

Be A Super Dad

Reflective Advice For Fatherhood

Gareth Wall

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DEDICATION

To Naomi, Freya and Noah.
I love you to the moon and back.

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To my mum and dad, thank you for giving me a great childhood and for showing me what stability and care look like in real life. I carry those early lessons with me every day.

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This book was written in between school runs, coaching sessions, and everyday life. If it helps another dad feel more confident, more connected, or more grounded in who they want to be, then it's done what I hoped it would.

Before We Dive In, Dad.

I want to offer you something to help you put this book into action—because being a better dad isn't just about what you read. It's about what you do with it.

Get Your Free 21-Day Fatherhood Challenge Workbook

I've created a free companion workbook to help you reflect, reset, and reconnect with what matters most—your kids, your values, and the kind of legacy you want to leave.

It's 21 short prompts—one a day—that help you make small, meaningful shifts in how you show up as a dad.

Whether this book finds you in a season of growth, struggle, or quiet curiosity, this challenge is here to support you.

 **Scan the QR code to get started**



Or visit: <https://beasuperdad.kit.com/dd8471f543>

You'll also receive occasional reflections, tools, and honest encouragement from me—straight to your inbox. No spam. No overwhelm. Just the kind of support I wish more dads had.

Thanks for picking up this book.
Let's think deeply and take action.

— Gareth Wall

1 Introduction

I still remember the day I became a dad, as if it were yesterday. I was 36, and it felt like I'd been preparing for that moment forever. It wasn't a smooth entrance for our daughter; there was a brief moment of panic, a rush of staff into the room, and then a ventouse delivery. But there she was—healthy, beautiful, and ours.

The room was quiet. Still. That strange hospital stillness that makes everything feel slow and unreal. I held her, dazed, barely breathing. I'd just met the person who would change my life forever, and I couldn't believe how something so small could hold so much meaning. Then, as if the universe wanted to mark the moment, Guns N' Roses started playing: "Sweet Child o' Mine." I can't hear that song now without being transported back, her warmth, the hum of machines, the flood of tears. The good kind. The overwhelming kind.

That wasn't just a turning point. It was the beginning of a whole new chapter. That moment reshaped my life. It led me to coach other dads, build a project that champions fatherhood, and eventually write the book I wish I'd had. I've spent nearly 30 years working with children and families, from residential care and behaviour change programmes to early years fatherhood work. So what's in here comes from the heart, time spent in the field, and real-life mistakes—mine and those of the dads I've worked with. Some of it is grounded in theory, but it's the kind of theory tested, questioned, and shaped through everyday experience. It's hard-won learning, turned into practical, reflective guidance to help you become the dad you want to be.

Before becoming a dad, I worked with children and their families daily. Holding my daughter made it real, raw, and personal. I grew up in a loving home with a gentle dad and an emotionally available mum. I had a quiet sense that being a dad would be part of my identity. I just didn't realise how deeply it would shape everything I became.

But not every child gets that kind of start. Working with children in care, many of whom had experienced neglect, trauma, and loss, opened my eyes. Reading their case files, filled with grief and harm, made me stop and re-evaluate my upbringing. It gave me perspective. I saw how easy I'd had it. It made me want to do more for those kids and for the dad I hoped to become.

Early in my career, I was mentored by a man named Tony Matthews. He taught me to look beyond behaviour and ask, "What need is this child trying to meet?" That question changed everything. However, it also meant unlearning old ways of thinking and confronting some uncomfortable truths.

I remember one evening at the children's home. It was 9 pm bedtime. I turned the telly off, just like always. The kids got restless. Stayed up. Played up. I felt frustrated; I'd followed the rules, hadn't I?

The next day in supervision, Tony gently helped me unpack it. "What do you think it felt like for them?" he asked. And then I saw it. I had the keys. I had the control. They had none. Without meaning to, I'd mirrored what they already knew too well, power being used on them, not with them.

