

ADVENTURE

FATHER

YOUR

BECOMING!

\* LEGACY

EMERGING

ATIONS

SELE

FIRST



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO BECOME  
THE FATHER YOUR FAMILY DESERVES

**GLEN HENRY**

CREATOR OF BELEAF IN FATHERHOOD

*ADVENTURE*

FATHER

*BECOMING!*

YOUR

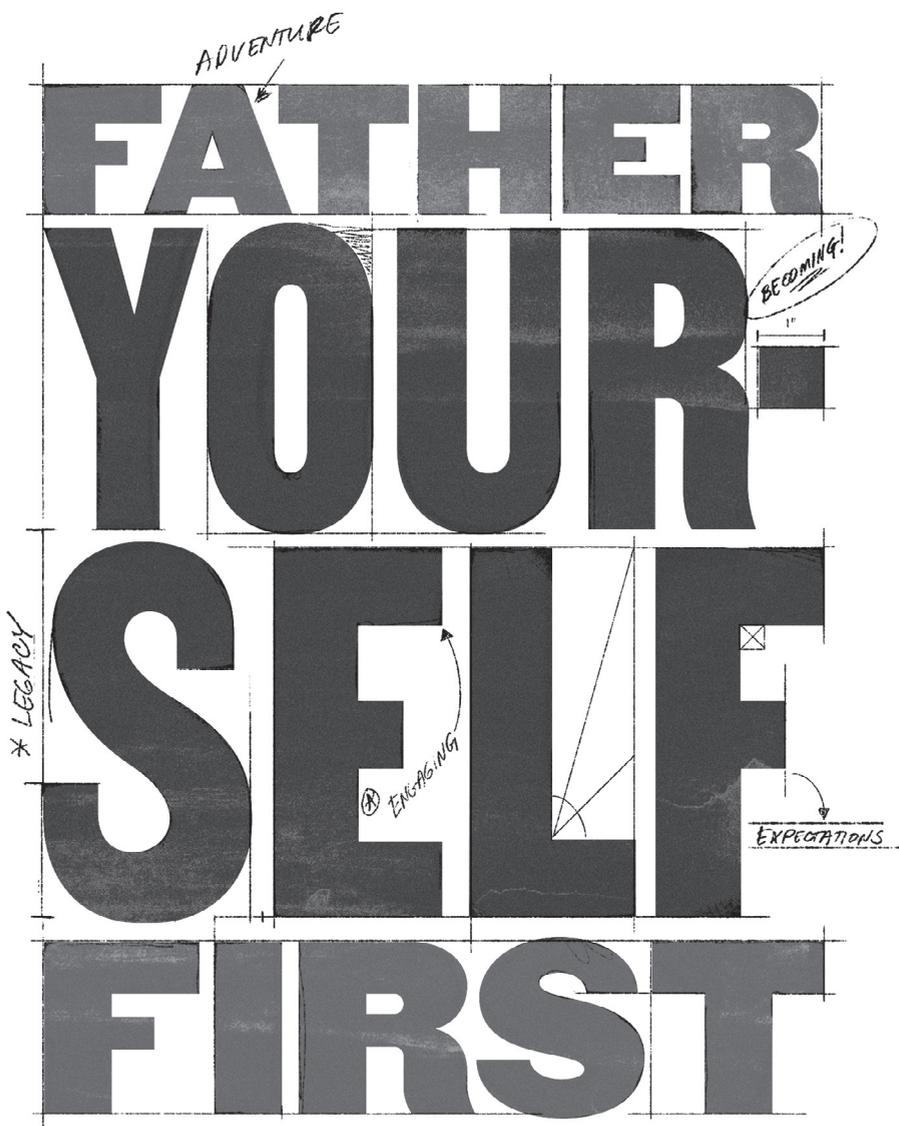
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**GLEN HENRY**



NELSON  
BOOKS

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*Father Yourself First*

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Dedicated to the Chocolate Babies:  
Theo P, Uriah Beau, Anaya Zai, and Uzi;  
to my incredibly beautiful and patient wife, Yvette;  
and to all the men who have held me  
accountable—don't stop!

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# I NEVER WANTED TO BE A FATHER

*Introduction*



*Start*

**W**

hen I was growing up, I never wanted to be a father. Bringing kids into this world seemed inconvenient, even irresponsible. I couldn't imagine myself ever having kids or being a dad.

That seems ironic considering my career today is based on telling people about fatherhood, but it makes sense if you know about the way I grew up. My mom was fifteen when she became pregnant with me, and she was sixteen when I was born. My dad was nineteen, and he didn't marry my mom. Instead, around the time I came along, he got another woman pregnant. He then moved from Baltimore, where we all lived, to California to be with her. They had my sister, Britni, out there, and they built a family and life on the opposite side of the country from my mom and me. So my dad had two kids with two different women by the time he turned twenty, my mom became a single mother at sixteen, and I grew up without a father physically present for most of my life. That was my example of fatherhood.

Those events happened nearly forty years ago, but they shaped my life in ways I'm still unpacking. I'm not angry at my parents for their choices back then. They were practically kids themselves, and they didn't have great examples to follow either. But their

parenting—both the presence of it and the lack of it, the good of it and the bad of it—affected me deeply. That’s not an accusation or an excuse, but simply a reality: A reality that every child experiences and one that follows them into adulthood.

My mom had a few long-term relationships but never married. When I was nine, my brother, Blease, was born. As I entered my preteen years and began to look more like a man instead of a little boy, my mom’s treatment of me seemed to grow more intense, for whatever reason. Maybe in her mind she was trying to “correct” or “teach” me, but I remember lines often being crossed. At the time, I recall wishing I had a father present in the home who could help parent me. I love my mom deeply, and I understand it’s tough to be a single parent. But the reality is that those years and experiences were deeply damaging to my inner child and to my concept of fatherhood, and it’s a big part of the reason why I’m so passionate about fatherhood and family today.

For example, tensions were often high around my house. Everyone, me included, seemed to be defensive and on edge all the time. My mom was always yelling about something. By the time I was a teenager, I couldn’t wait to get out of the house—and I definitely never wanted to be a father.

I started wilding. Tripping. I got kicked out of the house a lot, and I’d go sleep at my aunt’s place or my grandmother’s. I finally left home at seventeen and went to live with my grandmother in her one-bedroom apartment. A year later, my mom and Blease moved into my grandmother’s place too, so I went to live with my aunt. That didn’t last long either. After that I moved in with my girlfriend and her family.

By age twenty, I wasn’t in a good place mentally or emotionally.

I remember calling my dad and telling him I was planning to kill myself. He started crying on the phone. He asked me to fly out to where he lived in Escondido, California, so on August 31, 2005, I moved in with my dad.

In California, my life slowly got more stable. I loved hip-hop, which I had been introduced to early on by Uncle Jahson, my step-mother's brother. So I took a job as a roadie for Thoughts Aloud, a local hip-hop group. I didn't love the job, but I started to enjoy being part of something. That would eventually lead me into a career as a hip-hop artist, including recording several albums and going on countless tours.

