

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

Lead with Strength.
Show Up with Love.
Build a Legacy That Lasts.



Nate Wagner

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Also by Nate Wagner

Sibling Suicide: Journey From Despair to Hope

Dedication

To my girls—Emma and Natalie.

You made me a dad.

You showed me where I was still a boy.

And you gave me the courage to grow.

To Cindy—

Your steady love is the soil this book was planted in.

And the reason it kept growing.

CONTENTS

Introduction — The Wake-Up Call	1
Part I: Wake Up.....	13
1: Life Harmony Over Life Balance.....	14
2: Start Strong.....	24
3: Redefining Success.....	30
4: What It Means To Be An Unstoppable Dad.....	36
5: Becoming The Man They'll Thank You For.....	42
Part II: Get Strong	52
6: You Can't Lead If You're Empty.....	53
7: Break The Same Loop. Show Up Anyway.	63
8: The Mirror Effect.....	71
Part III: Lead At Home	77
9: The Love They'll Imitate	78
10: Speak So They Listen.....	83
11: Raising Resilient Kids	89
12: Brotherhood Over Isolation.....	95
13: Your Legacy Starts Now	103
Tools To Stay Unstoppable	109
The Unstoppable Dad Decision Filter.....	110
The Daily Compass	110
The 60-Day Unstoppable Reset.....	111
Realign With Truth	111

Stay Connected..... 112

The Weekly Reset..... 112

Book A 1:1 Clarity Call..... 112

Let’s Keep Going—Together 113

To The Unstoppable Dad..... 114

Acknowledgments..... 117

About The Author..... 120

INTRODUCTION — THE WAKE-UP CALL



You don't need another pep talk.
You need something real.
This isn't a checklist.
Not a fix.
Not a trophy for trying.
It's a mirror.
A gut check.
A way forward.

Short lines.
Real stories.
No fluff.
No spin.
Just truth—dad to dad.

If something hits, stop.
Don't push past it.
Think about it.
Write it down.
Then keep going.

Every section ends with one clear step.
Not advice—action.

Each one is called a **Reset**.
Not a recap. Not a summary.

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

A moment to return to presence —
and choose who you'll be next.

Reading won't change anything.
Doing something will.

You don't have to read in order.
If home feels heavy—go to Section 7.
If something feels off—start with Section 4.
If you're close to quitting—go to the end.
Start where it matters.
Skip what doesn't.
Come back when you're ready.

Why I Call You Unstoppable

Because you're still in it.
Still showing up.
Still choosing your family —
even when it's hard.

That's not weakness.
That's strength.

You don't have to be perfect.
You just have to stay present.
That's what makes you Unstoppable.

You don't have to fix everything all at once.
You don't need a perfect plan.
You just have to start—right here, right now.

With love.

With presence.

With truth.

Why This Matters Now

Becoming means you haven't quit.

You're still here.

Still learning.

Still showing up.

Not perfect—but present.

Not drifting—but deciding.

One moment at a time.

Unstoppable means you don't walk away.

You keep choosing what matters.

Even when it's hard.

Especially then.

You're not chasing status.

You're building something that lasts.

You don't quit on what matters most.

That's what this book is about.

And you're already in it.

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

Mark it up.
Talk about it.
Try one thing.
Not later—now.
As you are.

The Wake-Up Call

Let me take you back to the moment my life split in two.
It was the summer of 2002.
I was halfway through a youth ministry internship—
teaching Bible studies, leading teenagers, planning mission trips.
Fifteen minutes after one of those meetings, I was in my car,
driving home.
No clue that everything was about to change.
I opened the front door and knew.
It wasn't the cars in the driveway.
It wasn't the hushed voices.
It was the look in my dad's eyes.
Like the world had just cracked open.
“Nate—Brian's gone.”
A pause.
“He took his life.”
The world didn't explode.
It just stopped.

Fell silent.

Muted—except for my heartbeat.

No screaming.

No crashing.

Just stillness.

The kind that doesn't just break you—

It rearranges you. And it stays.

I wasn't just grieving what happened.

I was grieving what never would be.

The conversations we'd never have.

The relationship we'd never repair.

The someday plans—gone.

That silence—the kind that lingers long after everyone else
leaves—

became the reason I stopped waiting for “someday.”

It became the reason I started paying attention.

To what matters.

To who matters.

To now.

You Know the Feeling

Maybe your moment didn't come with a phone call.

Maybe it was quieter.

But just as real.

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You pushed through another day.

Held it together—barely.

The house is finally still.

Everyone's asleep.

And you—

sitting on the edge of the bed,

shoulders low,

feet planted,

quiet pressing in.

“Is this it?”

“Why do I feel stuck?”

“Am I even doing this right?”

You're not here for motivation.

You're here because something's been pressing down—

and you've been carrying it anyway.

You've tried to be present.

At dinner.

On the sidelines.

During the car rides home.

But something still feels off.

Like you're there—

but not with them.

You nodded at dinner—

but missed the story.

You drove them home—

but forgot the sound of their voice.

You're showing up—
but it's not landing.

Even when you do everything "right"—
work hard,
stay calm,
come home on time—
there's still that ache.
That voice.

"You're not enough."

It doesn't yell.
It just lingers.

Let me say this clearly:
That voice is a liar.
And you're not alone.

I've Been There Too

Let me tell you about the night it all hit me.

It was years after my brother died.
I was now a husband, a dad, and a therapist.
But I was running on fumes.
Four hours of sleep.
Trying to hold it all together.

We sat down for dinner—
Cindy, the girls, voices filling the room.

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But I wasn't there.

Not really.

My youngest started whining.

My oldest fired back.

Forks clinked.

Tension rose.

It wasn't just noise —

It was thunder in my brain.

I didn't explode.

Didn't yell.

I just stood up.

Walked to the sink.

Started scrubbing a plate I hadn't even eaten off of.

Not to help.

To escape.

The faucet was running.

My hands were moving.

But I was somewhere else.

Not angry.

Not sad.

Just... gone.

Then I heard her voice.

"Honey—are you there?"

It took a second to realize she meant me.

That's when it hit me:

I'm standing right here —

but I'm not with them.

There—but Not with Them

That moment felt like being woken from sleep.
I looked around and realized: I had disappeared.

Not physically.

Emotionally.

Spiritually.

Relationally.

I was checked out.

And that silence—the numbness—

I knew it too well.

It was the same silence I felt the night I lost my brother.

And standing at that sink, I made a quiet vow:

**I will not let my family feel that kind of absence while I'm
still alive.**

You Don't Have to Fix It—Just Stay

Through grief.

Through therapy.

Through fatherhood.

I've learned:

You don't have to fix it all.

You don't need the perfect words.

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Sometimes, you have to stay.
Stay soft when shutting down feels safer.
Stay present when your brain screams to flee.

Sometimes, staying means sitting on the floor
and letting your daughter finish her story—
even when your inbox is on fire.

This book isn't about performance.
It's about presence.

The dads who stay—
not perfectly, but fully—
they're the ones who shape legacies.

Who This Book Is For (and Not)

This isn't for the guy who's got it all figured out.
It's for the dad who wipes down counters at midnight
because it's the only thing he can control.

The dad who feels the fog roll in during bedtime stories—
and stays anyway.

The dad who shows up when no one claps.
Who wants something real, even if it stings.
Who's done pretending everything's fine.

This isn't a checklist.
It's not a self-help formula.
It's not a motivational speech wrapped in pretty words.

It's a chair beside yours.

It's a light in the fog.

It's me saying:

"Yeah—I've been there too.

Here's what helped me find my way back."

Let's Begin—Together

You don't have to fix everything all at once.

You don't need a perfect plan.

You need to begin—
with presence and intention.

Here.

Now.

This book is about transformation.

It's about movement.

It's about choosing presence over pressure.

And leading from the inside out—
one honest moment at a time.

Reset: Start Where You Are

REFLECT:

Where in your life do you feel like you're drifting?

ACT:

Breathe in.

Breathe out.

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Then say it:

“I’m not failing. I’m just tired.

And I don’t have to do this alone.”

That’s your reset.

Your first step back home.

Because your kids won’t remember perfectly—
but they’ll never forget right now.

PART I

WAKE UP



Stop Numbing. Start Showing Up.

You're not here to be perfect.

You're here to wake up to what matters.

Progress not perfection.

Urgency over drift.

This is where it begins.

