

Like I said at the beginning of this book, before 33 years of age, I didn't care what a man was. I thought to the best of my knowledge it really didn't matter. The problem is that it does matter. Since those first sentences in chapter one I hope I made a small case that being a man matters. It matters to God, women, kids, and hopefully to us as well. I'm going to make some controversial statements in the next few paragraphs. Why not just leave them out and save myself the headache? It's because I believe in women and men. I believe they are made separate for a reason. We were created as help mates or soul mates. The man and woman co-exist together to make a whole picture.

I look at the world with eyes open. If dogs stop at trees and posts to pee then basically they all do. If it always gets colder in the fall year after year, then I expect it to get cold when October comes around. It's the same with women and men. In a 48 year study (I have witnessed) there are certain traits in men and women. In the next few paragraphs, it's my observations and nothing more. They are not fact or necessarily true. It's what I have seen.

Without insulting women, the feminine gender drives the bus but masculinity is the bus. The world survives by the actions of men: it always has and always will. I don't believe women will ever rule this planet. It's not because they can't, it's because men will never let them. The stronger sex or stronger species will always win. Since the beginning of time this has been true. Why would you think it will change in the future?

This sounds like women repression or female bashing to me. Then I ask you this: why can't a woman walk alone on our streets anymore? She used to be able to and feel safe. Men make our streets unsafe. They always have and more so these days they always will. That sounds depressing and pessimistic. Yep it does, but the stronger species will always win. Unfair yes but

reality-check everyone. Men are sometimes more violent, more evil, and more thoughtless than women.

My point is not to repress women. My point is to show women how to change the odds. Men are better when they are held to a higher standard. A man will do what he has to do to survive. A woman can guide him to see a better way. Sometimes men need to fight but not all the time. A man needs to be challenged. Women have the unique ability to get to the core of a man. I will get nowhere in life without my manhood being **accountable**. I say that mom's, wives, and sisters can hold men to a higher standard. We usually listen when a woman speaks.

That is an interesting word: "accountable." Let's take a closer look at that. The old dictionary refers to the word accountable as "expected to justify" or "understandable." I think both descriptions of "accountable" hit the mark. In the old days, traditions of the male person played a role in our cities, towns, and country. Men were the milkman, postman (my favorite), and the policeman. They were men held accountable for their actions. They were expected to serve the people in their community. A man was as good as his word. A stranger was trusted. Strangely enough so were the police and politicians. A man was "justified" by his actions. Justified meaning: "worthy to trust and honored." Men were justified because they were in the community prominent roles.

Today do we pin these words on men in the community. Do we trust our military, police, or politicians? The answer is simple and straight forward: no we don't. Right now on social media there are a million tweets ringing out questioning our male leaders. Why are we in Afghanistan? Why did the police use force? Why did the politician spend extra money? Some of these leaders are women but in many cases they are men that live in our community. On television men are dumbed down and the woman is the smart one (she always was). The men

seem to always need help and they always get into trouble. The men start wars and kill our children. Men are corrupt priests, police, and teachers. To be a man now is to be “unjustified” in the community.

I like the other word “understandable.” Do we understand men these days? Are they heterosexual or homosexual? Are they a little bit of both female and male as in transsexual? What does a man look like today? It seems to me men have become a mixed bag of nuts. Our boys are growing up to be whatever they want. Isn't that a good thing Patrick? Men can be a stay at home caregiver, fireman, policeman, nurse, or teacher? I must admit that past view of gender has defined men's roles. A nurse was predominantly a woman. A fireman was a male.

Today the view is still a view but it's changed. Gender roles have been replaced with social tags. It's more about sexual orientation and lifestyle that defines a man these days. We are gay football players, police persons, and Native American leaders. We are no longer just the mailman. The social tag makes you something along with the role. Now anyone can be those roles and that is great, yet new tags go with it. The sexual or race tags now are added. Obama will always be known as the Black President and Ellen will always be seen as the gay talk show host.

We are regarded by the tag more than the justified actions we expect from the role. It was never that a man in that role was justified. Just because he was a man did not make him credible. We did however think the male in the role was safe. Today being male in a role is not considered safe. Yet, if we add the tag it's safe. Isn't a gay man safe? Is a lesbian teacher safer than a white male? My son said he would vote for Obama because he's black. He must be better than the white guy right? We still look at people by what they look like. In the past it was gender but today its politically correct social tags.

I'd like to believe that in the old days men were held accountable for their actions. In many ways a man was held by his word. It did not have to be written on paper and witnessed by a lawyer. Men were trusted and honored. I remember how excited we were in class when the Fireman came to visit. In many ways the man is to blame. We have ruined the good name of the man. We have cheated, raped, and killed the very people who trusted us. Our actions need to return to mean "justified by character" that we used to have. What is the understanding of what a man is in today's culture?

