned in our papers for the final grade for that paper, errors corrected. If I had just gotten one grade for each paper, covering both content and grammar, I would have accepted that grade without question. By giving us two grades, I was motivated to improve my grade by correcting my grammar errors. What would have been a failure turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

As we shepherd our children through childhood, each moment is teachable, a learning opportunity. All children, and adults for that matter, fail at one time or another. It’s what we do with that failure that defines character. It’s not a curse, but a blessing. It’s not a failure, but another opportunity to learn more. Mistakes are our best teachers, if we see the opportunity and blessing.