1

LIFE HARMONY OVER LIFE BALANCE



There was a stretch when I tried to do it all —
therapy sessions,
kid pickups,
dinner on the table,
dishes done,
laundry folded into piles.

I looked like I was holding it together.
But inside?
I was unraveling.

Not in one big crash —
just slowly, quietly, through a thousand small moments
when I wasn't really in my life.
I was performing it,
helping everyone —
except the people who mattered most.

I was the guy sitting in a therapy room,
holding space for everyone else.
Day after day, absorbing grief, rage, trauma —
quietly, professionally, completely.

And I told myself,
This is what good men do.
This is a strength.

So, I poured everything into my clients
and came home empty.

Not bitter.

Not angry.

Just—disconnected.

I still made dinner.

Still folded the laundry.

Still smiled at bedtime stories.

But it felt like I was watching myself act in a movie

I never auditioned for.

There—but not really.

Smiling—but somewhere else entirely.

Performing fatherhood—
not living it.

I'd brush Natalie's hair, hear Emma tell a story—
while mentally replaying a session I couldn't shake.

I'd nod at the dinner table,
eyes locked on my plate,
heart stuck in someone else's pain.

Then one night—

after tucking the girls in,

after doing the dishes,

after sitting in silence long enough to feel the ache—

Cindy asked me:

“When’s the last time you laughed with us?”

I didn’t have an answer.

Because I couldn’t remember.

My face flushed.

My chest tightened.

And the silence that followed?

It hit harder than anything I’d heard all day.

That was the moment.

The one that split me open.

I was doing everything...

But I wasn’t doing anything that mattered.

The Myth of Balance

Balance says:

- Keep everything equal.
- Spin all the plates.
- Don’t drop a thing.

But life isn't balanced.

It’s messy. Uneven. Loud.

Some days, your kids need more.

Some days your marriage does.

Some days, your soul is begging you to stop pretending you're fine.

Balance is performance.

Life harmony is presence.

The Run That Reminded Me

It was cold.

Pouring rain.

Middle of the day.

I hadn't run in a while.

And every voice in my head said, *Skip it.*

But I laced up anyway.

Not because I wanted to suffer—

because I knew what would happen if I didn't.

No movement? No clarity.

No clarity? No presence.

So, I ran.

Shoes soaked. Shirt clinging. Lungs burning.

And somewhere around mile three, it hit me:

Life isn't something to balance.

It's something to feel and move with.

A rhythm to step into.

A symphony to conduct—one note at a time.

The Symphony of Fatherhood

Picture an orchestra.

The strings don't drown the melody.

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The horns don't clash with the drums.

Each section has its moment.

Sometimes the most potent part...

is the silence.

Fatherhood works the same way.

Not doing everything at once.

Not showing up at 70% everywhere.

But giving the right thing

the right energy

at the right time.

That's life harmony.

And that's what I'm learning to choose—

again, and again.

The Cost of Half-Attention

Another night.

I was on deadline—worn out and distracted.

My youngest walked in holding a crayon drawing.

“Daddy, look what I made.”

I didn't look up.

“That's great, sweetie,” I muttered.

“I'll check it out later.”

She paused.

Then walked away.

Two hours later, I found it on my desk.
It was me. Holding her hand.
She titled it: *Me and Daddy*.

I missed that moment.
And I'll never get it back.

**That's the cost.
And I'm not willing to keep paying it.**

The Power of 90 Seconds

We overthink this.
We think we need:

- A full day off
- A perfect dinner conversation
- A deep life lesson

But the moments your kids remember?
They're the ones you didn't plan.

The moments when you looked up.
When you leaned in.
When you truly saw them.

That one question at the dinner table.
That silly laugh on the floor.
That pause to ask, "*Tell me more.*"

**Ninety seconds of presence
can shift everything.**

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What Harmony Feels Like

Starbucks on a Saturday.
Phone off. Words flowing.
Then home.
Dishes done. Ten-mile run.
Later, a movie with the girls—
No rush. No guilt. Just presence.

Not balanced.

Not equal time.

Just everything in its place.

Fully.

That's life harmony.

How to Build It

You don't need more hours.

You need more presence.

Here's how I build it—
one honest moment at a time:

Set Hard Boundaries

Protect your focus when you're working.

And when you're home? Be home.

Transition Intentionally

Before you walk in the door:

Pause. Breathe. Shift.

Protect Your Non-Negotiables

What matters most right now?

Guard it like oxygen.

Ask One Question Daily

Where does my presence matter most?

Then go there—fully.

What Your Kids Will Remember

They won't remember how many hours you worked.

Or how many tasks you checked off.

They'll remember:

- How your eyes lit up when they walked in
- How you listened without rushing
- How you stayed—even when it was hard

They won't say, *"Dad had perfect balance."*

They'll say:

"Dad made me feel safe.

Seen.

Loved."

That doesn't take perfection.

It just takes presence.

Say This with Me

I'm here.

I'm leading.

I'm becoming an Unstoppable Dad.

And if saying that feels like too much right now —
That's okay.

**Borrow my belief
until you find your own.**

Because I've been there.

Exhausted.

Second-guessing everything.

Wondering if being in the room
was the same as being there.

But I've also seen what happens
when a man chooses to stay.

Even when it's messy.

Even when he's tired.

Even when he's unsure.

That smallest moment of presence
can shift everything.

Even when you don't feel like enough —

you're still in the fight.

And that fight means something.

Reset: One Honest Moment

REFLECT:

Where have I been physically present—but emotionally absent?

Name it. No shame. Just truth.

ACT:

Pick one person who matters. Use the 90-Second Reset:

- Phone down
- Step in
- Stay with them

Not to fix.

Not to impress.

Just to be there.

Then do it again tomorrow.

This is how we lead.

Not perfectly.

But powerfully.

With presence.

With courage.

One honest moment at a time.

And if you mess it up?

You're still in the fight.

And that's what makes you Unstoppable.

START STRONG



I used to start my mornings in a fog.
The alarm would go off,
and I'd hit snooze—
again and again.

By the time I got up,
the day was already pulling me in ten directions.
Texts.
Kids.
Emails.
Needs.

Everyone wanted something.
And I had nothing to give.

I wasn't lazy.
I was overwhelmed.
Burned out.
Behind before I began.

One morning, I had a thought I couldn't shake:
"If I don't own my day—someone else will."

So I tried something different.
I didn't overhaul my life.
I just started small:

Wake up.
Drink water.
Get outside.
Move my body.
Write something honest.
And that small change?
It shifted everything.

The Power of a Strong Start

Here's what I know:
The way you start your day
shapes the way you show up.
Not just for work—
but for your family.
Your mindset.
Your presence.
Start reactive, and you'll spend the day
putting out fires.
Start centered, and you'll lead from overflow.
You don't need an hour-long routine.
You don't need perfect conditions.
You need one intentional choice
before the world gets loud.

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What This Looks Like for Me

It's not magic.

It's movement.

I start by waking up before the house does.

Not because I love mornings—

but because I love what they give me.

Then I move.

Walk, run, stretch—

anything that gets me into my body.

After that, I write.

Not for content.

For clarity.

Sometimes it's a few lines.

Sometimes it's a reset prayer.

Sometimes it's just me telling the truth

so I can hear it.

That's it.

No fancy apps.

No noise.

Just a moment of ownership

before the rest of the day begins.

Resistance Will Come

There will be days you don't want to.

You'll feel tired.

Unmotivated.

Pulled in every direction.

But that's when it matters most.

Because every time you choose to show up—
especially when you don't feel like it—
you're building something.

Discipline.

Integrity.

Momentum.

You're becoming the kind of man
your family can count on—
because you've already counted on yourself.

The Morning I Wanted to Quit

There was a day I woke up heavy.

My chest was tight.

My mind was spinning.

I had every reason to stay in bed.

But something in me whispered:

"Get up. Go outside. Breathe."

So I did.

I walked.

No phone.

No music.

Just the cold air and my thoughts.

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And somewhere between breaths,
I felt it:

I'm still here. I'm still leading.

That morning didn't fix everything.
But it grounded me.
Reminded me who I was.
And helped me walk back into the house
as a man—not just a dad
on autopilot.

Start Where You Are

This isn't about being perfect.
It's about being present.

Start small.
One habit.
One shift.
One moment of ownership
before the noise begins.

Then do it again tomorrow.

Because the man who starts strong—
even with a shaky voice or tired eyes—
is the man who doesn't drift.

