

The Power of Vulnerability in Fatherhood

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SUMMARY

Joe Gonzalez, founder of Brooklyn Stroll Club, shares his journey into fatherhood and the importance of community for dads. He emphasizes that modern fatherhood requires support and connection, as many fathers feel isolated and overwhelmed. Through his initiative, he aims to create a space where dads can share experiences, learn from each other, and feel seen.

- *Fatherhood is rewarding but can be isolating and lonely.*
- *Joe founded Brooklyn Stroll Club to create a supportive community for dads.*
- *Many dads lack close friendships, with over 50% of men aged 25-40 feeling isolated.*
- *Community is crucial for emotional support during the transition to parenthood.*
- *Joe emphasizes the importance of validating children's feelings while maintaining boundaries.*
- *Parenting is a journey of self-discovery and healing, not just about raising children.*
- *The long-term goal of parenting should be to foster love and connection, not just immediate compliance.*
- *Open communication and vulnerability among fathers can help break stereotypes and build stronger communities.*

Parenting can be one of the most rewarding journeys of our lifetime, but at the same time, without a doubt, it [music] is one of the most difficult. And one of the reasons it's often most difficult is that it can [music] be so lonely and isolating. Today, I'm having an amazing conversation with someone who has changed what it means to be a modern dad. Joe Gonzalez is a New York-based father, media professional, and the founder of Brooklyn Stroll Club, built on the idea that dads also need belonging and community. Every parent needs a group to turn to for those moments when you're panicking or need support or can't put words to something that you're going to that's real but feels so confusing. And what he has done through Brooklyn Stroll Club is nothing less than remarkable. Joe and I unpack what it really means to be a father, what he hopes his kid says about him and the type of father he is, surprising things he's learned along the way, and really the power of not feeling alone.

I'm Dr. Becky and this is Good Inside. We'll be back right after this. >> Hi Joe. >> Hi. >> So happy to have you here. >> I'm so excited to be here. Thank you. >> So, let's just jump right in. So, why don't we start? Just tell me a little bit about how you kind of came to this world of fatherhood. What you noticed in terms of maybe what's absent from it, what it was really like and you didn't expect and then what you did about it because it's pretty remarkable.

>> Yeah. So, I became a dad almost about 2 years ago now. Um, when I found out me and my wife were having a kid, uh, I just it completely changed me. I was like, what am I going to do? We don't have family here. So I think for us it was like what are we going to do about that? How are we going to create a village for us? And I had been

documenting it online in Tik Tok and just really kind of documenting how I was experiencing what she was going through as well and just kind of being open and vulnerable about that. Then when my son came I'm like okay this is a lot to experience. You know I'm she's going through healing. She's going through so many different things as well. And so for me I was like how do I get community around? I need people who understand this. Like, this is something I've never experienced before. A lot of my friends maybe didn't have kids, aren't married, you know? So, I'm like, put a put a call online and I'm like, hey, where where do the dads hang out?

Like, I'm just like, I'm in Brooklyn. There's got to be dads around here somewhere. And kind of the consensus was, we don't know, you do it. And or there was like a Facebook group or something that didn't really feel inviting. So for me, I pretty much made a call out to, hey, do you guys want to meet up on a random Saturday and uh come to find out like dads really were open to that as well. So like 20 20 dads came through. U my son was about 4 months old and from there we've just started building this community called Brooklyn Stro Club and really didn't expect it to grow how it has. But I think for me what I found is just like community not only is needed for me but for others as well.

>> Yeah. and just your one twoline description of what Brooklyn Stroll Club is or maybe what it is underneath what people might see. Tell me a little bit about that. >> So, I would say Brooklyn Stroke Club, it always changes as far as I'm changing as well, but for right now, I would say Brooklyn Stroke Club is a community for dads to feel seen and supported while giving a new voice to modern fatherhood. >> Okay. There's so many things I want to unpack from what you said because you went online and kind of said like where did the dads at? Like where did the dads go? And it seems like is this right? You got interest but no answer.