I grew up attending church a few times a year, but in California, a childhood friend of mine named Garrett invited me to his church. Soon I began going regularly. My faith became (and remains) a vital part of my life.

That church is where I met the person primarily responsible for changing my view of fatherhood. His name was Patrick Lynch, but we all called him Pat. He was the high school pastor. I'll talk more about Pat and a few other mentors later on, but for now I'll just say he was the person who helped me believe in fatherhood. There wasn't any one moment or conversation that flipped a switch in me. It was mostly just seeing fatherhood modeled in a way I had never experienced before. Pat's home was proof that family could work. I was amazed by the peace, by the way they got along, and by how welcoming their home felt. Suddenly I saw what family could look like, and for the first time ever, I could see myself in the role of a father.

A couple years later, I met my wife, Yvette. We got married in

2010, and two and a half years after that, our son Theo was born. Whether I was ready for it or not, I was now a father.

Today, I can honestly say I love fatherhood. I don't love certain parts of it—such as the whining, the battles over eating vegetables, and all the parts having to do with bodily functions and odors—but I realize now I was born to be a father, called to be a father, and blessed to be a father. Fatherhood has changed my life, and I've watched it do the same for many other men. I've come to see the incredible power it holds not just to shape, serve, and bless our children, but to create a better world.

## PROVING GREAT FATHERS EXIST

Sometimes people use the word *example* to describe my family, and I hate it. I literally have a physical reaction to that word because it's the opposite of what I believe myself to be. I'm not an example for anyone to imitate, and I can't tell you how to live or what to do. I'm not you, and I'm not parenting your kids. Instead of an example, I want to be *proof* that fatherhood works. That's why the tagline of my organization is "Proving great fathers exist, one day at a time."

This book is part of that goal, but it goes beyond it: I am inviting you to be part of the process. Your family can be proof of fatherhood for other people to be inspired and encouraged by.

I believe there are a lot of strong families out there, but they're not necessarily accessible to people. Instead, whether on the news or in the gossip rounds, we mostly hear about dysfunction: who got divorced, who cheated on whom, who walked out on their family. I'm not shaming anyone who has experienced those things, but if we

can so easily listen to and repeat the negative things, we should also be able to repeat the positive things. We should be willing to let the beauty of family and fatherhood shine.

If you don't think you fit the "ideal" definition of a father, that's okay. Honestly, none of us fits it because we all have our quirks, traumas, weaknesses, and mistakes. For the love of our kids, though, we need to be willing to step into our roles and grow into the fathers we're created to be. You might be a single father. You might be an experienced father, a first-time father, or an expectant father. You might be divorced and sharing custody of your children. You might be a grandparent or an uncle who has a close relationship with kids who need a father figure. You might be a spiritual father or a mentor to other people. All those roles are not only valid; they're vital. So while I'm going to speak from my very unique experience as a married, Black father of four who lives on a farm in the California desert, works from home as a content creator, and homeschools his kids, I hope you can find a lot here that speaks to *you*.

Let me emphasize that I'm going to speak from my experience as a father—but that in no way implies motherhood is less important! I could not do what I do without Yvette. I honor her, respect her, and love her beyond what I can put into words. Much of what I'll say in these pages applies equally to mothers and fathers, but this book is about fatherhood, so please don't get upset when I don't qualify everything I say by adding "and mothers too!" That's a given.

Also, if I can be so bold: Please don't get offended on behalf of our children. We take our responsibility to protect them incredibly seriously. They appear on my channel all the time, but they are not forced to participate, and they enjoy it. We have regular family consent meetings where we make sure they are okay with how they're

being portrayed. They also earn money from the videos, which is both a great opportunity for them and really good training.

I remember Yvette asking me once, “Is this a family business, or is our family a business?” At first I was like, “Who cares? What’s the difference?” But then I stopped and thought about it. Our family is not for sale. While we have built a business based on the family we are blessed to parent, the family comes first—not the business. This never became clearer to us than a couple years ago when Theo asked me to take down the videos he was in because he wasn’t comfortable with people knowing so much about him. I removed seven hundred videos. It was a significant hit to our income, to the point we had to sell our house. But now he’s realizing the power of storytelling to build his own future, and he’s comfortable appearing in the videos again. Without question, though, our kids come first, and they always will.

The word *BELEAF*, which I’m using as an acronym to structure this book, is my hip-hop name as well as the name of our organization, Beleaf in Fatherhood. I chose the name *Beleaf* rather than *Belief* because I’m passionate about authenticity and honesty—and there’s no *lie* in what I’m saying. Because of that passion, I’m not going to sugarcoat fatherhood in this book. As I’m sure you’ve already discovered, carrying out this role is going to cost you a lot of money, and your furniture will have some dents in it, and your car will be full of sand and crumbs, and at times you’ll be creeped out by tiny humans staring at you when you wake up.

It’s worth it though. Your kids need to *experience* great fatherhood, and society needs *proof* of great fatherhood.

## WELCOME BLACK

While I'm not only writing *for* Black men, I am writing *as* a Black man. I have a deep desire to see Black men and Black families become visible proof of the power of family. That's why I start many of my videos with the phrase "Welcome Black." I want to embrace the value of my identity and inspire others to do the same.

Awhile back, a friend I've known for years, a white guy, came up to me at church and said, "Thank you for posting all those videos. It gives us a window into your family. I didn't know how you guys lived."

That last phrase was so weird to me. What did he mean he didn't know how we lived? Did he think we were eating our children? Practicing voodoo? It almost made me mad. But it also reminded me that a lot of people don't know what we (Black families) are like because they haven't seen very many.

One of the problems is that other people have been telling our story for too long, but it's the wrong story. It's the story of the absent Black father, the angry Black man, the broken Black family. If you look back over history, this narrative is not new, and it often feels intentional.

Consider slavery in America. Enslaved people were not allowed to marry, and if they did so secretly, they were often separated. Any children from their union were the legal property of their parents' owners and were frequently taken from one or both parents. The "right" of slave owners to sell off individual family members was enshrined in law in the infamous Slave Codes. Why would they do that? I think that in large part, it was because slave owners were

afraid of the power of family. They didn't want families growing and multiplying because they would become strong.

Think about that for a moment. If Black families were such a threat that slave owners intentionally fragmented them, how much power could a family have in society today? How much strength could *your* home and *my* home provide for a society that desperately needs a new narrative around fatherhood, especially Black fatherhood? There is power inherent in our families—power not just to change our own future, but to change the lives of those around us and even society itself.

Slavery was abolished long ago, but even today, forces still target Black families. Think about the War on Drugs, which disproportionately affected Black men and damaged countless families. Think about redlining and other housing and education policies that made it more difficult for Black families to prosper. Think about massacres that targeted Black businesses and destroyed generational wealth, such as the Tulsa Race Massacre. Think about police brutality toward Black people, including young boys and teenagers. Think about how often and how loudly news outlets broadcast the crimes of Black men and tell society we are to be feared and controlled, not loved or trusted. Think about politicians who dehumanize us, who propagate stereotypes, and who rely on fearmongering to gain political clout.

