



Fatherhood: Shaping Responsible Boys and Men

Today, we live in a culture where the word "responsibility" is unpopular and "rights" is most popular. Everyone wants to assert their rights and no one wants to take personal responsibility. We are taught to stand up for our rights. But who will stand up for their responsibility? The end result is a culture where parents want the rights or benefits or parenthood but not the daily rearing responsibility. Employees want the rights or benefits of employment but not the accompanying responsibilities. Most unfortunately, this mindset now dominates much of our young male culture. Many young men want the rights to conceive a child but not the responsibility to provide for, protect and nurture the child. This mindset is most prevalent in the gang culture where young boys and men commit random and careless crimes and feel no responsibility to their community or fellow mankind.

How do we turn the dial back to personal responsibility for our young men and away from rights? Research indicates that boys who grow up in father-present households are more likely to lead responsible lives which steer clear of teen pregnancy, crime, illiteracy, substance abuse, poverty and the like. However, this does not happen with the mere physical presence of a father in the home. The father must be actively involved, committed, and responsible.

So what can a father do to be involved and instill the value of responsibility in his son? Here are some recommendations:

- **Walk the Talk. Be a living billboard of what true manhood and fatherhood is to your sons every day. And when you make a mistake, apologize and take full responsibility because this is what real men do.**
- **Consistently Demonstrate Respect for their Mother. No matter how great or challenging the relationship may be, demonstrate respect for your child's mother on a consistent basis. She may not be your wife but she will always be your child's mother. Responsible men respect others—Especially women and particularly their child's mother.**
- **Take Your Son To Work Where Appropriate. Show him that responsible men do things because they have to—Not merely because they want to. Let him know that you do not always feel like going to work but you have responsibility for a family.**
- **Talk To Your Son about Girls At The Appropriate Time. Let him know that he is not to abuse girls or women but act in a responsible manner. Hence, your behavior with his mother will be critically important here.**

- **Think before You Act. This is a much-needed trait in our young male culture where men are encouraged to act and not consider consequences. They must learn that we can choose our actions but not the consequences. No one can plant apple seeds and reap pears. Actions have uncontrollable consequences.**

Responsibility must no longer remain a word of some past time. We must bring this character trait to the forefront of our male culture and regain our young men. When we do this we will regain our culture and community for a more noble cause and existence. Fathers...it's time to work overtime at home.

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