

- Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Love is not puppy dogs and rainbows. Fluff is hard, love is demanding. Love has consequences. Love holds people accountable, but love always shows up and it transforms not only the one delivering it, the father in this case with your podcast, but all the children and the children of those who know those kids. All right man. Welcome to the front road dads podcast. If you're new here, I'm your host John Broman. This is [inaudible]
- Speaker 2: [00:24](#) the show for family, men with businesses, not businessmen who happened to have families. And my guest today is a gentleman who I deeply admire who is of course a family man. A guy who's been married for 15 years, has four children, which talk about his family here in a little bit. His name is John O'Leary, and many of you may know that name because he has an incredibly moving and successful book out there called on fire, seven choices to ignite a radically inspired life. Uh, which I love and I was just sharing with John that I was listening to, uh, re listening to I should say this morning. I think it's a stellar book. I love your story, John. I could hear it a million times and not only that, but John hosts an incredible podcast and yesterday, John, you'll appreciate this. I was saying to somebody and I say, or I was telling them I was going to be getting a chance to chat with you for the front row dads podcast.
- Speaker 2: [01:17](#) I was saying 10 years of being a keynote speaker. I've been on hundreds of stages and uh, I thought I was like a relatively accomplished speaker, right? Like I just, I had worked at it, I had studied it, I refined it. I constantly for 10 years, right? 50 plus a year. And then I sat in the audience last year at the EO event, the eccentric event and listened to your message. And I was just in awe because I sat there and I said, this is what mastery looks like. What I said to somebody in the car was, I said, I used to think I was a pretty decent speaker until I sat in the audience of John O'Leary. And then I was like, that is actually what a really good speaker sounds like. You know what, let me respond to your incredible praise real quickly. First John, it is an honor to be back with you.
- Speaker 2: [02:04](#) I consider you a friend and a guy who is doing life extraordinarily well and teaching others to follow suits to get in line into Marcela port with him. So this for me being on your show is an honor. You are at delightful, outstanding speaker. I've seen you a couple of times. I've also seen you online several additional times and you are a master and the beauty of your messages, you're also humble, which means you are able to learn and grow from someone else who's doing what they do. Hopefully at a pretty high level. And I think the reason why I'm

considered pretty decent speakers because I'm really not a speaker. I'm a, I'm a dad, I'm a husband, I'm a believer. I'm a guy who moved through being burned as a child and learned an awful lot from that experience. I'm a hospital chaplain, which means I spent three years of my life asking questions and then shutting up. And I think many speakers are there to brag on himself or herself. And I'm there to Prague on life

- Speaker 1: [02:58](#) and I think is a message that is extraordinarily attractive and it doesn't take an extraordinarily attractive guy to deliver it. So, uh, it's, it's not the message, it's the message I think that makes our speech so,
- Speaker 1: [03:10](#) so outstanding and I'm really glad that you were in the audience and that you, you were moved by it. Wow. This idea of sharing a message, I think an appropriate place for us to launch here. Maybe to talk about the differences of being on stage and sharing a message and motivating an audience or moving an audience, connecting with an audience, allowing an audience, right to feel fully alive, giving them permission, a space in a container. How has your work impacted your life as a dad? Like what have you experimented with on stage that you bring home? Or where are you frustrated when you're like, everybody listens to me on stage?
- Speaker 1: [03:50](#) What a delightful piece of humble pie. You're asking about because as great as you may be as a leader, I know you've got a lot of leaders listening today. Of course if business owners and entrepreneurs, a speaker, a writer, then you go home. Yeah. And there's the great litmus test because they're not all that impressed by awards, by money, by status or by standing ovations. They are much more impressed by time and by listening and by a dad who loves them in spite of their actions or their words or their deeds or how they fight with their brothers and sisters. So, uh, I would almost reframe your question. You said, what have you learned at work that you can apply at home? And I would say no man, I've learned so much at home that I am now applying at work and because of that, because I'm listening to it home and because I'm at home because I'm there and I'm present and I'm, I'm in the arena, I'm able to take those learnings back into the marketplace.
- Speaker 1: [04:40](#) You mentioned in the introduction, I was in awe while I was listening to John O'Leary and I'm right, I just finished writing another book. It comes up not until so cute to have next year, but it's called in awe. And what it's really about is how do you show up as a child at work and how do you show up as a child in relationship and how do you show up as a child in creativity?

How do you show it as a child and likes that book. And the speeches that are going to be growing out of it are things I learned on the road. There are things I learned at home that I'd forgotten. Yeah. And so I am paying attention at home and I think it's making me a better writer, a better listener, a better speaker, and hopefully a better leader. Yeah, John, I know that your story is well documented.