He leads.
From day one.
From moment one.
From within.

Reset: Own the Morning

REFLECT:

What's one thing you do in the morning
that pulls you off course?

ACT:

Replace it with one grounding habit:

- 90 seconds of movement
- One handwritten line of truth
- A slow glass of water in silence

That's it.

You don't need more hours.

You need ownership.

And tomorrow?

You start again.

That's how we become Unstoppable.

REDEFINING SUCCESS



I thought I was leading.

I wasn't.

It wasn't some life-shattering moment.

No funeral. No hospital bed.

No dramatic wake-up call.

Just a Tuesday.

Long day.

Empty tank.

Kids fed.

Dishes done.

Brain fried.

I sank into the couch—

half-dead, half-scrolling.

That numb kind of tired that whispers,

“You’ve earned this. Just check out.”

Then she walked in—

my youngest.

No crisis. No meltdown.

Just quiet curiosity.

“Hey, Daddy, want to see what I worked on today?”

I heard her voice.
But I didn't listen.

I mumbled,
"Maybe later, sweetheart."

Eyes on my phone.
Heart somewhere else.

She paused—
just long enough for me to feel it.

That invisible moment—
sacred, small, and easy to miss.
And I almost let it pass.

What I Almost Missed

It wasn't about the paper in her hand.
It was about the question behind it:

Do I matter to you right now?

Our kids ask us that question every single day.
Not with words—but with bids:

- "Want to come see this?"
- "Can I show you something?"
- "Did you hear me?"

Most of the time, it's subtle.
Quick. Easy to miss.

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Especially when your head is spinning.
When your phone feels safer than the connection.
When you're just trying to survive the night.

But that night?

I caught it.

I caught myself.

I looked up.

Put the phone down.

Called her back:

"Hey, show me what you made."

Her face lit up.

She sat beside me.

And for the next few minutes—

I wasn't just in the room.

I was with her. Fully.

That's what she needed.

And honestly?

So did I.

Redefining Success as a Dad

For a long time, I thought being a good dad meant getting it all done:

- Keep the schedule tight.
- Check every box.

- Keep the peace.
- Hold it all together.

But none of that matters if you miss the moment.

They don't remember the clean floors.

They remember if I looked up.

If I paused.

If I saw them.

Being an Unstoppable Dad isn't about crushing the to-do list.

It's about catching yourself in the fog—
and choosing presence over autopilot.

That couch moment?

It lasted 90 seconds.

But it mattered.

That 90-second pivot?

That's real-life success.

You're Not Too Late

Maybe you've missed moments.

I have, too.

Maybe you've said "later" too many times.

Let the phone win.

Let the pressure win.

Let your exhaustion carry you past what matters most.

But hear me clearly:

You. Are. Not. Too. Late.

This isn't about guilt.

It's about the next moment.

The next pause.

The next bid.

The next ordinary Tuesday, when you decide:

"I'm showing up for this one."

Not because you feel ready.

Because they're worth it.

And so are you.

Reset: One Honest Moment

REFLECT:

Where did I miss a bid for connection this week?

ACT:

Pick one small moment today:

- A quiet story.
- An invite to play.
- A glance that asks, *"Are you still with me?"*

Look up.

Lean in.

Respond like it matters.

Because it does.

This is how we change.
Not with big speeches —
but with tiny, 90-second pivots that say:

“I’m here. I see you. You matter.”

That’s leadership.

That’s presence.

That’s legacy —

built one moment at a time.

And if you’ve ever wondered what it looks like to lead this way —
not just in moments, but in a rhythm you can live —

that’s what the next chapter is for.

Because presence isn’t random.

It’s built.

And the dads who build it with intention?

They don’t just change their homes.

They change generations.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN UNSTOPPABLE DAD



The 5 Core Commitments That Change Everything

I've said the right things. But here's what's true.
It's one thing to want to be a great dad.
It's another to live it—
especially when you're stretched thin and quietly wondering:
"Am I even doing this right?"

I used to think that gap—
the space between the dad I wanted to be
and the way I was showing up—
meant I was failing.

So, I tried harder.
Hustled more.
Read all the books.
Still felt off.

What I was missing wasn't effort.
It was clarity.
No compass.
No rhythm.
Just pressure.

That changed when I stopped chasing perfect—
and got anchored in what matters most.

The Wake-Up Call

Losing my brother shattered me completely.
But it also held up a mirror—
and a choice:

Keep drifting— or choose to lead differently.

I decided to lead.
But good intentions alone weren't enough.
I needed something simple.
Repeatable.
Authentic.
Something to come back to when life gets messy.
This is that something.
Not a formula—
But a framework.

The 5 Core Commitments of an Unstoppable Dad

These aren't aspirational.
They're foundational.
The anchors I return to—again and again.

1. I Choose Presence Over Perfection

Perfection whispers,

“You’ll be enough once you get it all right.”

But that day never comes.

So I stopped trying to look perfect—
and started showing up.

Messy. Honest.

Right here, right now.

My kids don’t need a polished version of me.

They need the present one.

2. I Lead Myself First

When I’m running on empty, everyone feels it.

So I fill up—not to escape, but to lead.

That means:

- Protecting my morning rhythm
- Moving my body
- Saying no to what drains me
- Investing in my mind and spirit

Self-leadership isn’t loud.

But it’s the difference between burnout and legacy.

3. I Love Without Holding Back

I don't wait for the perfect moment.

I don't make them earn it.

I say it now.

I show it now.

I give it now.

Because love isn't a reward —

It's a responsibility.

4. I Fight for Connection, Not Control

It's easy to power up when things get messy.

But barking orders isn't leadership —

It's fear in a louder voice.

Connection takes more strength:

- Staying close
 - Listening longer
 - Slowing down to get it right—not just get it done
-

5. I Build a Legacy, One Moment at a Time

Legacy isn't built in big wins.

It's built in small, hidden choices:

- What I say when I'm frustrated

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- How I own it when I blow it
- How I stay when I want to check out

Legacy isn't built someday.

It's built right here.

Right now.

These five commitments aren't just ideas.

They're how I lead myself when it's hard.

They're how I show up when I want to shut down.

They're how I fight for my family—every single day.

Reset: One Honest Moment

REFLECT:

Which of the five commitments do I need to return to this week?

Pick one.

Start small.

Act from that place.

Miss a day?

Come back.

The compass still points home.

ACT:

Choose one moment.

One bid.

One hard choice.

Lead from that place.

Nate Wagner

Presence over perfection.

Connection over control.

Legacy over autopilot.

You've got this.

You're not alone.

You're becoming an Unstoppable Dad—
one honest moment at a time.

BECOMING THE MAN THEY'LL THANK YOU FOR



The Unstoppable Dad Identity Map

You've seen the commitments.
Now it's time to look in the mirror—
and own who you're becoming.

Here's what I didn't want to admit:
You don't need another list of things to fix.
You need a mirror.
Not to point out what's wrong with you—
but to remind you of who you already are...
and who you're still becoming.

Being an Unstoppable Dad
isn't about finally getting it all together.
It's about choosing—every day—
to lead from the inside out.

This Isn't a Personality Quiz

These aren't traits you're born with.
They're not "strengths" you either have or don't.

These are reps.

Lived values.

Practiced choices.

You build them in the quiet.

In the chaos.

In the five-minute windows between bedtime and dishes.

You build them on the days you snap—
and come back to repair.

On the mornings you want to check out—
but show up anyway.

In the messy, holy, ordinary work of fatherhood.

This isn't about performing for approval.

It's about aligning with the man you were always meant to be.

Let's Name It. Let's Own It.

This is who you're becoming:

Present

You're not just home.

You're here.

Phone down. Eyes open.

You know your presence is the difference.

Resilient

You've taken some hits.

But you're still standing.

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

Still leading.

Still loving through the hard.

Intentional

No more autopilot.

You lead on purpose now,
with your time, your tone, your energy.

Consistent

You don't just say you'll show up.

You do.

Again and again, even when it's not glamorous.

Accountable

You've stopped hiding.

You've welcomed a brotherhood to hold the line with you.

Because isolation was never the goal.

Self-Aware

You name your blind spots.

You don't pretend.

You name what you've buried and grow through it.

Growth-Oriented

You're done with staying stuck.

You're not chasing arrival,
you're committed to evolution.

Emotionally Strong

You don't shove it down.

You feel it fully, and lead wisely.