The sad reality is that in America, many people have a built-in, subconscious fear of Black people. I have Black children, and I cannot sleep well at night knowing that people are going to fear my kids and view them as threats. I will fight to change that narrative. We *all* must fight to change it.

History and current statistics point to a harsh reality: Black

men—and Black fathers, in particular—are often working from a deficit. We’re playing from behind, and we have one arm tied behind our backs. Society breaks our families apart, then blames us for being broken, and finally uses our brokenness as an excuse to break us even more. If we stay silent, the injustice continues; and if we speak up, we’re labeled whiners or agitators. It often feels like a lose-lose.

Don’t get me wrong: I’m not playing the victim here. I’m proud of the strength of Black people, and I believe with all my heart that the future is ours to step into with faith and courage. But I’m also very aware of the systemic, systematic attacks on Black fatherhood, and I’m pissed off.

The first time my family videos went viral, you should have seen all the racist comments people made about me: “The monkeys are multiplying,” “He’ll be gone in two weeks,” and other stuff like that. At first I was sad about it. Then I got mad. I wanted to find their IP addresses and punch them in the face. But eventually I realized that many people actually believe these things because, as I said earlier, *they haven’t seen anything else*.

Our family together represents way more than just a cute family on YouTube who loves each other. It represents more than just the importance of fatherhood. We are working hard to reclaim an image that has been twisted and hidden by society. We can’t legislate fear and false narratives out of people’s hearts. Instead, we must show the world something different. We have to live a different truth: *our truth*.

I know this, and you know this, but the world needs to know it: *Black families are beautiful*. We live with contagious passion. We work hard, play hard, and laugh hard. Our culture is as strong

as it is diverse. We are deeply angry at injustice, but we're also fiercely proud of our resilience. We are unashamed, unstoppable, and invaluable. We don't have to prove anything to anybody, but our very lives and families *are* proof—proof that Black families are not only possible but also a gift to the world.

This goes beyond Black people, of course. False stories are being told about Christian families, Muslim families, Hispanic families, single-parent families, same-sex parent families, white families. It's not your responsibility to change everybody's perspective, but if that story is not true—if a lie is being told about you—then the best way to reclaim your story is to live it out, loud and proud, and let the haters and the critics be silenced by your presence.

You can't control what other people think or say about you, but you can choose the family you're going to be. Even if your own family background is less than ideal, you have the power to make changes with God's grace. You can learn and grow. You can write a different story and build a better future.

And it starts with having a *beleaf* in fatherhood.

01

*Part Number*

# BECOMING

*Title*



Start



In a technical sense, you became a father the day you did your part to conceive a baby. But that's only the beginning because your kids need more than a biological father. They need someone who knows them, cares for them, stays with them, protects them, trains them, and serves them.

These are skills you learn over time, through effort and experience. In other words, you *become* the father your kids need and deserve. Fatherhood is a role you grow into; and without a doubt, it's the most transformative role you will ever have. It will expand you, teach you, test you, and bless you. (It will also drain you, strain you, stress you, and distress you at times, but let's not focus on that!)

The choice to grow into better versions of ourselves is something each of us must embrace on our own. In **chapter 1, "Father Yourself First,"** we talk about the importance of taking responsibility for how we show up as fathers. This is about self-reflection, healing, and growth.

Besides internal growth and self-healing, we also need to become more skilled at the day-to-day art of parenting our individual kids. In **chapter 2, "An Expert in Your Children,"** we look at the uniqueness of each child and the value in studying them and learning about them, especially as they grow and change over time.



01

Chapter Number

# FATHER YOURSELF FIRST

Title



*Start*

**W**henever my wife packs our bags for a flight somewhere, I get nervous. It's not because she doesn't do a good job packing. She packs for herself and all the kids, and she remembers everything—medicine, snacks, hygiene bags, shower caps, water shoes, and even extra shoelaces. The problem is that when we get to the counter at the airport, I know at least one of our bags will be overweight. Even though we weigh our luggage before we leave, somehow that bag is going to gain half a pound in the car.

The process that follows makes my skin crawl. I feel my breathing getting shallow just thinking about it. As the airline worker stands at the counter judging me, and as the line behind us grows longer and angrier, I have to open the suitcase and use my mental scale to figure out what articles might add up to half a pound.

When our luggage is wide open and I'm hunched over it trying to figure out what is necessary and what can be thrown away, I find the craziest stuff in there. Stuff I had no idea we were carrying around with us, and stuff that doesn't belong in our bags at all. It's just dead weight.

I've realized that, in the same way, I have stuff packed away inside me that I'm unaware of—certain things hurting my marriage,

my kids, and me, but I drag them along, year after year, because I haven't fully examined the contents of the bag that is my heart. When it comes to the inner me, I'm still trying to unpack what I'm carrying from my childhood and teen years: the bully in my head, fear of failure, fear of rejection, perfectionism, a hot temper, and more. Life put those things into me, but I never took them out; and now they show up in how I treat my family, how I handle problems, and how I talk to myself.

It gets crazier. Sometimes I'm carrying around other people's bags, and I don't even realize it. Some traumas and troubles in my family history never got dealt with, so they got passed on to me. I've got armfuls of frayed luggage full of someone else's dirty laundry that is weighing me down and tripping me up, and I've never stopped to say, "What in the world am I carrying? Who packed this? Why am I dealing with it, not them? Do I even want this anymore?" I'm not blaming anyone else for my issues. I'm just saying

that many of the things I carry are not there because I chose to have them but because I didn't choose to leave them behind. *And that's on me now.* It doesn't matter who packed my bags. I am responsible for examining my own life and figuring out what is going on with my own self. I have to check myself, repack myself, and take responsibility for myself.

I have to father myself.

quote  
↓

**MANY OF THE THINGS I CARRY ARE NOT THERE BECAUSE I CHOSE TO HAVE THEM BUT BECAUSE I DIDN'T CHOOSE TO LEAVE THEM.**

## THE “BEST YOU CAN DO” SHOULD KEEP GETTING BETTER

Fathering yourself means taking on the role of father for your own life. You treat yourself the way a responsible, healthy father would treat their child. This is about owning who you are right now *in order to grow into a healthier person in the future*—just like parents do for their kids when they’re young. I don’t know what your father did or didn’t do for you, but I know what you can do for you:

- You can teach yourself.
- You can correct yourself.
- You can protect yourself.
- You can love yourself.
- You can show yourself compassion.
- You can believe in yourself.
- You can encourage yourself.
- You can hold yourself accountable.

Those are just a few of the things a father should do, right? I’ll bet you’re doing these things for your kids right now because they come naturally when you truly love your children and are involved in their lives. But do you do them for *you*?

I was talking with my therapist some time ago, and he said something that left me shook. “Glen, how come you’re so much better at encouraging your kids than you are at encouraging yourself?”

That question stayed in my mind for weeks. Heck, I’m still thinking about it because it’s true. I know what my kids need, and

I'll do anything to give it to them. But I suck at doing those things for *me*.