Like everyone's like there's no I don't have an answer but I'm also kind of asking that question. Is that what happened? >> Yeah. It was kind of like uh well I don't know. Uh and it was a lot of moms that were just like oh I mean maybe my husband has done this or you know we have this Facebook group. It wasn't it didn't really point me anywhere that felt like >> where I belonged. You know what I'm saying?

>> So, >> do you think dads or let's even say dads to be? Cuz it sounds like you were thinking about this during the pregnancy >> are are also aware like I have this need for community. Was community always been a big thing for you before fatherhood and then the absence of it around this new identity was obvious to you? >> Yeah, I I so originally kind of my background is I come from the church. So the premise a lot of that is community groups and some of those fall short sometimes. You know when it comes to faith you can kind of go back and forth like I'm involved. I'm not I'm kind of contemplating where I'm at in life.

>> But fatherhood I'm here forever. So I think what I kind of got inspired was like hey I really want to create a group where I can evolve and grow in and that doesn't kind of fall apart. You know what I or I don't have to go back and forth and and contemplate this like I'm in I'm in fatherhood forever regardless. So having a community that empowers that was important to me. >> Yeah. And look, I think moms and dads are woefully under supported in general.

I know you and I have talked about that, but but there probably is a lot more for community for new moms. Are you in a new mom's group and are you in this group when you're pregnant and do you have your text thread? And have you found that that is something that moms have a little bit more built into their life or more optionality than than dads have traditionally had? >> Absolutely. I think moms really are great at community, great at building community, great at understanding what their needs are, what they're expecting, what they want in friendships. I think women are way better at just building strong connections with women. And I think that's the kind of uh thing that we've wrestled with or or struggled with as men. Um there's some stats by my friends at Mundo. Really? They have a stat that's like 58 55% of men between 25 to 40 uh have not one person that they feel close to. So I think that >> Wait, say that again.

>> So 50 50% of men between the ages of 25 to 45 don't have one person they feel close to. Which is interesting because if you don't have somebody one as a friend to you just by yourself, how can that affect you when you become a father and you're actually somebody's closest friend, you know, or as a partner to your to your to your partner, you know, how how can that affect you and how can that affect the way that you operate in the world? And that's just something I think we've answered or tried to figure out as we create the community.

>> Yeah. You know, a principle I think about a lot, and it's just feeling loud in my brain right now, is we can't change the hard. We can change the alone. >> And the transition to parenthood is really hard. >> Yeah. >> And I think sometimes we focus on trying to change the hard. It's not that hard. Or here's how to make it easier. But if you think about not changing the hard, if the hard just is the hard because life has hard things. and instead you focus on wait maybe the problem isn't the hard it's just hard plus alone and what if I actually focus on the alone piece it's actually not to say it's so easy to change but I actually think that part is >> we have a little bit more agency yeah in changing that and that's exactly what you created and transitioning to becoming a father what if I just didn't feel alone every Saturday what if I put my baby in a stroller walked around with other dads I don't know if it's probably not structured conversations who knows what we talk about but I'm literally no longer are alone in this brand new identity I'm taking on.

[illegible]

Um, to me, it feels like I'm not doing it alone. Of course, I have my partner, which is always the support for me, but being able to have another dad to experience, hey, your kids going through this, my kids going through this. I feel a little bit more less alone in that element. >> Yeah. And look, I I don't want to be shy about naming this. The transition to having a baby can be tricky sometimes in a partnership. And sometimes you have a little tiff or something's going on.

You're feeling distant. And actually having someone to talk to about it helps you vet, helps you feel understood, maybe helps you develop a new perspective to be more productive with your partner. Our partner can't be the only person we're talking to when we're having a hard time with our partner, right? It's too circular. >> No, absolutely. There's dads in the community that I look up to how they handle things or I'm like, "Hey, I actually wouldn't handle it that way."

And it helps me kind of regulate what I'm doing and how I'm expressing myself not only to my partner but also to my child. So it's like, hey, I love the way that you're talking to your wife or how y'all experience this together and y'all went through it together or you know what, it's 100 there's we have meetups with 100 dads. Not everybody handles things well, but being able to regulate those and understand where I want to take things, where I want to kind of leave things from other people and other experiences is helpful. You know, I'm curious what you think about this. I'm not even sure of my own answer, but I'm just going to put it out there. Do you think most dads or most men when it comes to something that's hard, have they been socialized to think, I just have to make this better or pretend this isn't happening rather than maybe I could talk to someone about this or experience this with someone?