Because you know strength isn't volume.

It's depth.

Legacy-Driven

You think beyond today.

You speak like it matters.

You live like it echoes.

That's not just who you hope to be.

That's who you already are, when you lead from presence.

It's who you're becoming, every time you come back to the moment.

And Here's What You're Building

These are the tools.

The skills.

The reps that strengthen every room you walk into.

Not to look impressive,

but to lead powerfully.

These aren't checkboxes.

They're how presence takes form in your real life.

1. Emotional Intelligence

You don't explode. You don't numb.

You pause. You notice. You choose your response.

2. Communication

You speak to connect, not control.

You know your tone is louder than your volume.

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

3. Patience & Presence

You slow down.
Not because it's easy,
but because it matters.

4. Leadership

You go first.
With vision, humility, and strength that doesn't need to shout.

5. Conflict Resolution

You own your part.
You repair what breaks.
You fight for peace, not power.

6. Time Management

You don't cram. You choose.
You schedule what matters, not just what screams.

7. Self-Discipline

You show up on the days you don't feel like it.
You do the work before the reward.

8. Adaptability

You don't need life to go to plan.
You flex. You adjust. You lead anyway.

9. Resilience

You've failed. But you didn't quit.
You let the fall teach you how to rise.

10. Playfulness

You laugh. You dance. You wrestle on the floor.
Because joy is part of the mission,
not a distraction from it.

This Is Your Identity Map

Not a script.
Not a rulebook.
A mirror.
A rhythm.
A guide you can return to—
when things get loud and you start to forget.

You don't need to master it all today.
But you do need to return to it—again and again.
Because this is how legacies are built.
Not someday.
Not perfectly.
But here.
Now.
One honest moment at a time.

Reset: One Honest Moment

REFLECT:

What part of me have I been hiding—because I didn't believe I could lead with it?

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

ACT:

Choose one trait or skill.

Practice it in the next 24 hours.

Not because you have to.

But because it's already who you are,

and you're done pretending otherwise.

You're not just raising kids.

You're shaping a legacy.

And that starts with who you are becoming.

Before We Move On

Why This Book Isn't Really Just for You

One more thing before we step into the next section.

While this book is written for you, Unstoppable Dad,
two girls shaped every word on these pages.

They're the reason I fight for presence.

They're the reason I lead with love.

They're why this isn't theory —
it's legacy in motion.

So before we turn the page to Part II,

I want to share something personal:
a letter to my daughters.

Not to impress them —

but to show them (and you)

what this whole journey is about.

A Letter to My Daughters

To my girls,

I wrote this book with one man in mind —

the Unstoppable Dad who feels like he's slowly losing himself
while trying to give his family the life they deserve.

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

But the truth is—
this book is really for you.

You're the reason I fight to become the man I'm writing about.
You're why I keep showing up—on both hard days and good ones.

You're why I refuse to settle for surviving.

You've taught me more about love, grace, patience, and presence
than any book, class, or mentor ever taught me.

So hear this—something I wish I'd told my brother more often:
I love you.

Not because of what you do,
how you perform,
or how proud you make me.

I love you simply because you're mine.

You don't have to earn that.

You don't have to prove a thing.

You already have my whole heart—nothing will ever change it.

If you remember nothing else from these pages, remember:

- You are enough.
- You are loved.
- You are worth fighting for.

Never believe you must earn love or prove your worth—
you already have both.

Nate Wagner

I lived too long thinking my value came from what I did;
the truth was, it had always been about who I was becoming.

I don't expect you to live perfectly.

I expect you to live fully —

With love,
with strength,
with purpose.

And I pray that every word I've written,
every moment I chose presence over perfection,
every time I led with love instead of fear,
leaves you a legacy worth carrying forward.

One day you'll write your own story,
lead your own family,
shape your legacy.

When that day comes, know this for sure:
You've already seen what Unstoppable love looks like.

I love you,

Dad

PART II

GET STRONG



Lead Yourself Before You Lead Them.

You can't pour from an empty heart.

Before you lead your family, you have to lead yourself—
with truth, strength, and capacity.

This is how we build from the inside out.

YOU CAN'T LEAD IF YOU'RE EMPTY



You're the guy everyone counts on—
except you've got nothing left in the tank.

Let's not sugarcoat it.
You want to lead your home well—
to show up stronger for your wife,
your kids,
your mission.

But here's what I had to learn the hard way:
You can't lead anyone else
if you're quietly falling apart inside.

This isn't about time hacks.
Not about willpower tricks.
It's about capacity.

Because if you're running on fumes—
burned out, bitter, or disappearing into the grind—
your presence won't land,
even when you're physically in the room.

This isn't about doing more.
It's about finally facing what's empty—
and filling it with something that lasts.

When the Breakdown Becomes the Mirror

Before the crash.

Before the warehouse.

I was doing work I loved —
counseling, crisis support,
helping people carry things
that nearly crushed them.

But somewhere in the middle of the helping,
I stopped helping myself.

Ignored the signals.

Muted the whispers.

Told myself I could outrun the burnout
if I just pushed a little harder.

Then one day, I couldn't push anymore.

I sat in my office,
staring at a calendar I couldn't make sense of.

Heart racing.

Mind blank.

Breath short.

I wasn't just tired —

I was done.

The Night I Almost Quit Everything

I sat next to Cindy on the couch.
Looked at her and said it:
“I don’t know how much longer I can do this.”

Not dramatic.
Just honest.
Spent.

I was showing up for everyone—
except myself.
And it was unraveling me.

But that breakdown gave me something real:
truth I couldn’t outrun.

The Choice That Changed Everything

That season gave me two options:
Keep performing while empty...
or finally lead from the inside out.

I chose honesty.
No more pretending.
No more white-knuckling my way through life.

It didn’t fix everything overnight,
but it cracked the door open.

And that’s all I needed—
a way forward that wasn’t built on survival.

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

The Morning I Knew I Was Done

Alarm went off.

And the truth hit me hard:

“This job isn’t killing me —

It’s who I have to become to keep doing it.”

Muted.

Disconnected.

Numb.

I made the call.

Talked with Cindy.

Walked away.

Not in fear —

in integrity.

You can’t rescue anyone if you’re drowning.

And I was.

Leaving wasn’t quitting.

It was leadership.

The kind that trades pretending for peace.

That stops performing and actually comes home.

Self-Care Is Not Soft—It’s Survival

I used to think self-care was soft.

Weak.

“Real men grind.”

I was wrong.

Self-care isn't selfish.

It's how you keep from burning down
the life you're trying to protect.

When you neglect your mind,
your body,
your soul —
everyone feels it.

Your wife.

Your kids.

You.

Self-leadership means creating the capacity
to love well — before everything falls apart.

If It Doesn't Land at Home

Most nights, I'm in bed by 8:30.

No scrolling.

No posting.

Just trying to rest enough
to wake up before the house does —
to write,

run,

and reset

before the day hits full volume.

Sometimes someone says,

"Man, your words hit."

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

And I'm grateful. I am.

But here's what I've learned—the hard way:

If it doesn't land at home,

it doesn't matter how strong it sounds anywhere else.

I could write the most honest chapter of my life—

but if I snap at my daughter two hours later...

or give Cindy half my attention while she's sharing something that matters...

Then I've missed the whole point.

If my kids don't feel safe with me—

If my presence fades the moment the laptop closes—

If the version of me the world sees

is stronger than the one my family lives with...

That's not success.

That's a warning light.

So, I've made a quiet commitment:

If my life ever stops matching the words I say—

I pause.

I look my girls in the eye.

I ask Cindy how she's doing.

I shut the laptop.

Take a walk.

And come back different.

Because this book?

This mission?

It's not a performance.

It's the permission I wish someone had given me years ago—
to slow down,
to show up,
to lead from love.

Not just out there.

Here.

In my home.

First.

Always.

Winning the Inner Battle

Self-leadership isn't just about managing time.

It's about facing the internal lies:

“You're weak.”

“You'll never get this right.”

“You're not enough.”

Strong dads don't avoid that voice.

They face it—

then show up anyway.

The TAG Framework: Tell. Ask. Give.

I needed something simple.

Something I could grab onto when I felt stuck.

It started in an accountability group.
We were spinning our wheels—
talking, not moving.

So we made it a game:
TAG—you're it.

T — Tell the Truth.

Say where you are.
Out loud. No filters. No spin.