I can't afford not to do those things though. Neither can you. Even if we didn't have someone to teach, correct, protect, or encourage us, we can't parent from that place of deficiency. We'll only reproduce our own lack and our own pain.

Awhile back I was speaking with my mom about some of the things that messed me up as a kid. She got defensive. She told me, "I did the best I could. I'm not going to apologize for what I didn't know back then."

That made me so mad. Now, since that conversation, she's started going to therapy, and she's taking steps forward, which is great. But at that moment, I was pissed. *Why can't you apologize?* I was thinking. *You're not perfect. Can't you see that?*

Notice what she said: "I did the best I could," and "I'm not going to apologize." Those are two different things, and it's important to separate them. Okay, she was doing the best she could. I'll give her that. After all, *her* mom struggled with substance abuse. It's okay for her to have compassion on that past version of herself, and I'll have compassion too.

But the reality is that her past version hurt me deeply. That person made mistakes throughout my adolescence and teen years that left a legacy of trauma I'm still unpacking. That person might not be today's person, but today's person can still own up for what that person did.

Do you follow? Saying "I did the best I could" doesn't magically erase the pain of the mistakes you make, excuse you from saying you're sorry, or give you permission to stay the same.

Real talk, in ten years I'm sure I'll have to apologize to my kids

for some of the things I'm doing today as a dad. I don't know what they are because I'm figuring this dad thing out as I go, just like all of us. So I can't let fear of mistakes keep me from stepping into my role as father, but I also can't throw up my hands and claim, "This is the best I can do" just to avoid confronting the pain my mistakes may cause my kids. I just have to keep showing up every day, willing to work and willing to learn.

I've seen two wrong reactions when men who were raised in dysfunctional environments become fathers. One is to say, "I'm just messed up, yo. I've got problems that can't be fixed. I'm doing the best I can, so if that's not enough, too bad." The other reaction is the opposite extreme: "I'm going to be perfect. I'm going to give my kids everything I wanted and never had."

The first reaction is resignation. They're allowing themselves to keep carrying things that are harmful to them and their families. Instead of taking time to sort through the baggage they've accumulated along the way, they've accepted their current state as if it were a life sentence.

The second reaction I described above is perfectionism. Some people put pressure on themselves that God himself is not putting on them, and they hold themselves to an impossible standard. The problem, of course, is that they can end up spoiling their kids when they should be training them. They'll let them get away with things that actually hurt them because they are unwilling to be the bad guy.

Both resignation and perfectionism are reactions, and reactionary living is not a great success strategy. Rather than reacting, start fathering yourself. Yes, you might be dealing with some issues, but they're not insurmountable. You have wounds, but they're not incurable. You didn't have the parents you needed then, but you

can become the parent you need now. Not just for your kids—for yourself. Do the best you can today, but continue to father yourself so “the best you can do” keeps getting better until it’s the very best it can be.

## BE THE RIGHT VOICE IN YOUR HEAD

As we saw above, fathering yourself means taking ownership of who you are: your traumas, your mindsets, your habits, your character. You have to keep teaching and training yourself throughout your life rather than carrying around bags full of stuff you don’t want.

There’s another aspect of this that is equally important: fathering yourself through difficult situations. This is about being your own encourager and motivator. Too often, we have a voice in our heads that is literally abusive. We become our own bullies, our worst critics, our biggest haters.

Because my career is to make videos about my family, I can go back and watch my parenting style like a coach breaking down game film. Recently I was studying some old footage, and as I watched myself dealing with my kids’ malfunctions, I noticed how much grace I was showing them.

Then I heard a voice in my head, as if I knew exactly what my therapist would ask. *Glen, why aren’t you giving yourself the same grace as you give your kids?* It was a tough pill to swallow as I rewatched those moments and realized I am never as compassionate to myself as I am to my children. At the same time, asking that question saved me money in therapy, which felt good. What felt even

better was realizing that the fact I asked myself that question means I'm growing. I'm learning. I'm fathering myself first.

The answer to that “why” question is that my inner voice is a bully. It's a concoction made from the bullying I received from my mother and the constant approval I sought from my dad, and I find myself knocking back that toxic cocktail of inner inadequacy whenever I'm struggling with something that feels beyond my abilities. Unfortunately, as a father, those moments happen frequently. You can smell the feelings of inadequacy on my breath whenever I mutter and grunt my way through difficult tasks. You can hear it in the labels I give myself. You can see the effects of it when I snap in anger because my insecurities are triggered.

My biggest fear is that my inability to hold my proverbial liquor will spill all over my children as they grow older, and they would spend their lives trying to get the smell out of their clothes. I reek of this toxic inner language, and I must stop for the sake of my children and for myself.

Case in point: As I write these words, my truck is stuck in the sand outside our barn. I've tried everything I know to do, but I still can't get it unstuck, so now I have to call a tow truck. The whole time I was working on it, the bully in my head was giving me hell. The voice was my mom's, but the words were my own. *You're inadequate. You procrastinate. You're letting people down. Bruh, you're just lame.* The voice is always like that unless I consciously fight it.

In situations where I lack experience, my inner bully sounds a lot like the character Alonzo from the movie *Training Day*, and my inner child is like Officer Hoyt. If you've seen the film, you might know what I'm talking about. Alonzo is a dirty cop with years of experience and apparent success who tries to intimidate and

manipulate his trainee, an idealistic, ambitious young man named Officer Hoyt, by insulting him and lying to him, all in the name of “training.” Some of what Alonzo says is true, but most of it is not. And even what *is* half-true is infused with toxicity. Hoyt just wants to do what is right and learn how to be a better cop. Alonzo, on the other hand, is mean, manipulative, and abusive—but he does it in such a way that you think maybe he’s right and Officer Hoyt needs to listen to him. Eventually Alonzo’s world blows up, and by the end of the movie, his abuse and violence are revealed for what they are: bullying.

I often imagine my inner bully as Alonzo, and my inner child as Officer Hoyt. The voice of Alonzo in my head is rude, condescending, aggressive, and flat-out damaging. And yet, I listen to it because it claims to be “making me better.” So in the name of self-improvement, I abuse myself. I insult myself. I ridicule myself. And then I wonder why it’s so hard for me to change.

When you fail, when you don’t know something, when you are insecure—what voice do you hear in your head? Whose voice is it, and what does it tell you? Is it building you, or is it bullying you?

An enormous part of fatherhood is instilling the right voice in our children’s heads, but we have to do the same for ourselves. When my inner Alonzo tells me I’m green and stupid, I have to father myself. I’ll literally say, *Son, if you are lacking experience, you are only one experience away from knowing more than you know now.* I give myself grace to learn and to fail. Well, I try to, anyway. I’m a work in progress, and Alonzo is really convincing.

As I evaluate the mentality I have toward my kids when I’m helping them through a challenging experience, there are three things that I automatically understand about them: *They are dramatic and*

*therefore tend to exaggerate things, they have proof of what they are capable of achieving, and they have my force behind them.* If I'm going to father myself, I need to remember that these three things are true about me as well. Let's break them down.