>> Yeah, I would say so. I think dad's I think the male uh maybe stereotype is just internalize a lot of those things. Uh find the solution on your own. Um and I think like that's been seen in society and and been seen in how men kind of operate maybe on isolation uh in politics in general in government and things like that. like when men get power and and and have those things that maybe aren't addressed, those I think those kind of play out a little bit differently, but your family needs you in those elements. And so to be able to like uh process those things, I think is really important.

>> Yeah. What what was it like when you became a dad? Like what what images come to mind or feelings or thoughts? >> Man, I think completely changed me. I think what I when I first saw my son, I had this amount immense responsibility that made me feel like I'm the sole responsibility. Of course, my wife was there. She had this whole she had this like tough process of giving birth. But, you know, even in that moment of seeing him, it's like she's healing. She's trying to figure out get better. And I'm like, okay, what am I doing now? And I think that responsibility of can I provide? Can I be there for him and unlearn all the patterns that maybe I learned in the past? Like what can I do for him that's better? And I think a lot of not only what can I do for him, but also what can I do for myself and how can I change the dynamic of maybe what he's seen and what he's going to experience kind of fell on me as well.

>> Yeah. You know, I read something you had said in another interview. It makes me think about what we're talking about here that so much about fatherhood isn't just about raising your kid. It's about re- raising parts of yourself. >> Yeah. I've been in a place where I everything means more. How I respond to him, how I respond to my wife, it matters. And I think I've really been trying to take those moments one at a time and not just like think about, hey, these are things that I need to address overall. Of course, um I need to work on this and this. Um, but being able to respond to my son out of love, out of care, patience, like there's elements maybe that my dad maybe fell short in that I want to give to him in a way that >> kind of heals not only him but myself, you know, and I and I think that it seeing him and how I've handled situations sometimes is a healing journey for me

as well. being able to him him him to have a tantrum or him to lose his cool and me to respond just out of love uh or really out of patience. I I kind of make myself proud in those elements in those times, you know?

>> I mean, I think you're getting to the heart of what parenting secretly is all about, right? I think so many times like we think having our kids are going to heal us or our kids will naturally heal us, but our our kids trigger old stuff in us. Kind of the opposite. I guess I didn't resolve that thing. And >> I think we can either look at that as something's wrong with me or I'm destined to repeat the interaction with my kid, they're kind of like showing me a mirror or shining light of something that if I can work through this, it's going to benefit them, but it's going to be maybe huge for me even in my non-parenting areas of life. And it sounds like that's kind of the >> journey. I mean, especially him being so pure and just a raw emotion of what a human is, like he's just experiencing things for the first time. So, being able to see that in a way that's like, hey, he doesn't know how he's responding to me. He doesn't know how he's acting in some areas. I do. I'm 30. I'm 33.

Like, I understand my responses. And so, it definitely has more of a responsibility to say, "How can I respond better?" He's It's his first time. It's not my first time. And not that I have I definitely have grace in how I respond and how I react, but can I be better the next time that he responds this way? And can I respond better to my partner the next time as well? You know, >> tell me a little bit about about your dad. Like you what do you remember growing up?

>> My dad, he he worked hard. He was a hard worker. Um, I never I that's one thing I learned about from my dad that I'm really proud of is that he he could provide he could make a way with whatever whatever he had uh whatever resources he could make. I think what I saw and why the community is so important to me is my dad was really isolated. I think he didn't have friendships and honestly I don't think he had the time to have friends and and I think that kind of put him in some isolation moments and I saw that in patterns maybe that he reacted or maybe that he expressed himself in different areas and so I think for me it was just important to like figure out how do I get around people >> take the good parts of my dad take the good parts of what he's been about and be able to >> channel it to something better and you know and that's what he would want.

That's what our parents have done for us. You know they for me my dad wanted me to be in a better school, wanted me to be in a better life. He was one of seven. So you know he had a lot going on and a lot of experiences with his siblings with his family. So of course like it was just a different upbringing in a different time but >> he worked so hard so that we can do this. And so I'm grateful for those moments but I'm also challenged in how I can operate and how I can be a father.