A — Ask for Help.

Text a friend.
Speak up.
Let someone in.

G — Give What You Need.

Need grace? Give it.
Need encouragement? Offer it.

TAG isn't a cure.
It's a lifeline.
A way out of isolation.
A way back into movement.

Playing TAG: Closing the Action Gap

For a long time, I lived in the land of “almost.”
Ideas.
Intentions.
No traction.

And this book?
It almost didn't happen.
Started in 2019.
Started. Stopped.
Life got loud.
Doubt crept in.
I nearly walked away.
Then I tried something simple:
I started tagging friends.
"I'm writing this piece.
I'll send it when I'm done.
Then I'll TAG Steve."
Suddenly, I wasn't stuck.
I was in motion.
That's the power of TAG.
It pulled me out of my head—
and back into aligned action.
One moment.
One message.
One TAG at a time.

Reset: One Honest Moment

REFLECT:

Where are you running on fumes?
And who's feeling it most at home?

Be honest.

Your tone.

Your patience.

Your presence.

Is your family getting the best of you —
or what's left of you?

This isn't about shame.

It's about ownership.

ACT:

Pick one move that refills your tank.

Do it within the next 24 hours.

- Go to bed when you said you would.
- Take a 10-minute walk—no phone, no noise.
- Text a friend: “TAG—hold me to this.”

Then TAG it:

- Tell the truth about where you're at.
- Ask for support before you need to crash.
- Give what you need to someone else today.

You don't have to fix everything.

But you can't keep running on empty.

Capacity first.

Presence next.

Legacy always.

BREAK THE SAME LOOP. SHOW UP ANYWAY.



Unstoppable Dad,
There's one fear we carry that rarely gets air.
We don't name it on team calls.
We don't drop it in our men's group.

But it shows up—
Late at night,
When we lie in bed staring at the ceiling.
Or after another moment we didn't handle well.

And it sounds like this:
"I'm failing them."

Not loud.
Not dramatic.
Just heavy—
like a cinderblock on your chest.

You snapped.
And the shame still lingers.
You checked out.
And now you wonder if it's too late to check back in.

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

You've tried —
but it still feels like you're losing ground.

That voice?

"You're messing this up."

"You're not enough."

"They'd be better off with someone stronger."

That voice is a liar.

This isn't about parenting tactics.

It's about the fear that's been calling the shots —
so you can finally lead from truth, not shame.

The Night I Almost Believed the Lie

It was one of those weeks.

No margin. No rhythm.

Just noise.

Dinner felt like a ticking bomb.

My youngest pushed back — nothing major.

But I snapped.

"Just listen to me and your mom!"

Instant regret.

Her face crumpled.

Silence dropped —
and not the peaceful kind.

The kind that echoes.
The kind that makes you wonder
if you just did permanent damage.

I walked away.
Laid down.
Stared at the ceiling,
like it held an answer.

And that voice came back:
“This is who you are now.”
“You’re blowing it.”
“They’ll remember this more than anything good you’ve done.”

I wanted to stay in bed—
let the guilt harden into distance.
Move on like nothing happened.

That used to be my pattern.
But I’ve grown since then.

I got up.
Walked into her room.
Sat beside her in the dark.

And I told her the truth:
“I’m sorry. Not just for yelling—
but for how I’ve been showing up lately.
I’ve been tired, and I let that leak out on you.
That’s not your fault.”

She looked at me, soft eyes, small voice:
“I forgive you, Daddy.”

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

That's when it hit me again:
They don't need me to be perfect.
They need presence.
They need real.

Where the Fear Really Began

This fear didn't start with parenting.
It started the day my brother died.
That was the first time I truly felt like I had let someone I loved
down.

"If I had called more —"
"If I had been a better brother —"
"Maybe I could've saved him."

That guilt didn't stay in the past;
It came with me —
into marriage,
into fatherhood,
into every room I entered.

For years, I parented as if I were walking a tightrope —
One wrong step,
and everything would collapse again.

But that's not a strength.
That's fear — dressed up like vigilance.

The Moment the Lie Broke

I sat across from a counselor,
years after Brian's death,
still holding it all.

I finally spoke the words:
"I feel like I failed him."

Then I broke —
not from weakness,
but from honesty.

He looked at me and said:
"Nate—you were a college kid
trying to figure out your own life.
You didn't fail him."

"You've been carrying a weight
you were never meant to hold."

Something cracked.
Because I had been.

The Real Lie

The deeper fear isn't just,
"I'm failing them."

It's this:
"If I fail—then I am a failure."

That's the lie.

And it drives us to:

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

- Over-function
- Over-control
- Over-compensate

But shame doesn't make us better dads.

It just makes us scared to tell the truth.

What Shame Never Taught Me

Shame says:

“You’ll never get this right.”

Self-compassion replies:

“You’re still learning—and you’re still here.”

Your kids don’t need perfection.

They need a model—a dad who:

- Owns his stuff
- Comes back after the mess
- Stays soft when it would be easier to shut down

They need a real leader—

a man who shows them what grace looks like in motion.

What Real Leadership Looks Like

The strongest leaders I know?

They don’t hide their screw-ups.

They own them.

Fully.

Without flinching.

You don't need to prove anything,

or be the hero.

You need to be honest.

Because whatever you avoid in yourself

will eventually show up in your home.

That's why I lead differently now.

Not to be impressive —

but to leave my daughters a different blueprint.

Not one built on pressure and perfection.

But one anchored in grace, truth, and repair.

Reset: Rewriting the Fear of Failing

REFLECT

Where are you carrying silent shame?

Mistaking it for strength?

What lie still creeps in when all is quiet?

“You’re blowing it.”

“They’ll never forget that moment.”

“You’re not enough.”

Now rewrite it:

“They don’t need me to be perfect. They need me to be

present.”

“I’m growing—and I always come back.”

ACT

Pick one moment from today that didn’t go your way.

Don’t shame yourself—reclaim it.

- Name it—honestly.
- Replace the lie with truth.
- Lead again—with love, not fear.

Because here’s what they’ll remember:

Not the snap—

but the repair.

Not the guilt—

but the comeback.

You’re not failing.

You’re becoming an Unstoppable Dad.

And every time you get back up—

You’re building a legacy.

THE MIRROR EFFECT



Unstoppable Dad,
I've heard it a thousand times:
"I just want my kids to have a better life."
"I want them to be stronger than me."
"I don't want them to carry my baggage."

I've said it too.

But here's what life keeps teaching me:
They don't become what we say.
They become what we live.

The Mirror Effect

Your kids are always watching.
Not just your words—but your tone.
Not just your rules—but your reactions.
Not just your lectures—but your lifestyle.
They're learning:

- How to handle stress—by how you handle yours
- How to treat people—by how you treat them when no one's watching

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

- How to live with purpose—or drift—by how you show up when it's hard

They may not follow your advice.

But they will absorb your example.

That's the mirror effect.

You are the model—whether you like it or not.

The Moment That Stopped Me Cold

You've heard the story.

Dinner. Tension. My youngest pushed back.

I snapped.

But it wasn't just the moment that hurt.

It was what I saw in her eyes—

a reflection of me I didn't want to see.

I thought I was having a stormy night.

But to her?

It was a blueprint.

That's when it hit me:

I wasn't just shaping her with my words.

I was shaping her with my energy.

My tone.

My presence—or my absence.

Years ago, I would've brushed it off.

Corrected her tone.

Justified my stress.

Moved on.

Now?

I pause.

I breathe.

And I ask:

“What’s she learning from me right now?”

“What kind of man is she seeing in the mirror?”

What Happened Next

Not long after, one of my daughters snapped at her sister.

Before I could say anything—

she walked over, looked her in the eye, and said:

“I’m sorry for how I said that.”

Not because I told her to.

Not because we had a long talk.

But because she’d seen it live.

That moment wasn’t perfect.

But it was real.

She didn’t just apologize.

She repaired it.

And that showed me something I’ll never forget:

They’re not waiting for the perfect dad.

They’re learning how to be human—

by watching how I handle mine.

The Silent Lessons We Teach

It's easy to say:

"You're enough."

"You can ask for help."

"You don't have to be perfect."

But if they never see you live that truth?

They won't believe it.

If they watch you grind without rest—

Numb out with a screen—

Shut down when things get hard—

They'll learn that instead.

Sometimes I see my girls arguing, pulling away from each other—

and I feel a lump in my throat.