Speaker 1: [05:16](#) I'm almost tempted to say if you want to know John's story, you should go listen to the book or listen to one of your speeches online. However, knowing that many people will be hearing about this and learning about you today for the first time and I know you're well-rehearsed here and I can just tee it up for the big ass. Take us through the experience that you had at nine as a child that led to ultimately the book that you had written and write speeches. I think that will offer some real context here. Of course. Well man, I'll go through it kind of slow pitch style and then you ask clarifying questions and when, uh, when you tire of hearing about it, I'm sure your listeners are already ahead of you. So here we go. All right. I think rather than take any of that 33 years, I'll take you back like 15 I never told anybody how I was burned as a kid, not college roommates, not friends in high school, not friends in grade school.

Speaker 1: [06:06](#) Not during my first interviews as a 22 year olds or as a 16 year old trying to get a high school job. I never told anybody how I was burned, which is pretty remarkable because I'm missing fingers. Go ahead with yours. Missing fingers on my hands. I'm burns, which means scarred from my next my toes. It is absolutely impossible to hide from that story. And yet I spent the majority of my life doing exactly that. And then my mom and dad wrote a book about what happens to their sunshine. They wrote it about 15 years ago. And in reading their words and reading their heart, it changed mine for the very first time, John, I recognized that this thing I'd always run from was actually worth embracing and holding tight and rather than covering up and being angry about it, actually elevating and sharing and celebrated.

Speaker 1: [06:51](#) So for the last 15 years I've been doing exactly that. It started really small three girls, man, that was the beginning story of my, uh, of my empire today. It started with three girl Scouts who are yawning as I'm reading my, my CliffsNotes. But she got to start somewhere. Yeah. And so that, that was mine. And then one of the groups was a Rotarian group, 12 Rotarians in a room and then one Quantas group, and then I'll work from there. But the story I shared with those three girl Scouts and the story I share with rotary or Quantus or my parents wrote in their book, it was

about how at the age of nine I was involved in enough gasoline explosion. The experiment with fire and gas and created this massive explosion at age nine launched me 20 feet against the far side of the garage, set my world on fire, trapped me in this garage.

Speaker 1: [07:36](#) It changed my life and it should have been in a very different than burns at that point on 100% of my body. 87% of those burns from third degree and yet through my brother's heroism and my sister's incredible love, unbelievable love how my mother and father responded when they came into the emergency room on day one, how the doctors stepped forward, how the nurses showed up, how the janitors did their job perfectly. How about global community? Literally global community. They came together around a little boy with no chance. Through their prayers and their offerings, their blood, their dollars, their support. [inaudible] a little boy with no chance goes on to become a little boy who's out of the hospital five months later and then into a little boy who moves on pretending as if that never happens. But it was an incredibly, incredibly painful, difficult, dark story that frequently was made filled with light and joy and optimism because of the people who showed up in my life.

Speaker 1: [08:33](#) Yeah. Wow. So how old are your kids now, by the way? My oldest is 13 yeah. And then 11 and then nine and then seven. So we've got a boy or a boy and a girl. And tell me, John, about how you talk with your kids still about this I, is it the type of thing where it's not brought up anymore? Are they usually interested in it? Do you use it as a gift? Imagine if it were my situation. Like don't you complain about that? Right. I know that's not your style, but with leadership it's best to show, not tell. Yeah. To be honest with John, when you, when you asked the question, my thought originally went back to my concern about how will I ever tell them the story. Yeah. I remember distinctly being seated on my dad's lap when I was a kid and my dad served in the army.

Speaker 1: [09:19](#) He's a business owner and he's a, he's just a, an a quality guy in every regard. He also had like big strong veins coursing down through them. And as a little boy, I used to track those veins and then I became a boy who lost my fingers and I lost the outward appearance of ANZ and I picked up scars instead. And my concern in high school and college and then shortly after was always first would any girl ever seek beauty? And then secondly, if she did, and if we had kids where any kid ever respect me, would they sit on my lap wondering, geez, I got, I got kind of a raw deal with my dad. He doesn't even have

fingers, you know. And so that was really my concern. That's my limiting belief. And uh, at age three, my son Jack was shaving next to me.

Speaker 1: [10:04](#)

I had my boxers on my tee shirt off. I'm shaving in the mirror. I looked down in this little three year old to speak shaving. The little shield is on, and then he stopped shaving. He looks up at my stomach, he starts tracing one of the scars, this big, big red, ugly scar. And then he says to me, Hey dad, your tummy is red. It is a bumpy and it is Reggie. So I'm like, okay man, here it comes. I get to finally tell my kid what happened to me, why my stomach is so different than every other dude stomach. And then my little boys says, and dad, aye love it. I just love it. And John, that was attorney. But I know it sounds like that's one story. Yeah. But our lives are made up of one story once to retro one's to Richard, one sort of time, the ones that were experiencing and also the ones who are telling ourselves.

Speaker 1: [10:53](#)

That was a story that changed the arc of my relationship with all my kids. Not only that, but all of them I recognized they weren't going to care about my hands cause they weren't going to care about missing bank. They were going to care much more about the quality of my character, the way I treated them and the way I decided to show up in spite of what happened. And so I don't talk frequently about what happens. Although like I told you offline, they travel with me during the summertime for speaking events. So they get the front row dad, right? They get the front row on what happened to their dad that you're in all the time, but not at home. I'm not a burn victim. I'm not even a speaker at home. I'm a dad, I'm a husband, I'm playing baseball, I'm shooting baskets under hand, I'm living life.