### **1. THEY ARE DRAMATIC—AND I AM TOO.**

The other day Anaya was learning how to skate. We were filming it, of course, and she looked dead into the camera and wailed, "Daddy, I'm going to die!" Spoiler alert: She didn't die. She was wearing a helmet, we were indoors, and I was holding her by the hand. She was fine. She learned how to skate faster than her brothers did, and now she's a pro.

The girl has always had a flair for the dramatic. I remember when she was four years old, when she was learning to swim. She asked, "What if a shark bites my whole face off, and I get to the hospital and the officers think I'm a bad guy?" This was an indoor pool. No sharks were present, and if any had been, they would've been terrified of *her* because Anaya is a force of nature.

Fear has a language. It has a dialect. Part of fathering is learning to recognize when your kids are being dramatic. This is often called catastrophizing, but I call it being dramatic because they exaggerate everything like bad actors. They don't have a lot of experience yet, and that lack of experience can cause them to imagine dangers that don't exist or reach inaccurate conclusions. Their fear is real, but you as a father know their mindset is not based on reality. You push them to see through their own drama so they can overcome their fear and do what they really want to do.

Here's my point: I am dramatic too. I need to remember this about myself. I get overwhelmed too easily. I see danger bigger than

it is. When my insecurities and fear are triggered, I've got to be able to talk myself through that experience. That means being patient with my emotions while *also* not believing all of them. I am not going to die. A shark will not bite my face off. The fear is lying to me, and I'm being dramatic.

To father yourself better, pay attention to your own mental and emotional makeup and learn how to help yourself through your inner drama. In what areas are you dramatic? How does your drama show up? How can you talk yourself out of exaggerated fears? How can you encourage yourself into new things? Are you able to hold yourself accountable when you're making excuses? You know how to do it for your kids. Now do it for yourself too.

## **2. THEY HAVE PROOF—AND I DO TOO.**

Our four kids are proof to each other that they can do hard things, and that helps them overcome challenges and see their own potential. This is especially true for the younger ones because they have the example of their older siblings. For example, it took Theo, our oldest, about forty-five minutes to learn to ride a bike. Considering he has chronic knee issues, that was amazing. He's always been athletic. The process for Uriah was longer—a lot longer. It took me five years to convince him to learn. His exact words on judgment day were, "This is the worst day of my life!" Again, note the drama; apparently it runs in the family.

Anaya watched both processes. She knew it could take her forty-minutes or five years to learn, but either way, she was going to be riding that bike. Why? Because her brothers were proof. When she got on her bike, Yvette taught her to ride in thirty minutes.

Our fourth child, Uzi, learned in about five minutes on Christmas morning.

The principle here is that proof leads to power. We'll unpack this more in a later chapter, but for now, just know that when you can see evidence of what you're capable of achieving, everything changes. Applied to fatherhood, this means that the successes you see in other fathers are proof that you, too, can succeed.

- If other men overcame their past hurts and trauma, so can you.
- If other marriages stood the test of time, so can yours.
- If other fathers built a happy family and peaceful home, so can you.
- If other men are juggling work, home life, marriage, and personal health, so can you.

When my inner bully tells me how bad I am and how hard I'm going to fall, I need to get outside of my own head and look for proof. This idea of proof is the reason I show so much of my family online. As I said earlier, I want to be evidence that fatherhood works, especially for Black fathers who might have grown up without a strong example.

I realized a long time ago that I need a community of people around me, especially other fathers, who can be proof to me that I can get through whatever I happen to be struggling with. Knowing something can be done in theory is one thing, but being in a community of people who do it on the regular creates another level of confidence. I need

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to be around men who value their fatherhood role and are in a similar season as me. I revel in the moments I have with friends like Kier Gaines and Karega Bailey, among many others, who prove to me that *I am not alone* and *I will be okay*.

Who is proof for you? Who shows you what you can aspire to become or do? Who do you call when your strength is gone, or your faith is weak, or you're about to make a wrong decision? Find proof, and you'll find power. You don't have to bootstrap everything. There are people who will pick you up, hold you, inspire you, and challenge you, but only if you let yourself lean on them.

### **3. THEY HAVE MY FORCE BEHIND THEM—AND I DO TOO.**

Whether you are scootering a shopping cart in the parking lot or observing a reaction engine in a rocket, force is force. Having force behind you makes all the difference.

When my kids were learning to ride bikes, they had Yvette and me beside them the whole time, and we wouldn't let them fail. They *fell*, but they didn't *fail*, because we didn't let them. We were a force behind them: guiding them, sustaining them, protecting them, and ultimately launching them into a new level of freedom.

In the same way, I need to remember that I have my own force behind me. That might sound funny, but it's true; I'm not going to let myself fail or quit. I'm not going to give up on myself. I will force myself forward, even if I fall a few times too. Fathering myself means that I provide the inner motivation and force I need to move forward.

As a father, the force you provide for your kids is not the threat of violence, but rather the strength to move your kids in the direction they need to go. Sometimes this is against their will, but it's

always for their good. I don't know if we have a word in the English language that defines this style of parenting. It's the duality of being both tough and tender. With bike riding, this looks like having one hand on their backs, pushing them forward, and the other on their bike seats, making sure they don't fall. In the pool, this looks like them jumping in while thinking I'm going to catch them, but then sometimes I let them fall through my hands so they can swim back to the top and build their skills and survival instinct.

Let me give you another *Training Day* reference because it's one of my favorite movies. Alonzo was played by Denzel Washington, who won Best Actor at the Academy Awards for this movie and is arguably one of the greatest actors of all time. Denzel is married to Pauletta, and they have a son named John David who is a successful actor in his own right. I've watched interviews with John David, and he doesn't just credit the inspiration he received from his dad. He credits the support he received from his mom. Denzel and John David both sing her praises, and they describe her as creative, thoughtful, loving, and strong. The way I see it, Denzel was proof for John David, but Pauletta was the force behind him. She instilled the guiding principles that carried him toward success.

In my early years as a father, when it was just Theo, Uriah, and me at home, I was less gentle with Theo than I should have been because of my ignorance and inexperience. I led from a lack of sensitivity and a place of frustration. With Uriah, I overcorrected, and I let him choose his own journey too often. I course-corrected yet again, and with Anaya and Uzi, I've learned to be wiser and more hands-on, encouraging them forward through their doubts. Fortunately, Theo and Uriah are still young, and I'm committed

to being a tender-and-tough force as I guide them through their childhood.

The crazy thing is that, once again, I often do a poor job of fathering myself this way. I tend to be either too harsh or too hands-off with the child in me. Maybe you've noticed the same tendency in yourself. Often we either beat ourselves up for everything, or we let ourselves off the hook for everything. Neither is a great option.

As I write these words, I'm dealing with a lot. Theo has a potential blood clot in his knee, Uriah has an infection that is making his face swell up and break out, it's one hundred degrees outside, and our van is overheating because I hit a coyote on our way to the airport last week. Oh, and my truck is still stuck. In moments like these, I have to *encourage* myself, not bully myself. I need to be my own gentle but unstoppable force.