And what you're naming as something that I think is the key to showing up in a way that feels good as a parent is none of this is about blaming our parents. We can say my parent was doing the best they could with the resources they had. >> Yeah. >> And there are things I want to do differently. >> Yeah. >> And it doesn't have to be my fault, my dad's fault. Like I always find fault to generally be an unhelpful framework.

We're just like pointing fingers at someone, which generally isn't a way we learn. >> Yeah. I and I've had to go through that. It's a constant mourning sometimes of maybe what I didn't experience or what I wish I would have

had. Yeah. >> When I see it in my son or when I can give it to my son, that's the healing element for me where I have blamed my dad or I have blamed my parents and oh, I didn't get to experience this or even now like being grandparents and things like that. Maybe what my son is maybe missing out on or not experiencing.

There's it it always evolves like how how I was treated, how I wasn't, how maybe my son's going to develop and that always wrestles with me internally, but I can only control how my wife and I manage and how we experience and get create those experiences for our son. I >> I wonder if you could talk about a specific moment with your son that makes you kind of know in that moment like like I'm giving him something that I I probably could have used but but didn't get. Can Can you can you share a specific moment?

>> Yeah, I think yesterday actually. Um he was just at a place I I mean I don't know if it's he's getting teeth, he's getting his mers. I don't know what it is. I It could be a you know a plethora of things that he's dealing with. Um I think this moment yesterday he was going back and forth. He just wouldn't go in his um wouldn't go in his stroller. Just was like we were trying to go to the park. I'm like hey I'm making a decision for you. Like we're going to the park and we're trying to do something. You're not happy. I think overall in that moment I was very frustrated like just like kind of not my full self. But I think I was really proud of how my wife and I handled that where we didn't like >> we didn't like react. We didn't do like we didn't take it out of control. We just really took him to the park and found a solution rather than just like hey we need to get out of the house right now uh because this isn't probably the best place for you. Let's go somewhere else. Let's make an active decision to do something. And I think I was proud of myself rather than just being like, "Hey, you know, just stop crying or hey, uh, you know, let's, you know, you're okay. You're okay." Like telling him, you know, being able to validate his feelings, but also being able to find a solution for him without without compromising how he's feeling.

>> Yes. And so what can feel natural in those moments, let's just act it out is some version of maybe I'll act one out, you could act another one out. It's like, stop crying. You're being ridiculous. We're just going to the we're going to the park. It's not such a big deal. >> No. Absolutely. >> Something like that. Or what's another >> kind of you feel like just easy quick vomit your own frustration response? >> Yeah, you're you're good. You're you're okay. You're you're okay. You don't need you're okay. We're going to go get this. Like you're you're okay. I think >> unvalidating how he's like he doesn't know that he's upset. Like I think one of those things like he doesn't know he's frustrated. He he doesn't he's just experiencing what he feels in the moment. Like telling a a one-year-old they're okay is like never helping the solution, you know?

>> So that that's an experience for sure. And so you're saying in that moment showing up and I think this is a duality that sometimes we don't even realize both are possible because I talk to this, you know, about this with parents all the time where it's like, okay, so let's say your kids having trouble getting in the stroller. You can say there's something about getting in the stroller that doesn't feel good right now or this is a hard moment. Keep it simple.

>> And then parents will say to me, oh, so then you're just not taking them to the park. And I'm like, whoa, I am taking them to the park. And the idea that you can validate and see your kid's current emotions as real and you can still put them in a stroller when they're crying. >> Yeah. >> You can still get out of the house or I can still say

to my kid, "Gh, I know you don't want to go to bed right now while carrying them to their bedroom." It's mindblowing.