Speaker 1: [11:31](#)

And then they learn that story when they're on the road with me. What do you think a good dad does? How do you think a good dad behaves? What's energy? How do you show them? And maybe what I'm asking is just to peek into your weekly routine where you might say, Hey, these are things I try to weave in so that when I do [inaudible] the right things occur. So beginning with the end in mind, whether it's at work in your faith journey and your health or raising kids probably makes a lot of sense. So I would encourage all of us to imagine beginning with the end in mind at some point, if you're lucky and if it's a fairly normal existence, your children will bury you. That's not always the case. That there are tragedies, there are suicides, there's adversity, there's moments in life that changed the arc of what happens next, but for the most part your kids are probably getting [inaudible].

Speaker 1: [12:20](#) That'd be the ones seated around drinking beer before the funeral Sans talk about dad, what are we going to say tomorrow guys? What are they going to say about you? Did you kill it professionally? Did you do the first mill? Was that the hardest mill to get to? What about the second and the third? What about the trips you took by yourself with your buddies? Like maybe that might be part of it, but I think for the most part it will be these ordinary moments of magic that transform a child's life. And we don't even know it. You don't even know it. It's something that's set around the dinner table. It's something that happens on the way to church. It's something they said to you that was incredibly wrong and it's how he responded and then you moved on. So I always try to begin with the end in mind of how do I want my kids to feel about me at the end of our days.

Speaker 1: [13:03](#) And I want them to be incredibly grateful for the dad that raised them. So if that's true, that that's going to change the way I do homework with them, it's going to change when I'm tired or jet lagged and they say, Hey dad, will you shoot baskets with me? And it's 115 in st Louis and humid and I'm tired. We're in a suit. And my answer, my artists, no, I will not [inaudible] but then I see a little Brown eyed face looking up at me and the answer is easy. Yes. Yeah, yes. Because I'm beginning in, in mind. I know how I want them to feel about me at the end of the day. And so I want to show up for them. Actively engage in every moment we have together. It looks a lot like love and love is not puppy dogs and rainbows. Love is hard, love is demanding, love has consequences.

Speaker 1: [13:43](#) Love holds people accountable. But love always shows up and it transforms not only the one delivering it, the father in this case and with your podcast, but all the children and the children of those who know those kids. So I, I wanna like make my kind of home the hub, like a hub of love and excellence and joy and were kids from my kids, from our neighborhood who come up and to recognize. And this good place, this a safe place. This is home. It may not be where I sleep every night, but I feel home when I'm at the old lady house. Yeah. Oh, that's great. I was just sharing with a buddy. I was at his house. Very nice place. You know, this is a really a mansion, you know, and I just looked at him and I and all the kids are out back and they were playing and playing soccer and I just looked around and I said, look at what you've built.

Speaker 1: [14:33](#) And I wasn't referring to the gorgeous home or the land, or I was referring to the fact that was somebody who had said this maybe on a recent podcast, and I'm sorry if you're out there

listening. I can't give you credit for this. I don't remember who said it. It was a comment about, I've been in some really incredible houses, but I've only been in a few really amazing home, you know, because it's like this idea of what you create with your environment. And actually speaking of that, I wanted to bring this up earlier. Prior to recording, we were talking about your environment that you're in right now. The pictures that are behind you, the pictures there in front of you. And you just talked about traveling with your kids as well. Tell us a little bit about the photographs around you. Cause I'm a big advocate for an environment that inspires, right?

Speaker 1: [15:16](#)

So, uh, for those who are not listening but they're actually viewing this, you see behind me a whole bunch of little black and whites probably can't make out a single one, but I can't. These are many of the guests that I've interviewed on my own podcast. We have a show called live inspired with John O'Leary and it's top 20 in iTunes and it has nothing at all to do with the guy asking the questions. We bring on these remarkable folks, John, and they are a, they're gut wrenching, beautiful, redemptive, powerful stories of adversity. And then overcoming it can be an Astro. So like for instance, one of the guys pictured up there, he's the guy from Apollo 13 my kids and I were watching Apollo 13 and they asked me when, when did Tom, when it's like, I don't know. So I Googled it or Apollo 13.

Speaker 1: [16:01](#)

And it turns out that he hasn't passed away. He's living in Chicago. He's 93 he has been married 71 years. He's a depression, irritated. He grew up without a father. He got kicked out of the year for like every adversity you can imagine, including what you saw on Apollo 13 and yet this guy continues marching forward into life. And so we share these Epic stories of men and women overcoming. So some of them are astronauts, some of them are authors, but that's that wall over there. And when I bumped into an adversity my own life, I look up and I'm like, you know what? This is not insurmountable. So those guys inspire me in front of me. Your camera can't see this one. These are all my babies. It's a family picture. There's a picture on the top left of my own family. When I got out of the hospital, a big train while I was in the hospital for five months was to not only get home but to live again.