How about you? You're a force for your kids, but are you a force for you? Do you father yourself in a way that is both gentle *and* powerful, compassionate *and* relentless, understanding *and* demanding?

Trust yourself to be that force. Just like you'd never give up on your kids, you're not going to give up on yourself. Don't listen to the mocking voice inside that says you're going to fail, that you're alone, that your worst fears will come true and somehow you won't be enough. You can be both tough and tender with your inner child, and that force will keep you on course no matter what comes your way.

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE

While it's necessary to own your fatherhood role and make sure you are healing, growing, and listening to the right voice inside, please know you are not alone in this process. I've left the most important truth for last: God is your Father. You might not have had the father you needed as a child, but you have the Father you need right now. He's your heavenly Father, and he's with you all the way.

Do you trust him? Do you believe he is with you and is committed to catching you when you fall? That's the hard part, especially when you're staring down the barrel of your own inadequacies. Your heavenly Father has always held you, even when you felt like you were breaking into a million pieces. He's not going to stop now.

I have to father myself into faith all the time, and you probably have as well. I must rely heavily on my understanding of God to keep trusting when my inner child is doubting. I need to be both Pauletta and Denzel, communicating to the little me that I will be okay. Yes, I have responsibilities, pressures, bills, two broken-down cars, two sick kids, and a partridge in a pear tree, but I also have an extremely supportive wife, a community that cares for me, my own hardworking self, and—most importantly of all—the Creator of the universe.

If you let him, God will not only be your Father; he'll also help you father yourself. He'll let you know when you're being too dramatic. He'll give you proof that you're going to be okay. He'll be the tough and tender force you need to overcome your fears and achieve your goals. He'll help you sort through your bags and figure out whose crap you're carrying and what needs to be thrown away.

Yes, life is crazy at times, and being an adult can feel like a cruel

joke. But God's got you and you've got you, and together, you both have your kids. When you father yourself first, it's a lot easier to be the father your kids need and deserve.

02

*Chapter Number*

# AN EXPERT ON YOUR CHILDREN

*Title*



*Start*

**S**traight out of high school, I enrolled in college. I'd actually planned to go into the military because I had always despised school, but my girlfriend at the time, along with her mom, sat me down and talked me out of that idea.

In college, money was tight, and I needed a way to make some cash. That's when I met Bo, a fellow student who was about three years older than I was. Bo was a Black Power proponent and a vegan, and he sold oils and incense on campus. He soon became like a big brother to me.

Bo was a fan of the phrase "Each one teach one," which meant everything he knew, he wanted to pass on to me. That included business skills—the guy was a slick salesman. He taught me chess, and we'd sit in front of the student building playing chess, eating fruit, and burning incense. People who walked by would ask what we were doing, and he'd talk them into buying incense, black soap, or oils.

Along with teaching me about sales, Bo showed me how to cut hair. I quit selling incense after I dropped out of college—which I ended up disliking just as much as high school—but haircutting is something I enjoy to this day. I cut all my kids' hair, and I always have. It's a special time together. I'll forever be grateful to Bo for

investing in my life and leaving a deposit that is still giving a return today.

The difference between formal education and the kind Bo gave me is simple: The first was in a classroom, isolated from the real world. That's why I hated it so much. The second was hands-on and practical. Bo didn't just tell me what I needed to know; he showed me. He had me watch him first, then he let me try things for myself.

When it comes to fatherhood, we need to embrace the hands-on learning style that Bo showed me. Reading books about fatherhood is a great start—after all, you're reading one right now—but the best learning happens in the classroom of the home as you interact with your kids. We need to develop our ability to watch them carefully and then put that learning into practice. This isn't a one-time thing either. For the rest of our lives, we'll be studying our kids.

I love how my career choice has given me the opportunity to learn so much about my children because I get to watch and rewatch the videos we make. That's exactly what I do in my "Fatherhood Breakdown" videos: I analyze my kids' thought processes and reactions. Often, when those events were happening in real time, I was predicting what my kids were going to do or say before anything even happened, just because I've spent so much time watching them. The more I observe my kids and the better I understand what

makes them tick, the better father I can be for them.

Everything your kids do and say is a revelation about their inner selves that can help you parent them better. That doesn't mean you have to film them all the time, just that you pay attention to what they do

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and say, and that you try to understand them better as a result. Those things are breadcrumbs to a lesson, and if you follow them, you might learn something invaluable. They are a thread, and if you pull it, you might get a whole sweater.

Learning is a choice we make every day. As fathers, sometimes we get frustrated by things we should be learning from, and that reaction can sabotage our growth. If we pay attention, we can learn; if we just get aggravated, we probably won't.

Speaking of school, my kids don't exactly hurry through their classwork each day. Sometimes it's because they don't understand the concepts, but usually they're just more interested in hanging out with the family, watching each other work, and watching their parents get slightly frustrated by their slow pace.

That all changed recently when we got them electric dirt bikes. Technically the bikes were Christmas presents, but they opened them two months early because we had to film and edit content for Christmas. That's one of the perks of being the children of an influencer, I guess.

The morning after we gave them the bikes, Uriah woke up super early and came into the kitchen. The first thing he asked was, "Yo, can I ride my dirt bike?"

I told him, "Bro, you haven't even said good morning or brushed your teeth. You're still in your pajamas. You haven't done any schoolwork. No, you can't ride your bike."

I have never seen that kid work so quickly. He's a smart guy, and he got everything done so fast I think he surprised himself. The other kids did the same thing. Now, every day, they whip through their work so they can go ride, because a farm in the middle of the desert is the perfect environment for dirt bikes.

As a dad, I'm paying attention. It's clear that when they dawdle through their work, it's not because they're lazy, the work is too hard, or they're being rebellious; they're just not motivated enough. Rather than being frustrated by that, I need to learn to work with it. I need to keep finding ways to help their motivation levels stay high.

That's what I'm talking about here: paying attention to our children and being open, teachable, and changeable. True fatherhood is about learning, not just teaching. It's about understanding the inner worlds—the motivations, needs, fears, talents, and desires—of our kids, rather than simply monitoring their actions so they don't hurt each other or themselves.

That's a lifelong challenge because they keep changing. I feel like I have a master's degree in my wife since we've been married so long, but I'm just now working on college degrees in my kids. I know they'll change once they become teenagers and then adults, so maybe by the time they're in their mid-twenties, I'll have a master's degree in them too. That doesn't mean I'll ever know everything about everyone in my family, but I'll understand them better than I do today, and better than I understand anyone else on the planet.

Let me give you three phrases that sum up the kind of learning we need to engage in as fathers. First, learn *about* your kids; second, learn *from* your kids; and third, learn *for* your kids. Let's look at each of these.

## LEARN ABOUT YOUR KIDS

I started my YouTube channel when Theo and Uriah were toddlers. A lot of what they would say was unintelligible to anyone outside

our family, so I'd spend hours each week poring over the audio files and captioning the videos. I got to the point where I could look at the waveform of an audio file and know which kid was speaking just by their cadence, inflection, and volume.

