A FATHER–SON RITE OF PASSAGE

# RAISING A MAN

*Twelve Months. Twelve Values.*
*One Boy Becoming a Man.*

## FREE SAMPLE — MONTH ONE: HUMILITY

The complete first month from both books:

the father's guide · the son's journal

BY DENNIS SMITH

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book covers one value per month, for twelve months. There's no fixed day it has to start on — his birthday, the new school year, January 1st all work. What matters is consistency once you begin.

Each month follows the same structure:

The Value, Defined — read together, in your own words, early in the month.

The Story — a short story to read together that brings the value to life.

The Conversation — questions to talk through out loud. These aren't meant to be answered in writing here — that's what his Journal is for.

The Challenge — a real task he completes that month to practice the value, not just discuss it.

The Mark — a short ritual moment at month's end where he receives that month's token.

Father's Reflection — a few minutes for you, at the end of each month, to consider what you modeled.

Keep this book on hand all year — it doesn't get written in and can be used again for another son, or kept as a reference long after this year is over.

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MONTH TWO — **GRATITUDE** *The discipline of seeing what you have*
MONTH THREE — **INTEGRITY** *Who you are when no one's watching*
MONTH FOUR — **SERVICE** *Strength used for someone else*
MONTH FIVE — **RESPECT** *Honoring what deserves honor*
MONTH SIX — **TEAMWORK** *You don't have to carry it alone*
MONTH SEVEN — **COURAGE** *Doing right despite fear*
MONTH EIGHT — **WISDOM** *Knowing the right time*
MONTH NINE — **RELENTLESSNESS** *Refusing to quit*
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MONTH ONE

# HUMILITY

*The strength to see yourself clearly*

## THE VALUE, DEFINED

Read this to your son, or better — read it together and talk about it in your own words.

Humility isn't thinking less of yourself. It's thinking of yourself accurately — knowing what you're good at, knowing what you're not, and staying teachable either way. A humble man isn't a doormat. He's not afraid to be wrong, not afraid to ask for help, and not afraid to let someone else be right. That takes more strength than pretending you already know everything.

Pride tells a boy he has to win every argument, look strong in every room, and never admit he doesn't understand something. Humility lets him put that weight down. This month isn't about becoming quiet or small — it's about becoming honest. Honest about his strengths, honest about his limits, and confident enough in who he is that he doesn't need to perform for anyone.

## THE STORY

Marcus was the best pitcher on his summer league team, and everyone knew it — including him. One game, he refused every pitch his catcher called for, insisting on throwing his own pitches his own way. He kept missing the strike zone — three batters in a row reached first base without ever swinging. His coach finally called time, walked to the mound, and said only one thing: "Your catcher can see the whole field. You can only see home plate." Marcus struck out every batter he faced the rest of the game — throwing exactly what his catcher called. Afterward, his coach told him: "The best players aren't the ones who never need help. They're the ones who know when they do."

## THE CONVERSATION

1. Can you think of a time you thought you knew better than someone — a coach, a teacher, a parent — and it turned out you didn't? What happened?
2. What's the difference between being confident and being prideful?
3. Who in your life sees things about you — good or bad — that you can't see about yourself?
4. Is it harder for you to say "I was wrong" or to say "I need help"? Why do you think that is?
5. What's one thing you're genuinely good at, and one thing you're still learning? Can you hold both of those at the same time?

## THE CHALLENGE

This month, your son completes The Apprentice Challenge: he identifies one skill he wants to improve — something he is NOT already good at — and asks a specific person (not you) to teach him, for at least three sessions. It could be a grandparent teaching him to fix something, a coach giving extra reps, a neighbor teaching him to grill. The rule: he has to ask for the help out loud, follow instructions exactly as given even when he thinks he knows a better way, and say thank you at the end of every session.

Your job as the father: help him identify the skill and the teacher, then step back. Don't rescue him if it's awkward for him to ask. The asking is the point.

## THE MARK

At the end of the month, sit down together — no phones, just the two of you. Give him the token for this month. As you hand it to him, say something like: "This is for the month you learned that asking for help isn't weakness — it's how strong men get stronger. I'm proud of you." Then hand him his Journal and let him record his own reflection on this month in his own words.