>> It's also wild. They're locking their legs, not going in the stroller. They kick something over. You're like trying to get a snack. you're you're trying to get the bag on. It's like so many other elements too that happen where you're like those are the moments that I'm proud of when there's so many external my dog the dog is kind of going back and forth. U maybe somebody rang the doorbell. We're just like it all sometimes feels like 15 random things happening at one time. But being able to regulate, hey, my goal is to take you to the park. We're going to be here. It's going to be okay. You're going to be you're going to be fine. Not actually, but just knowing internally like that's going to we're going to be good. like I think we're going to be good if we get here and then it's good and sometimes it's not. He's still, you know, fussy when we went back and forth, but at least we made a decision and didn't just react out of emotion.

>> And tell me for the dad or the mom listening, >> I I think a common thought is, okay, but so you're just telling your son it's okay to freak out about getting in the stroller. Like, he has to know that's not okay behavior. You don't want to reinforce that. Like that's I think a very traditional mindset, right? So does that thought ever come up for you or when you hear that from moms or dads around you? How do you think through that?

>> I think at first that makes sense logically when having a toddler, you understand I'm playing the long game. Like I'm I'm here to I'm here to not only just get him to the park, I'm here for him to feel loved the entire way to the park. Whether that's whether I had a long day or whether I didn't, you know. And not only am I here for him to feel loved, I want him to see my wife is loved. Like that my wife that I took time for her. I grabbed her a water. I we slowed down and we didn't let feelings dictate how we were going to operate in our day. We acknowledged them, but we were able to find something, a solution that helped us all get in a better place. Because if he's in a bad place, it could all slew into all of us getting into worse places. So, we, you know, we're taking care of him and he's our priority, of course, but we're also taking care of ourselves.

>> I I just want to be back something you said. It's so powerful and your language is so powerful. Like, I'm playing the long game, number one, and I think about that a lot with parenting. Yeah. Like whether you're kind of playing the right now, optimizing for ease in this moment game. >> Yeah. I could turn on the TV. I could, you know, I could do whatever. I could easy. I can Yeah. give them something, go on my or leave the room. That's easy.

Those are easy. >> They're easy. Or I guess I could scream at my kid and he'd become so scared that he'd get frozen and then I'd pick him up and put in the stroller, right? But whether you're optimizing for easy in the moment or the long game of and what you just said, it's not just about getting my kid to the park. I want my kid to feel loved on the way to the park. That's really profound. And loved doesn't mean giving in, right?

>> But loved means I see you. Yeah. >> And we can stay connected. You still have a parent and a leader and a coach in your hard moments. When I think about their long game and your son is going to be, you know, I don't know, let's say 16 and about for, you know, 14 years, right? There's going to be a lot of moments when he's

away from you and something really hard is going to happen >> and his body is either going to remember like, "This is going to get me in trouble. this is going to get met with more fear, more distance, more judgment from my dad or this is something my dad is going to be able to be present for.

He's still going to see me as a good kid even if I have a hard moment and he's going to help coach me through this. I mean, that literally makes all the difference at age 16. >> A friend of mine, he has a 18-year-old. He just went to college. I'm just I was asking him the other day, I'm like, "What did you like how are you processing like him making his own decisions now?" And he said something that I thought was so profound. He was said, "We made the things that were important when the stakes were low. So when the stakes were high, they understood that everything mattered." So for instance, like you know, dating somebody or the decisions that he had, those are little bit higher stakes or you know what school he's going to go to and those things like that. But he they made things that were maybe lower stakes of like disrespecting talking. They they everything mattered to them when the stakes were low. So when they were higher they could actually, you know, know that they can trust their parents, that they're present, that they're going to be there no matter what, and that everything mattered to them. And I just thought that was really >> I think that's beautiful. And I know you and I were talking about these toddler tantrums, right? Which >> I'm taking the good inside class right now. I was telling you before we got on, I'm like 30 minutes in. I'm trying to work through it, but my wife and I were like, we have to take these. And I I I love your process in it and just being able to validate and see um really really everything I'm repeating is just regurgitating what you said on on good inside on the app. And so I just appreciate your voice in that cuz it's really helpful cuz it goes quickly from being a baby to a toddler. It it was so interesting. And like I know when you ask me about what I remember about my son, it just everything he existed and now he's a human. And that's what like I I I remember these beautiful moments of existing now. I'm like, "Oh, I'm teaching him now. He's learning things and he's seeing things and it's just such a different and and and I want to let anybody listening or watching know people are generally surprised that tantrums start so early. It is usually before two." Terrible twos, that like phrase that we all think Honestly, in the one year, even 11 months, yeah, that's when toddlers start tantruming.