Since those early videos the kids' pronunciation has improved, and so has YouTube's auto-captioning feature, so I don't have to analyze their speech anymore. Their individual response patterns stuck with me though, and even today, when I ask them questions, you can catch me anticipating their words and almost mouthing their responses.

The idea that each child has a unique cadence fascinates me. Just as their speech has a specific cadence, so do their thoughts, their actions, and their decisions. That means I need to become an expert in parenting my children as distinct individuals. Before I had kids, I would have assumed having four children would be like having four slightly tweaked versions of the same kid. After all, they have the same dad and the same mom. In reality, of course, they are four entirely different people, which means I have to pay attention to each one, study each one, and learn each one.

With Theo, our oldest, one experience will forever stick in my mind as a father. When he was a small child, he had locs. That was partly for safety, because if he ever got lost, he'd be a lot easier to describe with a unique hairstyle; and it was partly because he looked really cute with locs. Over the years, I spent a lot of time with him twisting his locs. He wasn't really a cuddler, but when I was twisting his hair, he'd sit on my lap for two hours straight. Those were bonding times for us.

I didn't realize how important Theo's locs were to me until he told me "Dad, I want to cut my hair" when he was six years old. It's

hard to describe what I felt. It was grief, I suppose, because I knew I was saying goodbye to the little child I had known. I've always been my boys' barber. So when it was clear that Theo wanted this, I got out my scissors and clippers, and I cut his locs off and gave him an even Caesar with a shape-up.

It changed his entire appearance. We could see his forehead, his eyes, and his ears. We even found out he had a birthmark on the back of his head that none of us knew about. He instantly looked three years older.

More than his appearance, though, his personality blossomed. He smiled bigger and acted with more confidence. He took up hockey soon after that, a sport that is now a huge part of his life. I look back on that haircut as a defining moment in his development from a child into a preteen. It was emotional for me, but it was liberating for him.

What I learned was that I had to let him tell me about himself. I couldn't hold him captive to the person he'd been in the past. I had to step back and allow him to discover and reveal himself, and I had to accept and embrace the new, growing version of the child I'd always known.

That was not the last time I'll do that with Theo or with any of my kids. They're growing and flourishing in front of my eyes. My challenge now—and for the rest of my life—is to learn about who they are becoming each day, even if it means saying goodbye to something I loved from the past.

Uriah, our second, is very different from his brother. He and I have spent a lot of time together because I became a stay-at-home dad soon after he was born, so I've watched him grow and develop.

He is always affectionate, always passionate, and always *loud*. I wish the kid had volume control.

One thing I've learned about Uriah is that if I push him too hard, he'll get overwhelmed and start to panic. Then, if I react to his emotions and yell at him, he'll shut down. Now, in some ways, parenting is like coaching, and I know coaches often yell at their players. On the sports field, that might be an effective way to communicate, but coaches don't tuck their players in at night. They're coaches, and that's it. As fathers, we have many hats to wear and many roles to fill. We're teachers, chefs, problem-solvers, moderators, and more. So we have to make sure we don't show up in a way that causes us to lose access in other ways.

Something we recently learned about Uriah is that he has ADHD along with high-functioning autism. Those things don't define him, but they are part of who he is and how he interacts with the world. My wife had been telling me for some time that in the classroom, he was different from the other kids. For example, he had fidgeting episodes and would start crying if more than one sound was occurring at a time. I just thought Yvette didn't know how to handle the situation. Not until I started helping homeschool the kids did I see it too, and I realized how much I didn't know.

Learning this about Uriah is causing me to rethink a lot of things I assumed, both about him and about fatherhood—and that's my point here. This “learn about your kids” process is a normal, healthy part of being a parent. Each new kid and each new stage of growth will require you to reconsider what you think you know, adjust your expectations and assumptions, and move forward with more accurate knowledge.

Our third child and only daughter is Anaya. Even though she's

only seven, she has me figured out more than the other three put together. She is “high saddity,” which is Black vernacular for someone with expensive taste and high expectations. For example, when she was three, she loved a snack called Veggie Sticks. These little snacks came in three colors: green, yellow, and orange. Although there was no difference in flavor between those three colors, Anaya refused to eat any color except green. If we gave her a full bowl, she’d leave two thirds untouched. Rather than fighting that battle over and over, Yvette would separate the green ones every time she opened a bag and save them for Anaya. It was insane.

More recently, when I was going to be gone for three days to work on this book, Anaya made a list of all the things she wanted to do while I was away. I said, “Okay, show me the list.” She was like, “Eat at In-N-Out, have a marshmallow challenge, ride an elephant . . .” That was her expectation for the next three days.

I said, “You’re so high-maintenance. Where’d you get that from?”

Immediately she pointed at her mom, who was swinging in a \$600 hammock I’d bought her for her birthday, and said, “From her.”

With Anaya, I am scared of what’s coming because she thinks the rules don’t apply to her, and somehow she finds ways to get me to do what she wants. It’s bizarre. I love her, but she terrifies me sometimes. I’m still trying to figure her out, but it seems like she’s already got *me* figured out and is always one step ahead. Something tells me I’m always going to be playing catch-up with this one. Again, that’s the point: You will always be learning about your kids. Don’t let that frustrate you. Let it intrigue you. Let it fascinate you.

Our youngest is Uziah. As I write these words, he’s only five, so describing him is hard because he’s still coming into his personality.

I can say that when he was two, he'd get mad and just haul off and hit people on the regular. We have it documented on video. Now, he's calmed down—a little. He beats up on his siblings maybe once a week rather than every hour. I guess you'd call that progress. He's in the testing-the-limits stage, trying to figure out what he can get away with. He's a blend of the other three kids because he's around them all the time, but I have no doubt in my mind that he's going to develop in specific directions as he grows older. I can't wait to see what directions those are.

Kids are like surprise packages. You don't know what's hidden inside. The difference is, you don't open them; they have to open themselves. You just keep them alive while that process happens.

I've come to realize with all my kids that what I find irritating about them is often connected to their specific gifts. Whether their questions, their strength, their emotional outbursts, their drama, or their nonstop chatter, what I'm looking at is the seeds of their future strengths. Right now, they're practicing. They don't always know how to handle those abilities or play to those strengths. That's where I come in. It's my job to see those things, hone them, and invest in them.

## **LEARN FROM YOUR KIDS**

Kids are smarter than we usually give them credit for, and if we pay attention, they'll often tell us what we need to know about them and what they need from us. As they teach us more about themselves, we will become better parents.

One time Theo was trying to outdo his brother on his bike, and

he fell really hard. He actually fractured both of his wrists, although we didn't know it at the time. He was clearly in pain, but when he carried on and seemed to be doing okay, we thought he just needed some time. More than anything, I was irritated that he was trying to show off. Not until a week later, when he fell again and started yelling in pain, did we realize how bad he had been injured from the first fall.