I think of Brian.

Of how the space between us grew—

and we never entirely found our way back.

And I pray:

"Let them find their way back to each other—before it's too late."

"Let them carry something different forward."

The Legacy You Live Right Now

When I think about Brian, it all resonates more deeply.

He carried pressure.

Perfectionism.

Performance.

And somewhere along the way, he believed:

“If I can’t keep it all together, I’m not worth keeping around.”

That belief cost him everything.

And I refuse to pass that lie down to my daughters.

If I want them to know their worth isn’t tied to output—

I have to live like that’s true.

If I want them to lead with love, courage, and honesty—

I have to show them how.

Not with speeches.

With my life.

Integrity in Action

Integrity isn’t what I say.

It’s what I choose when no one’s watching.

And in fatherhood?

It’s what they absorb—

because they’re always watching.

That’s the legacy I want to live:

Not polished.

Not perfect.

But honest.
Intentional.
Present.

Reset: Your Mirror Check

REFLECT:

If your kids repeated how you show up today—
your tone, your habits, your way of handling pressure—
Would that be a legacy you'd be proud of...
or a pattern they'll spend years trying to unlearn?

ACT:

Pick one pattern you're passing on—good or bad.
Then:

- Call it out.
- Interrupt it once.
- Replace it with the example you want them to carry forward.

Because who you are
is the mirror they'll carry.

And that mirror?

It's being shaped right now.

PART III

LEAD AT HOME



Show Up Where It Matters Most.

Legacy isn't built in the spotlight.

It's built in living rooms. At bedtime. During chaos.

This is about emotional presence, not perfect parenting.

Start here.

THE LOVE THEY'LL IMITATE



Unstoppable Dad,
Let me say something complicated—but honest.

Some of the most potent things I'm passing down
aren't the things I *mean* to teach.
They're the things I inherited—
often without even realizing it.

And now I see it clearly:
What do my kids believe about love, safety, and trust?
They're learning that from me.

Not from what I say—
but from how I show up when things get hard.

This chapter isn't about blame.
It's about legacy.
It's about choosing what gets passed down—
and what ends with you.

What Are They Learning from You?

Whether you're married, co-parenting, or somewhere in between,

your kids are learning more from you than you realize.

Not from what you *tell* them—

but from what they *live with you* every day.

They're learning:

- What love looks like in conflict
- How trust is handled after it's broken
- Whether respect depends on agreement
- What presence feels like when it's not easy

You don't have to get it right every time.

But you do have to take responsibility for your part.

Even when it's hard.

Especially when it's hard.

You might think you're just trying to keep the peace.

But what your kids *see*

is how you handle the storm.

They're also learning how to receive love—

by watching how you receive it.

You're Not Just Loving Them—You're Leading Them

Here's what I now know:

My parents gave me what they could.

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

They loved me.

They tried.

They stayed.

And still—

some of the most important things I've learned
about marriage and leadership
came from noticing what was *missing*—
and choosing a different way forward.

I'm not here to rewrite their story.

I'm here to live mine—

one rooted in presence, truth, and intentional love.

That's your invitation, too.

You don't have to stay stuck in what you inherited.

You get to lead differently.

- If you're in the marriage, show up.
- If you're co-parenting, lead with honor.
- If you've messed it up, start again.
- If it feels one-sided, hold your ground.

Not to prove anything.

But because the way you treat their mom—
especially when it's hard—
is shaping how they'll show up
in every relationship that matters.

You're not just showing them how to love.

You're showing them what love requires.

Reset: What Kind of Legacy Are You Building?

REFLECT:

What did you learn about love, conflict, or presence growing up—

even if no one ever said it out loud?

- Which of those messages are you still carrying?
- What are your kids learning about love from how you show up right now?
- If they repeated your tone, your habits, or your way of handling conflict...
- Would that be a win—or a warning?

ACT:

This week, take one intentional step to lead relationally—with more presence, humility, or repair.

- Say the thing you've been avoiding
- Own the tone—not just the words
- Show your kids what healthy love looks like
- Do one small act of reconnection—with your partner, your ex, or your child

Because they're not just watching how you love.

They're learning how to live.

You don't have to have it all figured out.

But you do have to stay in the fight.

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

And every time you do?
You're not just raising kids.
You're reshaping a legacy.
You're building a kind of love they'll never forget.

SPEAK SO THEY LISTEN



Mastering Intentional Communication

Unstoppable Dad,
Let me ask you something:
When was the last time your words landed?

Not a lecture.
Not a fix-it speech.

I mean those rare, sacred moments when you spoke—
and your child didn't just hear you...
they *felt* you.

They didn't just nod...
they leaned in.

That kind of communication changes everything.

She Was Listening

On my oldest daughter's ninth birthday,
I got proof that modeling pays off—
even when it feels like it doesn't.

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

A friend was melting down at pickup.

Without missing a beat, my daughter said calmly:

“That’s one way to make sure you don’t get what you want.”

My words—spoken months earlier—
echoed back through her.

No sarcasm. No sass.

Just lived wisdom.

And it hit me again:

They’re always listening.

Even when they roll their eyes.

Even when they walk away.

Your example echoes.

Why They Tune Us Out

We think if we say it better, longer, louder—they’ll get it.

But deep down, we know that’s not true.

- Kids drift mid-sentence.
- Spouses glaze over while we “fix.”
- We talk more than we listen.

Why?

Because people don’t tune us out when we lack words.

They tune us out when they don’t feel **safe** enough to let us in.

The Moment That Convicted Me

My oldest came home—
shoulders low, eyes heavy.
Friend drama.

She opened up.
I bulldozed the moment.

“People can be like that.
You just gotta let it go.”

Instant shutdown.
I’d paved over tenderness with advice—
turned connection into correction.

Moment gone.
Lesson learned:

She didn’t need me to fix the feeling.
She needed to feel safe *having* it.

The Power of Emotional Safety

Weeks later, she tried again.
Same hurt.

This time, I fought the fixer:
“Wow—that must’ve been rough. Tell me more.”
She did—word by word, layer by layer.

I solved nothing.
But the connection deepened.

She felt seen.

She felt safe.

She felt heard.

Sometimes, that's the miracle we almost miss.

Conflict Without Control

Real life isn't always calm.

Conflict shows up:

- Dinner chaos
- Bedtime stalls
- Car-ride meltdowns

Here's the shift:

Unhealthy conflict seeks control.

Healthy connection stays *present*—even in the mess.

You don't have to win.

You don't need the last word.

You don't have to fix it right now.

Just stay:

- Curious
- Calm
- Connected

Longer than is comfortable—

long enough to prove your presence isn't conditional.

What My Brother's Silence Taught Me

I'll never know why Brian didn't open up—
or what might've changed if I'd asked better questions,
or held the silence longer.

But here's what I do know:

I didn't create space.

I didn't lean in.

And I carry that.

I can't rewrite his story.

But I can do better in the ones I'm writing now.

Reset: The Connection-Over-Control Challenge

REFLECT:

In moments when you usually correct, command, or retreat—
what would curiosity look like?

Who most needs to feel heard—not fixed—today?

ACT:

Each day this week, pick one moment you'd normally:

- Correct
- Command
- Retreat

Instead, stay:

- Kneel or get eye-level

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

- Put the phone down
 - Say, “Tell me more—”
 - Listen. Just listen.
-

You Don't Need Perfect Words

Your words matter—
but how they *feel* matters more.

Speak so they feel safe.

Listen so they feel seen.

Love so they feel held, not handled.

You've got the voice.

You've got the presence.

Let's use both—with heart, and with purpose.

RAISING RESILIENT KIDS



Teaching Strength Through Struggle

Unstoppable Dad,
You want your kids to be strong.
Not just tough—resilient.

- Strong enough to carry pressure
- Strong enough to fail without quitting
- Strong enough to rise after the fall

But here's the tension:
You want to protect them.
And sometimes, without meaning to,
you rescue them from the very struggle meant to grow them.

What I Used to Get Wrong

I thought my job was to shield my daughters from anything hard:

- Losing
- Failing
- Feeling left out

But I learned something:
Shielding doesn't build strength.
It builds dependence.

The Day She Found Her Own Way Through

Online school.

Weird rhythm. New expectations.

Then came the assignment:

"Record yourself speaking on video."

She froze.

Eyes full. Shoulders heavy.

I wanted to fix it—email the teacher, smooth it over.

But I didn't.