These two words "justified" and "understand" have struck a chord with me. I have told you before the statement "what a man allows happens." People get so darn angry when I say that. When I read that to my wife she flipped out. Let's just put the women's connotation aside for now. I'm not interested in debating women's rights or feminism in this chapter. I want us to solely focus on what a man allows.

Think of it this way. If a man wants to have sex with a girl, there is a right way to get what you want. He might ask her if she is willing. She may say yes and they sleep together. Suppose she gets pregnant, is it her fault? Is it his fault? They both said yes. In a sense it is what each of them allowed to happen. The woman is now a mom if she keeps her baby. The man supports the woman with her or without her if he is responsible. The man should take ownership of his sex life. He allowed these events to happen because ultimately he could have said no.

Suppose the man is told no. He decides to rape the girl and get sex anyways. The police are called and he goes to jail for a period of time. He allowed himself to be overcome with lust for the girl. His actions put him in jail. Did the girl ask for it? No, she did not, but he chose to get what he wanted. What a man allows happens. He chooses to pay for the child or become a dead

beat dad. Ever heard of a dead beat mom? It's all on the male gender even today. We need to show character so that the women and children can feel safe once again.

A person makes choices. I want to talk about men that make choices. A boy sees a player win the Super bowl. He decides to play football in school. A boy's dad leaves the family home. The boy decides to find family inside a gang. Each boy was influenced by something, yet the outcomes are quite different. At its core each boy makes a choice. I have talked about the male drive. I have talked about who we are made to be as men. There is an inner voice and a social responsibility to be male to some degree. As a boy we are faced with choices that make some boys into men and others just flirt with the concept. I am saying that to be a man is to take responsibility for our actions. A woman can do the same thing but I'm talking directly towards men. We can chose to rape and chose to enter a gang. We can chose to work hard in school and join a team.

At the end of chapter 2 I quoted **Proverbs 27:17** it says **"Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another."** I believe that to be a man we need to make choices that include other men. We do it already on teams and in gangs. Boys are free to join up with a mentor in Big Brothers. Maybe we spend time with a dad, uncle, or a friend. Either way we need men to become men. The choices we make will be forged by the men we know.

I have struggled with my dad. I have never really known if he likes me. He said he does but somewhere in the relationship I'm not so sure. At times he has judged me against other boys and men. I have been devastated by that measuring stick. At one time I was fairly good at hitting a baseball. My brother told my dad that I was really good. My dad mocked me by saying that if I was pitted up against the neighbor's son I would fail. Something died in me that day. It was just my dad being my dad but that hurt. A father can boost or kill a son in a very few words.

Many men measure themselves against other men. It seems that the sharpening in the proverbs scripture might be a cutting of a throat. I needed my dad to boost me, not bash me. So when I was playing lacrosse one day. My dad (the coach) asked me to go out and play hurt to stop the play. I said no. I think it hurt my dad that I wasn't the man he needed at that moment. What he did not know was that I was unsure if I was man enough to do it.

What I have found is that many men suffer at the hands of their fathers. Many girls do too. A father can build his children up or crush them into dust. In my ears I can hear "what a man allows happens." There are two sides in this chapter. One is that we need men to build our character. The second is what we do if we were missing a male mentor. Either way to be a man we need to be affirmed by one. Years ago a pastor in a church asked the men to tell their dads they love them. That is hard for some. It still seems weird hearing my dad say he loved me too. Inside I am still hearing that I would be crushed by the boy next door.

It's not funny but I wish my Dad would have told me he loved me over and over again in my life. I would have rather heard that than disappointment. There is a time and place for criticism but mainly we needed to hear the words I am proud and love you. My young son struggles with self-esteem. It is a tough battle. I have taken it upon myself to do an iron man event with him each year. For ten years we hiked mountains, rode bikes, and stood at the Pyramids in Egypt. I know the male battle because in all that reaffirming love for him he struggles with me. Something inside tells him he is not quite the man he should be. I understand his fight.

Many men won't admit it but sometimes men abuse men. Some of you might know the story of (NHL players) Theo Fleury and Sheldon Kennedy. Both boys were abused in junior hockey by their coach. One boy (Sheldon) became a spokesman for abused boys in the

community. He is a strong and amazing man. The other (Theo) became successful in NHL hockey but lived with a secret. In time Theo crashed and burned inside. It was time to tell the story of abuse. Men affect men in positive and negative ways. I feel that at some point each man needs to come to rest with his demons. Usually it means they have to confront a male in their lives.