Speaker 1: [16:48](#)

And our, our idea of living again was going to Colorado and having this experience where we have to solve up. See the Rockies. We never saw them as kids growing up in Missouri. And so up there on the top of my screen it says independent pass elevation, 12,095 feet. There's a picture of six kids, two parents, a little girl with Tony tales, my youngest sister Laura.

And in the middle of this little boy, barely any skin, no muscle tone, no fingers with this big goofy grin on his face. What they said was impossible is pictured up there. We made, we made it home and we made it truly hall pictures of my wife pictures, my grandparents, pictures of my family. They remind me why I do the work I do and they remind me why I need to shut this laptop and get home and make sure I spend part of the day with people.

Speaker 1: [17:30](#)

Most important to me. Cause I know my own weaknesses. I could work 24 hours a day, but they remind me, work hard for them but then come home to enjoy it with them. And then finally there's a picture wall to my right and just historic figures that I look up to. Like one is an oil painting by rebels, not the real Rembrandt. Olivia doesn't have that kind of cash, but it's a fake picture of the prodigal son. Yeah, painted by Rembrandt. And it's the picture of the father just putting his hands lovingly on the Sunday finally comes home after a long, long, long, long time. He finally comes home and then the other son judgmentally with his arms crossed. I love that picture. Picture of Abraham Lincoln with a son, picture of Martin Luther King with his daughter, for sure of mother Teresa holding a child. Real people in life who've done extraordinary things by showing up and being love in a marketplace that is desperate for it.

Speaker 1: [18:19](#)

So if you say, John, what are you all about as a brand? What's your podcast about what you're writing about when you speak? What's it really about? It's not a story, Johnny, it's not. It's a story of love and that's a story that tethers all of us together. And in a marketplace where about half of us feel disconnected, where the majority of us feel as if we really have no one that we can lean into and rely on trust in. I think now is a very important time to be talking about love. So that's what we do here. Those guys would remind you of the impact of it. You know when you, when you're just sharing this about love and you're talking about the father on the wall to your right and the father that you are on the wall to the left and your family.

Speaker 1: [18:57](#)

It reminds me of the story that you shared about when you were in the hospital and your dad came in and he said something to you. Can you take us to that moment? Cause I think that that's very powerful. It is. I'm glad you brought it up because it is so powerful and I'm half the dad. My father is and trying to get better everyday man. So I hope. How cool that your listeners recognize that they may be horrible. They may be great, they may be extraordinary, and yet they're tuning in to elevate. I don't care if you've got one, three or five talents. We're called to do more of what we got. So let's, let's be even



better deaths going forward. So John, the dad who asked this beautiful question, my father was the business owner and a veteran and kind of a type a guy, very loving, but in the hospital that day as a nine year old boy who just blew up a can of gasoline and in doing so blew up the entire house.

Speaker 1: [19:47](#) When I left home that morning and the back of an ambulance, I remember seeing my brothers face like his arms on his side as he helps me get into the ambulance. Just completely dejected. I remember seeing my four siblings kind of up by the burning house looking like w what was that? What did we just witness here this morning? And then I remember seeing beyond those five kids, our house on fire [inaudible] it's a moment that stays with me as you probably hear even in my voice because I don't usually talk about it. But man, I just remember seeing that and thinking I ruined everybody's life. And then in the emergency room, I remember thinking distinctly, Oh my gosh, my dad is going to kill me. The old man is going to lose it. When he finds out, when he leaves the office, when he comes here and he destroys me and I hear him coming down the hall, I hear him come closer.

Speaker 1: [20:36](#) They lean them back, they pull back the curtain. He walks and marches over, points down and says to me, John, look at me when I'm talking to you. So I look up shamefully at father and he responds, I have never Ben, so probably of anybody in my entire life and my little buddy today this morning, I am proud to be your dad. And then my father goes, I love you. I love you. Love you. As a nine year old kid, I crossed my arms and shut my eyes and remember thinking, Oh my gosh, nobody told my dad. What happens? My dad does not know what went down here. He doesn't know I blew up the house. And yet what the prodigal father reminds us and what Lincoln in that picture with the sun reminds us of mother Theresa holding that child very compassionate reminds us is the father knew like he knew, but he also wasn't going to let what went wrong with getting wind of what could go right going forward.

Speaker 1: [21:35](#) He understood that. I think ultimately the only way that this little boy was going to choose to move forward boldly, faithfully in love was to be met boldly, faithfully and love by his father and that that's what I got that day and it changed me. It didn't make losing fingers easy and it didn't make skin grafts easy, did not make five months in burn care or 12 months in rehabilitation, PT easy. I just think his love that day made the journey possible and I think for the fathers out there, you don't need to be in the emergency room to be in mindfulness. You don't need to be in a moment of crisis to be that kind of father.