I said:

"What if you talk to someone who makes you feel safe?"

She looked at our dog Benny, asleep on the couch.

Turned to the laptop.

Hit record.

And spoke—right to the dog.

It wasn't polished.

It wasn't easy.

But it was **hers**.

She did the hard thing her way.

And that's what resilience looks like:

Quiet courage.

Built in small, ordinary choices.

Rescue vs. Leadership

Rescue whispers:

“You can’t handle this.”

Leadership says:

“I believe in who you’re becoming.”

Rescue feels kind.

But it steals strength.

Letting Consequences Be the Teacher

Real love doesn’t always prevent pain.

Sometimes, it lets the lesson land.

- Forgot homework? Don’t save the day.
- Broke trust? Let them rebuild it.
- Hurt someone? Walk them through making it right.

Natural consequences are **honest** teachers.

Let them learn now—when the stakes are low.

Grit Is Caught, Not Taught

If I want my daughters to be resilient,

I can’t just say the words.

They need to **see** me:

- Show up tired
 - Own my mistakes
 - Keep going when it's easier to check out
-

The Confidence Bridge I Built (One Mile at a Time)

I used to think confidence was something you waited for —
like lightning before the risk.

But I learned:

Confidence is built, not found.

I built mine on the road.

One early mile.

One run I didn't feel like doing.

One choice to keep going.

Eventually, I ran a 50K.

Then a sub-2-hour half marathon.

Not for speed.

For integrity.

Because the same bridge I built mile by mile —

I walked across to write this book.

Word by word.

Doubt by doubt.

And I finished.

My daughters saw it.

They didn't just see what I wrote.

They saw how I showed up.

That's resilience.

What I Now Believe

Confidence isn't a prerequisite.

It's a **byproduct**.

You don't wait to feel brave.

You move.

That same bridge?

It works for parenting, marriage, business—

Everything that matters.

Reset: Your Resilience Check

REFLECT

When your kid struggles—

do you rescue them...

or lead them through it?

ACT

Let them wrestle with one hard thing this week.

Stay beside them—not in front.

Then ask:

- What did you learn about yourself?
- What would you do differently next time?

Resilience isn't built in rescue.

It's built in the bounce-back.

They Don't Need Easy. They Need You.

Your kids don't need you to soften every blow.

They need your strength in the middle of it.

Let them struggle.

Let them rise.

Let them **see** what real courage looks like.

Because resilient kids don't just happen.

They're raised.

By **present** dads.

Not perfect ones.

And that's who you're becoming—

One resilient moment at a time.

BROTHERHOOD OVER ISOLATION



You Were Never Meant to Do This Alone

Unstoppable Dad,

If you've made it this far, I already know:

- You care.
- You're in the fight.
- You want to lead with strength and love.

But let's be real—

You can't carry this alone.

I tried.

And it nearly broke me.

The Silent Killer of Strong Men

I thought strength meant:

- Hold it together
- Handle it all
- Need no one

So I smiled.

Nodded.

Said “I’m good”—even when I wasn’t.

Behind the scenes, I was drowning.

Surrounded by people...

but more alone than ever.

And I started pulling away

from the very ones who loved me most.

The Afternoon I Knew I Was in Trouble

I sat in my car.

Phone in hand.

Mind swirling.

I told myself:

“Just push through. Don’t bother anyone.”

I had good men in my life.

Men who had said, “Anytime, brother.”

But I didn’t reach out.

Not because I didn’t need to—

but because I didn’t want to *look* like I did.

The lie got louder:

- “Real men figure it out.”
- “You’re the only one struggling.”
- “No one will understand.”

I didn't break down that day —
but something inside me cracked.
And the drift got stronger.

What I Wish I Had Done for Brian

You know about losing my brother.
Here's the part I still carry:
I don't think he knew he wasn't alone.
And I didn't fight hard enough to show him.

I wish I had called more.
Asked better questions.
Leaned in, even when it felt awkward.

Created a space that said:
"You're safe. I'm here. You don't have to carry this alone."

I'll never know what might've changed.
But I carry that ache as fuel now.

I refuse to live isolated.
And I refuse to let other good men drift without a fight.

The Power of Brotherhood

The strongest men I know?
They're not the loudest.
Not the most polished.
They're the ones who:

- Let people in
- Ask for help
- Refuse to settle for shallow

Brotherhood isn't a luxury.
It's survival.
For you—and for them.

What Changed Everything for Me

It started with two men: Bobby and Steve.
I dropped the mask.
Reached out.

At first?

Awkward. Surface-level. Stiff.
But we kept showing up.

Week after week.
We talked life.
Got real.
Held space.

They've seen my best and my worst.
Called me up when I drifted.
Stood with me when the weight felt unbearable.

I can say this without flinching:

**I'm a better husband, dad, and man—
because I stopped trying to do this alone.**

How to Build Your Circle

If you don't have this yet—

I get it.

But hear me clearly:

You can't wait for it.

You have to build it.

It won't be perfect.

It might feel clunky.

That's okay.

Start small.

Keep showing up.

Brotherhood doesn't require hours.

Sometimes it's just:

- A 10-minute call
- A voice memo
- A simple, "You good?"

Start here:

1. Look for Men in the Fight

Not perfect—just honest.

2. Start Small. Go First.

Text someone.

Set a coffee.

Ask one real question.

Tell one honest truth.

3. Create Consistent Touchpoints

- Weekly call
- Monthly check-in
- 3-minute check-in text

4. Be the Friend You Wish You Had

Reach out first.

Check in early.

Don't wait until someone's drowning.

Throw the rope while they're still treading water.

You Were Never Meant to Carry This Alone

This mission?

Too heavy to carry solo.

Your wife needs you steady.

Your kids need you rooted.

And you need your people.

The ones who:

- Check in when it's quiet
- Hold space without fixing
- Fight beside you when your tank's on empty

Don't wait for the breakdown.

Don't disappear.

Build your circle.

Throw the rope early.

Stay in the fight.

Because Unstoppable Dads don't drift.

They link arms.

They lean in.

They lead together.

You don't need a thousand men.

You just need a few

who've got your back when life hits hardest.

And you can be that for them, too.

Reset: Your Brotherhood Challenge

REFLECT:

If you keep carrying this alone—out of pride, fear, or habit—

What will it cost you?

And who else will pay the price?

ACT:

Before today ends, reach out to one dad.

It doesn't have to be deep.

Just say:

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

“Hey—

I don’t want to do this dad thing alone anymore.

You up for coffee this week?”

It might feel awkward.

Do it anyway.

Circles don’t form by chance.

They start with one text.

Because brotherhood isn’t extra—

It’s the fuel for the Unstoppable Dad you’re becoming.

YOUR LEGACY STARTS NOW



Daily Decisions That Define Your Family's Future

Unstoppable Dad,

This page isn't the end. It's your next step.

Legacy isn't what you leave.

It's what you live—right now:

- Every word you speak
- Every choice you make
- Every time you lean in when checking out would be easier

Your legacy is already in motion.

Real Dad Moment

My youngest was labeled a “behavior problem” in kindergarten. Sticker charts. Meetings. Every trick—nothing worked.

Was I failing her?

Missing something, even while trying to be intentional?

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Turns out—

She didn't need more discipline.

She needed the right support.

We switched schools.

We fought.

And now? She's thriving.

It was messy. Exhausting.

But worth it.

Because showing up isn't about having answers—

It's about refusing to quit until your child gets what they need.

The Win I Chose Off the Course

This fall, I was signed up for a marathon.

Goal time: 3 hours, 59 minutes.

But that same weekend, a men's retreat called to me.

Old Nate would've crammed both in.

New Nate chose alignment.

I skipped the public race.

Still ran the miles—just later, solo, quiet.

No crowd. No fanfare.

Just me, the road, and peace.

Because this win wasn't measured in time.

It was measured in presence, purpose, and legacy.

The Shift That Changed Everything

The moment I chose the retreat over the race —
I felt peace.

When a decision feels anchored, not pressured —
That's alignment.

At the retreat, I was all in.
And when I run those 26.2 miles alone —
I'll be all in then too.

Legacy isn't doing more.
It's choosing better.
With clarity, courage, and control.

The Myth of "One Day"

I used to say things like:

- "One day, I'll slow down —"
- "One day, I'll be more present —"
- "One day, I'll get it right —"

But one day isn't promised.
This day is.