So, that's totally normal. And it's powerful to just know all a tantrum really is is a surge of feelings without skills to manage feelings. Cuz kids aren't born with skills to manage feelings, but they're born with the feelings. So, that's all a tantrum is. And and the reason I love this long game perspective around how we deal with tantrums is it's true. When our kid is 16 or 26, I don't think telling them they can't have ice cream for breakfast is going to lead to a tantrum. Like, I hope not.

>> But your kid is going to want something and not be able to have it. >> They're going to get fired from a job. They're going to be jealous of a friend. >> They're going to be mad at someone they love. And being able to learn when you're one, two, and three, I'm allowed to have feelings. By the way, my parent will stop me from hitting. All behavior isn't okay, but all feelings are. I always think it's just like the ultimate power move and emotional privilege.

Yeah. Growing up, and that's what you're teaching during a tantrum. >> Yeah. I was say I was saying the other day I I was talking to the dads uh and our my son bit someone and I was >> I was embarrassed like for myself

and I know that's maybe weird to say but I I felt and it was interesting cuz all of what happened was with him and dealing with how he was feeling and and it you know that happens emotions happen but I was like why am I feeling this way? It it was such an internal perspective. Not only was his tantrum what happened with him but it also happened inside of me too. And I'm like, why am I feeling maybe embarrassed or or f or sad, you know, that this happened as a parent?

And I thought that was interesting to feel cuz not only is he feeling something, I'm feeling something too. How he operates in the world. >> I feel it too, you know, and it and it matters to me as well. And so I'm like, is this a reflection? Is he going to be like this forever? Is he going to do this? Is this going to happen? And you know, I think all those things go through your mind. So being able to like calm myself as well during that moment is is important as well. Seriously, I I remember talking to it was a dad who was seeing me in my private practice years ago and he'd always come in talking. He was on this big journey of being like a different kind of father and he felt like that was the most important kind of journey of his lifetime. And >> and he'd always come in talking my kid had this tantrum was biting with this.

There's always stuff to talk about, right? And we'd always kind of pause and try to think about, well, what's the story you're telling yourself first of all about your kid's behavior? Because we don't respond to our kids' behavior. we respond to the story we tell ourselves and the feelings that come up in us and all this thing. And I just remember him looking at me and saying, >> "Becky, one time, can you just tell me this has nothing to do with you? This is all your kid's fault, you know, like and we kind of like laughed about it because it is funny when you really pause and you watch your kid their behavior can be so difficult and in inconvenient. I always feel like that's just it's inconvenient when your kid's biting another kid. You're like, "Oh man, got to really figure this out." But really what goes on for us is we have something happening inside of us. And so much of the reason we want to stop the tantrum, stop doing that. Is we just want to stop the feeling happening inside of us, it's not even have to do with our kid.

>> Yeah. >> So the fact that you're so open when you said, "Is that weird? It's embarrassing." Or it brought up so much for me. Yes. When our kid bites or hits or says to us, I doubt this has happened yet. I hate you. >> Oh my gosh. >> It will happen. And I'm giving you some emotional vaccination. Get ready. All good kids say those things. They do. >> If we're aware, let me first check in and just notice what's happening for me.

>> We can really slow down the process. And that's that's actually such a power move, I find. >> Yeah. No, absolutely. I think there's just so much internal introspective thought process in how it's processing and how he's going through it. But it it I I think about myself, too. I'm like, I'm 33 years old. And then there's times where I'm like, yo, why am I acting like this? Why am I I'm embarrassed by myself, too. I'm like, yo, I need to react better. He doesn't have those skills to regulate. I do. So, it's like, >> you know, and when it comes to biting, I just actually had this new thought. So many times as adults, you know, we have biting comments. Yeah, >> right. It actually is interesting to think, okay, maybe I don't literally bite another human. I'm just going to put this out there. I'm hoping that's not >> biting moments, which is kind of helpful when you realize what might be happening for your kid. Why would I in a situation >> have some comment come out of my body that's so cruel and so biting? Oh, I was probably even in that moment overwhelmed with a feeling and I didn't have a skill in

the moment to manage it. So it kind of viciously came out of me.