It's generally not the big stuff. It's generally the stuff you want to even remember. It's shooting baskets. It's throwing the ball. It's saying when a kid comes from disappointed and dejected by school, Oh come on, we can do this together better.

Speaker 1: [22:25](#) You forget it cause you get back to life. But she or she will remember for the rest of their days. Yeah. And so my dad's love changed me and I look it back at that fondly and that's just who my dad was. It's who he was to. He is. Yeah. Wow. That's such a, yeah, that story really stuck with me and that's really, I know it has been in running in the background for me of how I respond to my children. Thanks to you and other men out there who've shared stories similar to that of fathers that have been forgiving or loving. Oh, shout out to my buddy Larry Hagner who runs a dad's group was at our very first ever front row dad's retreat. I remember Larry talking about one time, you know how he, uh, he just, all he did was just held his son just having a really difficult time.

Speaker 1: [23:13](#) And it could've been one of those moments when you dish out your consequence or you let them know how disappointed you are in the behavior or whatever it might be. But instead you just show up with love and you know when you think about this with you, John, like it's so obvious that this love piece of you is not a big pitch for your company. It's really who you are. It's at your core. But then I have to ask as a dad, when I meet somebody like you, I'm saying, all right, what's at work in John's childhood? What did John's dad do? Great. I get it. And you just articulated a little bit of it, you know, with Hey, it doesn't always have to be the big moment in the hospital. It might be, but it's also those little moments all throughout your life. Is there any part of the ingredients of kind of your upbringing that you can look at and say, that helps me to develop that true value of love of family?

Speaker 1: [24:06](#) First of the nature of who you are makes me want to just figure out like what was the formula. Right. And I mean that really, I appreciate that. The compliment and the praise. I would say a couple of things. One, we cannot show up differently at work. Then we do at a bar, then we do it lunch, then we do when we're working out than we do when we're worshipping and then we do when we're getting ready for the next day, then we do and we're at home around the dinner table. We try to divide up life like so how do you want to show up today before you get home and what I would say to your listeners and to you and to me John, is that it's an undivided life. You, you can't be different on this podcast. Then I will be on the next one when we talk

about business sales tactics, like I am who I am for better and worse.

Speaker 1: [24:51](#) If you don't like it, fine, find a different channel. But I, I exude love unapologetically in anything I'm doing always. And today I get to do it with you right now and for the next 30 minutes or whatever it might end up being, but then I have a team meeting right afterwards. They're going to get it. I just, I want to be who I am regardless of the time of day or the hat that I'm wearing because you can't put on different hats effectively. Yeah. Be who you are all the time and then become a better version of yourself daily that will make you a better dad and will put you in the front row and we'll put more people up there with you. So, uh, I just would remind people of that first choosing to be undivided and the way they go about their life.

Speaker 1: [25:28](#) You'll be a better dad when you do. Back to my own father though, you heard this word love, but I will tell you one, it wasn't all a greens and ice cream cones around love, but not long before the fire. When my father showed love enough on way, he had told me probably 15 times to stop playing with live in the house. Like I'm nine years old. I probably have ADHD in a mighty way. Looking back on it, I'm a crazy boy. I knew better than my dad, so I continued to play with the balloon. Then I break my grandmother's plate that used to hang on the wall. I remember my dad walked over. It wasn't an anger, but he walked over to me directly. He said, how many times did I tell you to put the balloon away and stuff playing? I don't know, dad.

Speaker 1: [26:08](#) He said at least 15 you said life has consequences, John, and he bent me over his leg right there in the family room and gave me one little spat on the bottom. I don't think I bled. I'm like, I bruise. I don't think it's child endangerment. He was not angry. I think that's important. Dads to recognize that was an angry dad was love. Dan was love and when you touch a burner, sometimes you're going to get your hand burned. When you do something and when you drink and drive enough, you're going to hit a pole or you may take someone else's life. When you ignore your father's advice. It is delivered on a love enough and you break something, it is going to have a consequence that's called love. Okay, this is good. It's not anger. There's a difference. If you are spanking kids up of anger, that's when you got to watch out for, we could have a whole conversation on this.

Speaker 1: [26:53](#) I got spanked one time in my life and I remember not telling you about it right now on this podcast and I never played with a

balloon again in that house. I never dissipate my father again that I'm aware of in that ops. So at uh, that love I think was a gift to me as a kid. I still made a lot of mistakes and then the great grace and love and my dad would love me for it afterwards. Whether that's blowing up the house or a whole lot of other things that I did from the age of nine into last night. Cause I'm still making mistakes all the time. My father is still alive. It's still a model and still teaching me what love looks like in action. I personally have never spanked my kids if, if that's the next question. But they know when daddy says to do something, he's not suggesting it.