And your kids?
They remember the dad who shows up —
Not the plan he never lived.

What Legacy Really Looks Like

Legacy is built in the quiet spaces:

- Staying calm instead of snapping
- Reading the bedtime story when you're fried
- Saying "I'm sorry"
- Lighting up when they walk into the room

Thousands of small decisions whisper:

I'm here. I'm present. I'm building what matters.

The Night I Almost Missed It—Again

Bedtime.

Phone in hand. Half-listening.

Then a whisper:

"Be here."

I locked the phone.

Looked her in the eyes.

Asked, "What's the story?"

She lit up.

And I was reminded:

They never needed me to be perfect.

They needed me present.

That tiny, sacred moment?

That's legacy.

What Brian's Story Taught Me

Losing my brother shattered the illusion of second chances.

I once thought legacy arrived after success.

Now I know it's built one choice at a time:

- With my wife
- With my daughters
- With the decision right in front of me

Most of those choices aren't dramatic.

They're ordinary.

But Often, Legacy Looks Like This:

Letting go of something good

To grab hold of something better.

Not because I had to—

But because of who I'm becoming.

That's legacy.

And I'm building it now.

Reset: Your Legacy in Action

REFLECT:

If your kids inherited your decisions today — not your dreams —
What kind of legacy would they carry?

ACT:

Pick one legacy-defining move this week.

- Write it down.
- Tell someone who will hold you to it.
- Follow through.

Let your next choice

become your loudest message.

TOOLS TO STAY UNSTOPPABLE



Keep going—with the right support beside you.

Unstoppable Dad,

You didn't just read a book.

You made a shift.

You reflected.

Reset.

Told the truth.

Started leading from presence.

Now it's time to keep going—

Not harder, just more aligned.

Not alone, but supported.

The tools below aren't extras.

They're anchors.

When the fog rolls in—when the voice of “not enough” creeps
back in—**start here.**

THE UNSTOPPABLE DAD DECISION FILTER

Ask this before any yes, no, or taking the next step:

- **Alignment:** Does this match the man I'm becoming?
- **Vision:** Does this build the future I want—or just relieve pressure now?
- **Motive:** Am I acting from love—or trying to escape?

Let this be your compass—

Not for perfection, but for presence.

THE DAILY COMPASS

Each morning, pause and ask:

“If today were a paragraph of my legacy—how would I write it?”

Use this before you lead:

- Before meetings
- Before hard conversations
- Before walking through the front door

Not a checklist.

A reset.

Every day counts.

THE 60-DAY UNSTOPPABLE RESET

Draw the line.

Mark today as the start.

Circle the date 60 days from now.

One moment of presence—every day.

Not to prove anything.

But to practice what matters.

(Want daily guidance? Sign up for the Weekly Reset below.)

REALIGN WITH TRUTH

Every chapter gave you a starting point.

Return to those reflection + action steps when you drift.

Legacy doesn't require perfection.

It requires returning—again and again—to what matters.

Don't try to do it all.

Pick one. Do it today.

STAY CONNECTED



THE WEEKLY RESET

One email. One truth. Every Monday.

Join here: www.intentionalnate.com/unstoppable

Each week I'll send:

- 1 gut-check question
 - 1 story or mindset reset
 - 1 simple action to lead with presence
-

BOOK A 1:1 CLARITY CALL

Sometimes, you need real talk.

No fluff. No hype. Just one dad to another.

What you'll walk away with:

- Clarity on what matters most
- Language for what's holding you back
- One aligned next step

Book your free call: <https://calendly.com/natewagner08/30min>

You don't need to figure this out alone. Let's talk.

LET'S KEEP GOING—TOGETHER

You weren't made to carry this alone.

The book was the spark.

But the mission? It's daily.

Let's build the kind of life your kids will **feel**—

Every hug.

Every word.

Every moment of presence.

You've started something that matters.

Let's make it real—one day at a time.

TO THE UNSTOPPABLE DAD



Unstoppable Dad,

Let's tell the truth.

You've been through more than these pages could name.

You've led meetings after sleepless nights.

Held back tears during bedtime stories.

Walked through the door with a smile—when the day nearly broke you.

And still, you didn't quit.

You didn't quit when you felt like a fraud.

You didn't quit when you snapped and hated how it felt.

You didn't quit when your presence felt small and your failures felt loud.

You showed back up.

You kept coming back.

And that?

That's what makes you Unstoppable.

This isn't about becoming some polished version of "Dad."

It's about becoming *you*—

Aligned. Present. Real.

The kind of dad your kids will talk about—

Not because you had all the answers...

But because you stayed in the fight.

They'll remember your tone shifting.

Your eyes lighting up.

Your hand reaching for theirs.

They'll remember the shift.

So if you've ever doubted it, hear me now:

You didn't miss your shot.

You didn't blow your chance.

You're right on time.

Unstoppable isn't about speed.

It's about choosing—again and again—

To show up with love, leadership, and presence.

Even when it's hard.

Especially when it's hard.

You didn't just finish a book.

You made a declaration.

So keep going.

Keep deciding.

Keep becoming.

There is no finish line.

Because the legacy you're building?

It's not a theory.

It's your life.

And it's already happening.

And I'm right here with you.

Let's finish strong.

Let's begin again—every day.

Let's build the kind of life our kids will **feel**—

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

In every hug.

Every word.

Every moment.

I'm in.

See you on the path.

Let's live it.

Let's lead it.

Let's build the legacy—together.

—Nate

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad starts now.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



This book isn't just a message.

It's my life.

My story.

My scars.

My surrender.

It began as a whisper in December 2019 —

a quiet nudge to name what I was learning as a dad.

Most days, I didn't know what I was doing.

Some days, I wanted to quit.

But I kept showing up.

And I didn't do it alone.

To Cindy—

Thank you for holding the home, the heart, and the space.

For every early morning.

Every quiet burden.

Every late-night debrief when I came back tired or scattered.

You have been the anchor behind every word.

I love you.

To Emma and Natalie—

You were part of this project from the start.

I didn't just write this for you.

I wrote it because of you.

You lived the chapters with me.

You saw me edit on vacations, wrestle with the final pieces,

Becoming an Unstoppable Dad

and navigate the tension between being fully present—and being pulled by old habits.

Emma, you sat beside me on the day I broke my own rule—not with judgment, but with grace.

That moment reminded me that legacy isn't about perfection.

It's about realignment.

And I realigned because of you.

I hope that when you read this someday,
you don't just see your names in the back.

You see your fingerprints on every page.

And you remember:

Dad didn't just write about love and presence—he fought to live it.

With you. For you. Always.

To the ones who stayed when the message was messy—

Thank you.

You didn't need me polished.

You just showed up.

And your belief carried me.

To my Hardy Club brothers and sisters—

You walked with me when I doubted this.

You let me be both the author and the man in process.

Your questions sharpened me.

Your presence kept me grounded.

This wasn't mine alone—

it was forged in brotherhood.

To the Unstoppable Dads—

This is your wake-up call.

Presence over pressure.

Legacy over perfection.

Love over performance.

You're not behind.

You're not broken.

You're not alone.

We're just getting started.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Nate Wagner helps high-achieving dads stop coasting and start leading—with love, strength, and presence.

For over a decade, Nate worked as a professional therapist, walking with people through trauma, addiction, grief, and the quiet fight to keep going.

But his biggest transformation didn't happen in an office. It happened at home.

After years of doing everything “right”—working hard, staying steady, showing up—Nate hit a wall.

He was physically present but emotionally disconnected.

That wake-up call changed everything.

Determined to break the cycle, he rebuilt his life from the inside out.

He didn't chase hacks.

He embraced truth—simple, powerful principles that helped him shift from surviving to leading.

First in his own home.

Then with other dads caught in the same quiet grind.

Nate is also the surviving sibling of a brother lost to suicide—a loss that forever changed how he sees life, fatherhood, and legacy.

That story fuels every word he writes—and every dad he walks with.

Nate Wagner

Through writing, coaching, and speaking, Nate equips men across the country to lead themselves first—so they can lead their families well.

He helps dads trade autopilot for intention.

Performance for presence.

Pressure for peace.

He doesn't write from a mountaintop.

He writes from the middle of the fight—right beside the dad who's ready to wake up and lead on purpose.

Because he's still on that journey, too.

Nate lives in Pennsylvania with his wife and two daughters—the people who inspire everything he does.

Learn more or connect at: IntentionalNate.com