That moment stuck with me. It shifted how I saw everything.

From then on, I stopped doing things to the children and started doing things with them. I gave warnings, offered choices, spoke kindly, brought drinks upstairs, and held boundaries without holding power over them. I didn't have the language at the time, but this was the beginning of trauma-informed practice, what I now know as helping children feel safe, seen, and supported. It transformed not just my work but also how I parent.

As I grew professionally, I grew personally. Tony's guidance didn't just shape how I worked. It shaped the kind of man and dad I would become. That's what this book is here to support you with, too. Over time, I transitioned from frontline care to helping parents, running a dad project, and coaching dads full-time.

The dads I work with? They want to surpass their fathers. They want to break cycles. They want to show up. And often, they're scared they're getting it wrong.

I've lived that fear. The whisper that says, "You're not enough." It echoes in my head after long days and short nights.

Despite my experience, I've been overwhelmed, exhausted, and uncertain. So, I leaned into learning. I read, watched, and asked questions. And, of course, I got it wrong many times.

Like the night I got up at 2 a.m. to change my daughter's nappy. I fed her. Dressed her. Nailing fatherhood.

Except I forgot the new nappy. Cue a complete outfit change, a bath, and the kind of 2 a.m. laughter that only comes after you've cried.

Another night, we realised we hadn't planned for bottle-feeding. We thought breastfeeding would work, but it didn't. I stood there half-asleep, squinting at formula instructions like they were written in ancient code. At the time, it felt huge. Looking back, it was just one more sentence in the messy, joyful, bewildering story of learning how to be a dad.

That's just it, isn't it? You leave the hospital with a baby and no instructions. Every job I've ever had came with training or an induction. Parenting? You get a car seat, instinct, and maybe a bag of nappies you're unsure how to use.

There is no manual, but you're writing one daily, guided by your kids. Every day, they show you what they need. Every 'Daddy, will you play with me', the bedtime refusals, the meltdowns in the supermarket, the cuddles and the 'I Love You's' are pointers to the chapters and headings in your book.

All this learning happens quietly behind closed doors while we're bleary-eyed, figuring it out. That's why the comparison game cuts so deep when we scroll and see smiling families in matching pyjamas, home-baked sourdough, and picture-perfect parenting. Meanwhile, you're burning toast and hoping you've got enough for the zoo trip. I've been there. I once saw a post of a dad proudly taking his kids out, and that quiet question crept in: Am I doing enough?

That doubt? It's everywhere. Our dads didn't have to live with this constant stream of curated perfection. We do. And it messes with our heads.

I wrote this to cut through the noise and bring you back to what matters—not the highlight reel, but the reality: cuddles, mess, tantrums, and connection. That's the good stuff.

If scrolling makes you feel worse, switch it off for a few days. Come back to your real life. That's where the magic is.

You don't need to be perfect. You need to be present. Honest. Willing to grow. That's what your kids need.

And if you're wondering where to start, you already have. You picked this up. That says something: You care. You want to grow. You're ready to look inward, and that takes real courage.

This book isn't for perfect dads. It's for real ones. Messy ones. Tired ones. Dads who lose their temper, doubt themselves, and still get up and try again.

This isn't a manual. It's a mirror, held up with care, so you can see yourself, not to judge, but to understand. It won't give you all the answers, but it will offer questions. It'll nudge. Challenge. Reassure. And maybe help you do one thing differently tomorrow.

We only get 936 weeks from birth to 18. If your child's 12, that's 624 gone. You're three-quarters through. I'm not saying this to panic you. I'm saying it because now is always the best time to reconnect.

Shut the laptop. Turn toward your child. Create something ordinary that you both look forward to. That's where love hides. For us, it's bedtime stories. Every night. No matter what. That's been our anchor.

What's yours?

If something you read here stirs something in you, please email me at beasuperdad@gmail.com.

Sometimes, being heard is all we need to keep going.

You're doing better than you think.

You've already started. Now let's keep going together.