Why talk about male bonding? Well it's because who we spend time with is important. What type of male role model I am is important. In the dating chapter I asked you to spend time with yourself. This seems neurotic because I was talking about being the male role model for myself (well sort of really). What type of males do I want in my life? The good ones build you up and the bad ones tear you down. In the mirror I need to be a good one for me and the people around me. In many ways the dad I was before 33 might have haunted my kids. These boys only know domination by a wife and domination by a family. I was a spineless male in their younger years. These days I'm trying to grow a pair so to speak.

How do we deal with boys growing up so that they become a confident man? What is plainly clear is that boys become exactly what they experienced? My sons are the sum of their dad. They are influenced by those around them. Aren't we all like that? There are those out there that seem to be ok with themselves. What makes them different? I listened to a hockey player say he is just like his dad. Sometimes we end up just the opposite. The male role model is so crucial.

It leads me to believe we have to train our boys to be leaders. We need to train our boys to believe in themselves. Strong young men have a fighting chance to turn into strong older men. In Christian circles I have always wanted an older Christian man to mentor me. The problem is that there aren't many that want to do that. Trust me I have asked and asked. I have run men's

groups and men certainly don't like to be sharpened by other men. We have raised a soft culture in the modern man.

I read a book called "Raising the modern day Knight" by Robert Lewis. It was the story of a man who decided to bring his son into manhood. He used other influential men to affirm his sons walk in life. The role of the knight was to mentor a boy to maturity. It was a process of not only creating more knights but passing the torch. Throughout history men have taken an interest and investment in bringing up boys.

The coolest part was at the age of thirteen. The son went through a ritual or rite of passage. A special ceremony was created by Robert to welcome his son into the fold of manhood. What a great idea. Torches were lit along a path at night. As the son passed each light a man would appear affirming his masculinity. There were friends, uncles, and grandfathers involved along the way. At the end there was Robert ready to pass on the family crest and name to his wide eyed boy. I wonder if that made an impact in his life. I bet it did.

Several books have been written about bringing up boys like the one by James Dobson of Focus on the Family. They highlight the troubles we have with this society. The process of moving boys to men has been watered down and possibly lost. I wonder if one day in the future a boy will discover masculinity in an old book. He might have to lead men back to a better place. For now boys and men are in a hard place they were never intended to be.

One magazine was asking if our men are too soft these days. Oh Gee Has anyone noticed? We have trained our boys to express their feminine side. Masculinity is a dirty word. We model the men we see just like my boys modeled me. A stronger Patrick would have made stronger boys and I believe that with all my heart. I have become hard because I hated being soft.

That is not a good mix. Being trained to be soft and hard is much better than letting experience harden us.

So where do we go from here? I wanted men to date themselves so that they knew themselves. I wanted men to find quality mentors because a man is the only one who can forge a man. I watch men work, talk, and do. I wholly desire to be like them. If we are what we are now then how can we change? I insist it begins with becoming confident in you. You are a man when you were born. No matter what people say: you are a man. Now what kind of man is up to you.

Chuck Swindol says “if you got it get at it.” Ok he is referring to the Holy Spirit but it applies here too. Once you realize that you are a man everything changes. Now it’s time to put that into shoe leather. What steps will you take to walk forward from now on? Yes do this one unmanly thing: date yourself. Do it only to know who you are. Once you got that out of the way it’s time to get at it.

The next step is to find a male friend to do life together. I took the boys all over the world as men. I loved that time with them but I sure would have loved to have a man around to do that with me too. It’s fun to travel with the wife but some things only men can do. Some things only men can talk about. When it says a man sharpens another man there is something solid about that. Men are generally harder than women. I suppose a hard man makes a hard man.

Men need a piece of softness in them but generally we are born to be hard. We work hard, play hard, and sleep hard. We don’t cry that much. We should not complain that much either. At work they have asked me to complain to the union about my bosses. Something inside me can’t do it. I’ll win the fight myself. If that is missing in you then maybe you are too soft. Some people say “that man looks hard.” My wife hates a man who greets her with soft hands.

Bruce Springsteen is considered a man. We could argue that but duh, he is a man among men. He says in a song “tramps like us, baby we were born to run.” Men were born for adventure, chivalry, and dirt. The line that little boys are made of snails and puppy dog tails is so true. We need to fight, fall down, and win a war to become a man. When I finished hiking the Koko Crater on the Island of Oahu it was just me but let me tell you, I won! I did it! Nobody can ever take that from me. Let’s take a look at the next part of making a man. Let’s become a little harder and a little sharper than we were before.