## FATHER'S REFLECTION

Before you close this month out, take five minutes for yourself. Where did you model this value well this month, and where did you fall short? He's learning this value partly from what you say, but mostly from what he watches you do.

MONTH ONE

# HUMILITY

*The strength to see yourself clearly*

## THE VALUE

Humility isn't thinking less of yourself. It's thinking of yourself accurately — knowing what you're good at, knowing what you're not, and staying teachable either way. Being humble doesn't mean being a doormat. It means you're not afraid to be wrong, not afraid to ask for help, and not afraid to let someone else be right. That takes more strength than pretending you already know everything.

Pride will tell you that you have to win every argument, look strong in every room, and never admit you don't understand something. Humility lets you put that weight down. This month isn't about becoming quiet or small — it's about becoming honest. Honest about your strengths, honest about your limits, and confident enough in who you are that you don't need to perform for anyone.

## THE STORY

Marcus was the best pitcher on his summer league team, and everyone knew it — including him. One game, he refused every pitch his catcher called for, insisting on throwing his own pitches his own way. He kept missing the strike zone — three batters in a row reached first base without ever swinging. His coach finally called time, walked to the mound, and said only one thing: "Your catcher can see the whole field. You can only see home plate." Marcus struck out every batter he faced the rest of the game — throwing exactly what his catcher called. Afterward, his coach told him: "The best players aren't the ones who never need help. They're the ones who know when they do."

## TALK IT THROUGH

Talk through these with your dad this month:

1. Can you think of a time you thought you knew better than someone — a coach, a teacher, a parent — and it turned out you didn't? What happened?
2. What's the difference between being confident and being prideful?
3. Who in your life sees things about you — good or bad — that you can't see about yourself?
4. Is it harder for you to say "I was wrong" or to say "I need help"? Why do you think that is?
5. What's one thing you're genuinely good at, and one thing you're still learning? Can you hold both of those at the same time?

## WHAT I TOOK FROM IT

***What stood out to me from our conversation this month:***

***A question I'm still thinking about:***

## YOUR CHALLENGE

This month you'll take on The Apprentice Challenge: pick one skill you want to improve — something you're NOT already good at — and ask a specific person, not your dad, to teach you, for at least three sessions. Maybe it's a grandparent teaching you to fix something, a coach giving you extra reps, a neighbor teaching you to grill. The rule: you have to ask for the help out loud, follow instructions exactly as given even when you think you know a better way, and say thank you at the end of every session.

***What I actually did:***

***The hardest part:***

***What I learned about myself:***

## THE MARK

At the end of the month, you and your dad will sit down together, no phones, just the two of you, and he'll give you your token for this month. This one's for the month you learned that asking for help isn't weakness — it's how strong men get stronger.

***Date I received my token:***

***In one sentence, this month I learned:***

***Anything else I want to remember about this month:***

THE FULL YEAR

# One month builds a conversation. Twelve months build a man.

Every month of Raising a Man works the same way: a value to learn, a story to read together, a real conversation, a challenge that puts it into practice, and a moment at month's end — the Mark — where your son receives a token from your hands and hears what you saw in him.

**1** Humility · **2** Gratitude · **3** Integrity · **4** Service

**5** Respect · **6** Teamwork · **7** Courage · **8** Wisdom

**9** Relentlessness · **10** Peace · **11** Justice · **12** Love

The kit is both books: **Raising a Man** (the father's guide, 52 pages) and **Becoming a Man** (the son's journal, 64 pages) — written to mirror each other, month by month, all year long. Every father in the cohort also gets a seat in the **Raising a Man community**: a private group of fathers walking the same year, with a Mark thread every month to share the token you gave and what you said.

## Founding cohort: **$47** ~~$67~~

The founding cohort starts together on **January 1**. Founding pricing ends when the year begins — after January 1 the kit is $67. Get the full kit where you found this sample, or through the link in bio on Instagram **@dsmitty05**.

Raising a Man is a digital program (two PDFs — print them, or keep them on a tablet). The tokens for the monthly Mark are yours to choose: any small keepsake with meaning between you and your son. Questions: reply wherever you got this sample — a real father reads every message.