I felt terrible. I wished I would have paid more attention. Theo has always had a high pain tolerance, though, and he never wants to be a burden. He often won't tell us what he's feeling or how he's hurting. I've learned that with him. I have to ask a lot of questions and pay attention to the nuances of his answers. If I listen, he'll give me clues to what he needs, and he'll invite me closer.

I don't just mean physically, but also mentally and emotionally. For example, because of the fall, he got a cast on one arm and a brace on the other. One day, we were joking around, and he said something halfway aggressive to me. I popped off with "What are you gonna do? Beat me with your cast?" It was all in good fun in my mind, and I had like twenty more broken-arm jokes in the queue. But he got upset. He got a little moody, and he told me I hurt his feelings.

Part of me was bothered by that, and I thought, *Wow, I can't seem to do anything right*. But I realized he was trying to tell me that he's not as emotionally strong as he pretends to be. He always acts like things don't bother him, but they do. His honesty with me was an invitation to listen and learn. I had to accept the invitation. My twenty jokes were funny, but they would not have gone over well. I had to be sensitive to his needs in that moment.

If you listen with a humble, patient heart, you can usually figure

out what your child needs. That understanding is gold; it enables you to be the father *they* need in *that* specific context. That might not look like what your dad gave you or what you imagined yourself doing for your kids, but that's not what matters. What matters is their well-being, and as their father, you are God's provision for their needs. Maybe it's a hug. Maybe it's crying together. Maybe it's tickling them or chasing them around the house. Maybe it's a spontaneous trip. Maybe it's inviting them to help you with a project. What they need seems like an enigma sometimes, but you're the best person to make sense of it.

Besides revealing what they need, they'll also show you how you need to change—if you're willing to learn. This will stretch you because you'll have to do things outside your comfort zone. I'm not saying you need to be someone you were not created to be, but you will need to become *all* you were created to be. None of us have it all together when we first become parents. We learn and grow along the way, and our best teachers are the kids we're loving and caring for.

Recently my daughter was whispering to my wife, and I could hear her say, “Hey, I want to tell dad . . .” Then she said something I couldn't hear. My wife said, “Well, just tell him.” It took Anaya a minute to get up the nerve to say, “Dad, I want to use the white fan.”

So backstory: She was talking about the fan I bought for my office, which was *my* fan. It's mad hot in our house in the summer, and we have several fans, but Anaya kept sticking her fingers in the blades and breaking them.

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quote

(The blades, not her fingers.) Besides that, all the kids would stand on the bases of the fans and push them, which would break them too. This had happened multiple times, and I had made my frustration clear. I knew I should install a ceiling fan, but do-it-yourself stuff isn't really my thing.

Her hesitancy to talk to me was a wake-up call. It told me I was being too intense and grumpy about the whole thing. If my daughter can't even approach me about something as basic as a fan, what does that reveal about how she sees me and how I present myself? On an inner level, I was reminded to quit overreacting to things just because they highlight my deficiency as a handyman. I didn't say any of that out loud. I just told her that of course she could borrow the fan—but not to break it. Then I made a mental note to calm down a little about the whole fan situation. Her reaction showed me how I needed to change so I could parent her better, but I had to pay attention and learn the lesson.

## **LEARN FOR YOUR KIDS**

The goal of learning is to become a better parent for your kids. Ultimately, their well-being matters most. We want to meet them where they are, then father them forward.

When I was a kid, I don't think my dad knew how to show me affection. I'd only see him in the summer, and it seemed like he was just waiting for me to get older so we could play sports together and joke around. Now, as a grown-up, I love the bantering between us. But I needed something different when I was eleven years old. I needed affection.

With my kids, if Uriah needs a hug, he's getting a hug. I might tell him to go get a shower because he's in that funky stage of human development, but I'll hug him first. I've learned that I need to meet him where he is at, not expect him to meet me where I'm at. That's why learning about each child is so important. The lessons enable you to parent with understanding and empathy.

Too often, I think we try to parent our kids toward our preference for them. We want to control the outcome a little too much. While we can be a strong influence for them, we should also keep in mind that we exist for them, not the other way around. They didn't ask to be born. We chose that for them. Now it's up to us to guide and empower them to become the people God meant for them to be.

There's a story in the Bible about how John the Baptist told his followers he needed to decrease so that Jesus could increase. John recognized his role was to become less visible over time as Jesus stepped into his calling and became more visible. That's a good way to describe the transition that happens with parents and children.

At first, you're the hero, the king, and the boss (as well as the servant, the cook, and the butt-wiper). Eventually, your kids grow up and take more responsibility for themselves. If you're lucky, they even take showers without being told to. (So far only one of my kids has achieved that level of independence.) Along the way, you fade into the background a little more with each stage. You're still there, but you intentionally make their growth about them, not about you. You decrease so they can increase.

When parents refuse to do this, they often veer into codependence, which is about needing to feel needed. Codependent parents keep their kids dependent on them for too long or in unhealthy ways. That's dysfunctional though. Codependence is not good for

the parents or the children. It's far better to figure out what our kids need in each stage, provide it for them, and consistently push them toward greater independence and maturity.

Remember, you only have a few years with them when they're young and moldable, then you'll have a few more when they're teenagers and need you in different ways. After that, although they'll still need you, your influence will be from a distance. So take full advantage of the time you have with them now. Study them. Learn about them and learn from them. Learn about yourself too.

Then take all that learning and use it to serve your children. If you become an expert in your kids, your fatherhood will reach a whole new level.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Author

**G**len Henry, the creative force behind the immensely popular YouTube channel *Beleaf in Fatherhood*, is a visionary content creator, devoted father, and beacon of inspiration for parents worldwide. Beyond his YouTube channel, Glen is an advocate for positive parenting and family values, actively engaging with his audience through social media platforms, workshops, and speaking engagements. His dedication to promoting healthy relationships between fathers and their children has made him a sought-after voice in the parenting sphere.

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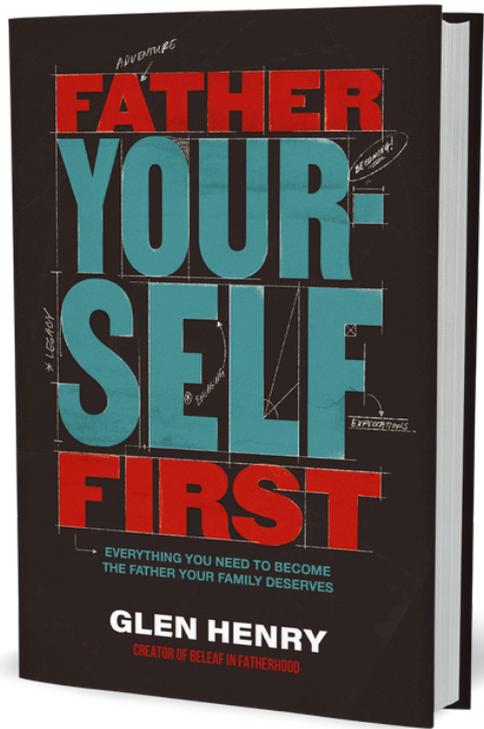
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