>> Yeah. And it I notice those way more having a child. It's just like a mirror. You know, I'm my wife will, you know, if we have a little back and forth and I'm like, "Oh, he's right there watching this." I'm like, "This is not something not only like of course I know I need to respond better, but I want him to understand how he's loved and cared for and that we also are trying to figure out our own things internally myself."

you know, I think that's important to see, >> but I'm not, you know, above him by, you know, I also have my own things that go back and forth. >> Do you feel like talking so openly, right, and being I find you remarkably emotionally available? That's what I would say. Do you notice that having a ripple effect on other fathers? Yeah, I think sometimes I share too much, but I think I think that's like my my characteristic, but I think fathers are really like we have a chat like outside of the discord that where our community lives and like yesterday I'm I'm hitting them like, hey, I'm wrestling with my son being upset today. Um, what do you guys think? And it's like six, seven dads saying, "Hey, this is what happens.

It's okay. Here here's some things you can do. Get him out." literally what I was doing, which was really helpful and it affirmed me like, "Hey, just get him outside, try to do something. Hey, maybe if you take him out of that environment, like all the things that I was doing made me feel seen and uh encouraged in what I was doing, not that I was just alone." Of course, my wife and I were, yo, this is the best decision, but having an outside community speaking into that is really helpful because you could feel like, "Am I the only one doing this? I don't know if this is normal. I don't know if this is happening." So having other dads and people being able to go through that as well and they're going through the same things like they're like [clears throat] hey my son's doing this my my daughter's sick or you know this is happening and this is happening. Being able to normalize that >> is just such a different you know ideology of parenting. I feel like being a then being able to just be in your you know your house your your own you know your own room being able to take it outside of that with community I think is helpful. I think the fear that we're the only one is present in every parent's brain. And it happens. You see your kid, you're like, "Does any other kid actually tantrum like this?" Like, everyone says, "Oh, kids do this." But do I actually have the kid who's the sociopath? Like people worry about that all the time. The reason it's so important to have a community to talk about that with is that fear. I'm the only one. My kid's the only one.

>> It leads to us getting so activated with our nervous system. we really go into fight or flight mode. So then you respond to your kid from fight orflight mode >> and that >> simple outlet which isn't simple but it's you know straightforward. >> Hey anyone else going through this? Hey any ideas? >> It's really not a nice to have like it's a critical part of the parenting journey. >> Absolutely. I was looking at uh just a phrase it takes a village. I was like where does it come from? It's an actual African proverb. It's like centuries of like what what parents have have understood that it takes more than just you and your partner. It takes grandparents. If you don't have grandparents like us here, it takes community, teachers. There's people that my son will see that validate him, that see him, not only him, but also me in those elements. And I think that's the healing journey. He'll he'll never have to see himself as isolated. He'll see my dad interacted with other men, other people, uh was proud of his friendships, was really open, and not only that, but he had those friendships as well.

>> All right, I want to end with five rapid fire questions. >> Awesome. >> You ready? Need to shake it out. Stretch. Okay, you're [laughter] good. Okay. What's one stereotype about dads that you want to retire so we can build stronger communities for them? >> Uh that dads are stupid. I would say dads don't know anything. Let's retire that. >> Let's retire that that we're we're we know we we want to learn. I would say >> finish the sentence. A moment in the last month I was really proud of as a dad or as a husband was >> it was our 7-year anniversary. Uh we had a babysitter. Um we spent time together, my wife and I. And I think that was just a really proud moment to be able to feel that our son was safe at home, to be able to talk about where we've come from, where we're going as a family. I think that was really good.

>> I think I commented on your story that day. >> Yeah. Yeah. We of course we did a TikTok, you know. Of course. >> Okay. What feels harder or more vulnerable? Saying to your kid, "I love you," or saying to your kid, "I'm sorry." >> I would say, "I'm sorry." is is more vulnerable. I think I know this isn't a rapid answer, but one thing my dad used to say that I'm trying to unlearn a little bit is I don't want to be right, I just don't want to be wrong. Uh, and it really I had to unlearn a little bit of that. Like you can be wrong and be sorry and be open about those things.