Speaker 1: [27:35](#)

It's not. And if you don't find, just go downstairs and eat ice cream anywhere. No. When daddy says do something, it a Terry's consequence. And I think we dads, we really don't want to be the friends of our kids. We want them to have tons of friends, great friendships. We want to be their leader. We want to be out in front. We want to show them the way when they fall, we want to be the first one that picks them up and loves them afterwards. Don't be your kid's friend. Let it be friends with other Eagles. They'll make a lot of friends. Be an example. Be light. Be love to your kid. And I think it's gonna change the way they show. You asked me John, what was it about your dad? He was love. It changed the way I shut up. It's changing the way I show up even today in this podcast.

Speaker 3: [28:18](#)

What's up guys? Hey, want to take a quick second to tell you about our next open enrollment for you to join the brotherhood. This happens twice a year and our next open enrollment is November 1st through the 15th you might be asking what is the brotherhood that's currently a group of about 120 high performing hard charging entrepreneurial men who decided that they not only want to keep growing their business but that it's more important to grow their life at home as a husband and as a father. Our group of men gets together and they have valuable discussions around five key areas of family life, thriving relationships, which is really your marriage, intentional parenting, which is considered that education integrated living, which many would call a work life balance, emotional mastery, your self awareness and the awareness of your family, a consciousness and then of course vibrant health for all.

Speaker 3: [29:03](#)

A couple of times every month our members hop on a video chat. We have active conversations on the most important subjects relating to family life. Guy shared their best ideas, they asked their most pressing questions. We cover all the ideas that help guys that are new families and guys that have teenagers

that may be finishing high school. The conversations are real and raw. We challenge each other to grow. We have challenges throughout the year for our community. In fact, as I record this, we're just in the middle of one where we're doing something amazing for our wives every day for the month of September and we've created a space to have conversations that aren't happening anywhere else in our lives. You know, many of us have business masterminds we're a part of, but only a few have family masterminds that they're a part of. We even have a membership area where we host all the replays from our calls, which is accessible from an app so you can listen on the go while you're working out on a walk in the car, whatever you're doing.

Speaker 3: [29:55](#) We have small groups within the brotherhood called bands, usually four-ish guys per band, and we also have two retreats per year that are around 40 or 50 guys. You can see a few of the videos on our retreats and what a band is about. You can read about all that [@frontrowdads.com](#) the brotherhood is designed for men who want to be family, men with businesses, not businessmen who happen to have families. It's designed for men with wisdom who are also wise enough to know that there is more to learn and you know one of the things we say in our brotherhood is it's not always about new, it's about true. It's about reminding yourself and others about the core principles that make it all work. This is for men who value the benefits of working on their business versus in their business and they understand that the same rules apply to our family.

Speaker 3: [30:43](#) Like I said, the next open enrollment is November 1st through the 15th we'll be posting about this in our open Facebook group, which you can get to by going to [front row dads.com/facebook](#) connect you right to the group and also we'll send out notifications through our weekly insights email. If you're not getting that, you can sign up for that at [front row dads.com](#) guys, I just want to say this group isn't for everyone. We know that this is for high-performing hard charging entrepreneurial men who went to invest in their families like they would, anything that's important in their lives. This is a unique community. There's nothing like it anywhere in the world. And uh, if it feels like it's the right brotherhood for you and join us in November and I'll look forward to talking with you on a future call or meeting you at a future retreat.

Speaker 2: [31:24](#) Yeah, I'm glad we're going down this road of, I don't we call it discipline, maybe we call it boundaries, but I also want to explore with you John, how you manage risk with your kids. You know, we've talked about this in the group. It's like there was

actually somebody who had posted recently, I think it was one of their kids that was doing, maybe it was my buddy Scott groves is doing flips. His son Gabe was doing flips off the couch and he's like this, that's where I go. All right. Just wild, rambunctious boy wanting to do flips or like, do I need to jump in here before a net gets broken or right. And I get that idea of, look, we don't want to

Speaker 3: [32:00](#) [inaudible]

Speaker 2: [32:00](#) you know, handcuffs on our kids and let them experience life, right? We want to come find them and not let them take risks. I've wrestled with this a little bit too because while my story is certainly not, and I know you don't want me to say this, but I feel like it's compelling and you look, your story is awesome and powerful and extraordinarily compelling and I totally understand. I kind of laugh with house sometimes where you know, cause if everybody out there listening, John and I are good buddies with howL rod. So you know, I was thinking about how and growing up with him as a young speaker, we would kind of like behind the stage joke around and you know, he'd go out there and crush it and I'm like well it must be nice. Like not all of us are fortunate

Speaker 1: [32:40](#) enough to be able to die for six minutes and come back to life. Like here I am just a normal dude. Like, and we can sometimes think, and it's true by the way, that some of our most tragic moments as kids become our, our pain becomes our purpose, right? I think about like in my own personal life, I was for 10 and weighed 85 pounds going into my junior year of high school, my son who's nine is about as the same sizes. I was driving a car and I got, I felt very insignificant. I felt unseen. I had very little confidence, if any at all. And that was a painful point. Now I spend my days trying to make people feel loved and witnessed and stuff. I read it and I get in their front row and cheer them on. But largely that comes from my pain.

Speaker 1: [33:26](#) So I'm taking a long time to set up the question, but the question is ultimately about letting our kids go through pain, almost wishing uncomfortable situations on them because that's where they grow. Do you know, experiencing some of that, but not too much? Right? So take that wherever you want. That was a wishy washy question, but around, Hey, boundaries, discipline, risk assessment, knowing what you've been Johnny, we could go and do a whole hour long podcast on that question. I hope you bring me back and do exactly that. I'll weigh in with about 30 seconds of thoughts. I believe it's important to go bowling with your kids with the little boundaries down. Yeah.

You don't want them to get a strike every single time. You don't want them to go through life without a couple bumps and bruises and broken bones. You used the word wishing.

Speaker 1: [34:15](#) No, you didn't mean it. You don't need to wish these things happen because the reality is this life will demand that it happens. You will get from life. Our job as dads, it's actually not to protect them from that. It is to guide them forward. After that, [inaudible] prepped him for to ensure that the foundation of their lives is firm, that it rests on something bigger than that day. Then some trophy, then some girl or some boy or some success story that their lives are more valuable and bigger than that or some point as social media becomes bigger and bigger and inches for where it's going to be going. As we look forward, it's just beginning. We have to stop basing our value on the perspective of someone else viewing our lives and our job as dads is to do exactly that as far as risk goes.

Speaker 1: [34:59](#) Some people will ask me, Hey John, do you ever let your kids like barbecue or do you ever let your kids be around a campfire? And my answer is, man, I barbecued ribs last night. We went camping twice this summer. I love marshmallows and I like them. They're burned at a campfire like so I'm not afraid of fire, but I also make sure my kids have a healthy respect of fire, hopefully respect. So they know that it can be used for cooking marshmallows or ribs, but it can also be used to take your human life if we're not careful with it. Yeah, the same with all whole lot of other things in life. And so I don't think our job is to protect kids from these things. It's to make sure they're aware of these things that we get to explore life together

Speaker 2: [35:37](#) at the risk of being overly preachy. I think we too frequently

Speaker 2: [35:41](#) walk through the days as bulldozers for our children. You know, like we plow over coaches who don't play our kid enough. We plowed on teachers who say Billy was talking in class when we know damn well Billy wasn't talking. Someone else was talking to the teacher, thought it was Billy. We take the side of the kid for the first generation in the history of the world, we are taking the kid, the standpoint of the child over the teacher or over the principal or the coach or the rabbi or the pastor. And my encouragement dads is to believe enough to know that a teacher has worked three decades in this work isn't trying to pick on your kid. Yeah. But that a coach isn't trying to bully up your child. That, that they might be trying to work with you to make them a better version of themselves.

Speaker 2: [36:22](#) And so let's put the bulldozer back in the garage. Let's let them fall a little bit and let's be right there next then when it happens. So let's talk about this for a minute. This is so great. Maybe this is like the tee up for a different show, which would be fantastic. But um, all right, let me give you a scenario. John, can you go into coach mode here for me for a second? I'm gonna give you a scenario and I want to get your take on this. So at Tiger's new school, there is a bathroom in his class without a lock on it. They have a door stopper inside, but that doesn't have a lock. Now my son doesn't want to go to bathroom to go to the bathroom at school cause he's nervous. Somebody's gonna walk in on him. Well, when I was younger I didn't want to go to the bathroom in school and we're talking number two, right?

Speaker 2: [37:05](#) So I didn't want to go number two in school. I didn't tell my parents about this. I ended up developing severe stomach problems, ended up in the hospital. My parents were like, is everything okay? Are you going to the bathroom at school? I'm like, everything's great. I just didn't want to disappoint them or let them down or be honest as I was really embarrassed. But I would literally go to the nurse. My mom would pick me up, take me home. I was missing school. It was terrible. It actually, I would argue that that almost ruined a good part of my schooling. That's when I found this out about my son. I was like, I've got to dig in here and ask. At least I reach out to the principal and said, Hey, can you tell me what's going on? Why are there no locks? And they really didn't have a good answer and that's where I'm at right now is still in limbo with them about what's up.

Speaker 2: [37:46](#) And I've even offered to like pay for it, get it done. Cause all you need is a lock with a key that the teacher has. It's easy if they don't want you to lock themselves in the bathroom. Why bring this up to you? Is that, and I wanted to give enough context so that you can tell me what you think about this. I'm wondering how much do I let tiger deal with it? Hey, this is Tiger's deal at tiger. Write the letter. Let tiger talk with the teacher. Let tiger experienced some uncomfortableness with us cause he is, and how much do I say, look, he might do what I did, which is I didn't handle it. It was devastating for years on end and it was caused major problems in my life. I wish I had an advocate that stood up for me in that moment. That's a good, such a great question. And so real. Yeah. Although not all of us have the bathroom question where all things come up and there's this one coach where's there? There's this one teacher need to be aware that it's not always what you're describing here. And so in this specific case, my encouragement,



Speaker 1: [38:36](#) you asked who should it be? Me or my son? And I think the answer is yes. Yeah, it's not you or him. It's us together. And what an awesome opportunity for you to sit with your little boy at your side and say, a teacher, a principal, a superintendent. I need you to know this about me. Yeah. This was my experience and it changed education, challenged friendship. It affected my health. It may have stunted my growth. Yeah. And uh, I see something that might be happening here and my son, I, in fact, I'm going to just let him talk for a moment about why he might be a little bit awkward about this and then give the microphone and your boy, let him share what he's willing. Don't talk on top of them. Don't speak for him. Let him share his own little perspective on this one because he'll be the one that closes the deal.