And so I think I'm sorry is really important to me. >> And I just want to name, you know, to me the most powerful relationship strategy in the world is repair. >> Yeah. >> And you can only repair if you made a mistake, which also is just a sign you're human. Yeah. >> But it is so hard because I don't think many of us had parents who really gave us a good sorry. Not like I'm sorry you feel that way. No, like I'm sorry, right? And so I think I think I'm sorry is harder for a lot of people and I love you.

>> Yeah. Cuz it puts you on the same field of like, hey, I actually I need you to like >> I need I need you to like acknowledge I'm I'm I'm actually kind of putting myself a little, you know, lesser than you. Like that's what I feel like they're like, "Oh man, like I can't be sorry to like he's a kid, you know, or they're a kid." And I think being able to be like, "No, if I react poorly, >> I'm sorry, period." Regardless of who age, whatever, you know, >> it is such a kind of new cycle breaking thought. And I know now I'm undoing my rapid fire questions, but no, it's it's it's a really good point. And just to give anyone listening a different model, if you think about the best CEO in the world who snaps at someone during a meeting or the best NBA coach who is overly harsh on someone in a game, >> those leaders say sorry if they're effective. And I don't think anyone would see that coach go up to a player and say, "Hey, I was like having a moment. I was frustrated with how our team is playing. I totally took it out on you. I'm sorry." I just don't know if someone say that coach totally lost their ability to have power. No, you'd be like, "Well, good thing if if not that player probably would have acted out for the rest of the week."

>> Yeah. I think [clears throat] I think we could change a lot in the world and in government in general if men just said they're sorry a lot more. So, I think that's what I'm trying to realize myself. >> Cheers to that. >> Okay. If you could give a brand new dad only one piece of advice, what would it be? >> I would say be patient with yourself. Um, you're it's your first time and their first time as well. Um, yeah. Just be patient. You're you you have everything. You're you're meant to be here.

>> Oh, love that. I think sometimes parents need to hear you're the right parent for your kid. >> Yeah. >> You're

you're you're the only one that they're you're the best version of yourself today and you're going to be better tomorrow. And and no matter what you have said or what how how that's playing out in your parenthood or in in your marriage or whatever, um yeah, patience. you you you'll figure it out. >> I love that. All right, last one. I wanted you to picture your son 20 25 years from now.

>> Oh, man. >> Okay. And someone just says to him, "Oh, like what was your dad like growing up?" >> And he says, "Oh, my dad." And then what do you hope he says? >> My dad had so many friends that loved him and cared for him. And I did, too. And I think he had so many people, not only friends, I say my dad had so many people around him that loved him and supported him and that he loved and served and supported too. Um, and I want the same.

>> He really visualizes this community, this belonging. >> Yeah. I would hope that he sees this not only, you know, today or in a photo or whatever that he sees it active in my life and in our marriage and our, you know, and and and that he wants the same thing for his, you know, family. >> Incredible. Thank you. This is such a powerful conversation. I feel like I could talk to you forever. So, it just means I'll have to have you back. So, thank you.

>> Thank you so much. >> I have so many takeaways from this episode. I'm guessing you do, too. But there's something Joe said that is cycling in my brain over and over. Even now, when he talked about how he was intervening when his kid was having a tantrum about getting in the stroller and they were just trying to get to the park and he talked about playing the long game, he said this thing. He said, "I don't just want to get my kid to the park. I want my kid to feel loved the whole way to the park."

There's something about that language that feels so important to me and puts words to, I think, what so many of us are trying to do with our kid. And so, I know for me, when I inevitably have a frustrating moment later today with my own kid and I'm just thinking, I need to shut this down right now. I have a goal of getting to bed, of turning off the TV. I can set certain boundaries, but my goal is for my kid to feel loved the whole time. I'm so thankful to Joe for putting that idea in my head. All right, let's end the way we always do. Place your feet on the ground and a hand on your heart. And let's remind ourselves even as we struggle on the outside, we remain good inside.

I'll see you soon.