Speaker 1: [39:18](#) And after he drops the Mike, pick it up quickly and say, Oh, by the way, I'd love to pay an 80 minute come up here and put the lock on 40th tomorrow if you're open to it. Because I think when they hear where you're coming from, how do you say no to that? How do you say no to a dad who's been there for a son who's nervous? Invite those teachers and they say, why don't you guys put yourself in this situation? Where do you guys go to the bathroom, number one or number two? I bet it's not that bathroom, but it's not. What if it was, how would you feel about it? And it's issue where on the other foot, what would you maybe do with it? And so I just think there's an awesome opportunity for all the folks who are affected by this, all the shareholders that come around and to talk about it without judgment, without anger, but with great honesty, great candor, and then get the locks on the door because I see that that's where this thing is going to go.

Speaker 1: [40:01](#) Yeah. Yeah. It's such an interesting thing. What we do for our kids and what we don't, I'm constantly wrestling with them. What's something that's going to open it up real big here, John, what is something that you've learned recently as a dad? What's going, let's even go here. Like what's going well for you right now that's relevant, that's new that we can celebrate with you. Hmm. Every day as a dad, you're learning about how great it is being a dad and how bad you are in some regards at it. I'm a, I struggle and just being totally honest with emotions, with reactions, with anger last night at the dinner table, but this is not the dinner table like five 30 this is last time that the dinner table like now, and this is a Sunday night when you and I are together live on a Monday. My son still hadn't done the homework that I told him on Friday.

Speaker 1: [40:50](#) Please do this before it gets Sunday. He has to write three sentences. We're not talking about can you write one piece brother? No, it's three sentences. He's a smart kid. He's got this and he was acting like I don't understand. I'm like, do I know you understand that I'm being sweet, I'm being loving and by the end of it, literally guys, here's dad O'Leary showing up. I punched the book against the countertop. I'm like, Henry, right? The damn sentences. We lose mine temper. He runs out. I'm not angry at him. I'm angry at the conversation. I'm angry at the slow build that has led to this at nine o'clock on a Sunday night. And then I'd go back and I apologize and I'm, I can't, or I'm not mad at you, man. I'm just mad at the situation. What can we do to resolve this thing together?

Speaker 1: [41:31](#) And so I'm, I'm trying to be in tune with my emotions so I don't get to the point where I'm punching a book against the table. Yeah. Because I know that's me. When I'm at my worst, that's how I show up. But I also recognize even then even that [inaudible] respond right afterwards in a way that draws your child back in into say, listen, I'm so far from perfect. And I knew I handled that really poorly. Let's talk about how we can resolve this together and get in a better position. Because I wasn't abusive toward him. It never happened. I never will be. But I think I handled that situation incredibly poorly. So I'm learning day after day how much I still have to do and learn and grow to be the front road dad. So that's what I'm learning right now. But I'm also learning that, uh, the more I choose to spend time with my kids, I used to be really active, like up in church doing various things and volunteer organizations and professionally a lot of, not for profits, a lot of boards.

Speaker 1: [42:25](#) I still do some of that. But if you say yes to everything, you're also saying no to things that might matter most to you. So I'm very selective on what speeches we say yes to. Now I'm very selective on what volunteer groups I said yes to. Now I'm very selective on who I'm meeting with for coffee, not because I don't want to be loved, I don't want to be encouragement. But dude, if I'm not given it the very best at home to my little ones, I'll miss out on the opportunity to do what I think I am as a father called to do first and foremost, to be love there. Just show up there to be a front row dad. And so, um, I think that's where I'm doing best right now. I've learned from mistakes, which I make all the time. And I'm saying yes and the things that actually matter. And currently the 13, 11, nine and seven and they, uh, are 41 and stunning.

Speaker 1: [43:10](#) John, this is so great man. I know we're coming up on the clock here. So this is the, I think this will be the last big question and

then we'll start to wrap. But the big question is around, well first of all, for anybody that's new to the show, listening in for maybe one of the first times, we have five pillars within front row dads. And so they're, the things we focus on are the, our podcasts are based on, these are retreats are monthly calls that we do as a community. And one of those five pillars is emotional mastery. And it's something I've talked about openly on this show wanting to get better at, you know, in situations like that, what you just described. I've lost my cool and I want to get better in moments like that. I'm experimenting with lots of different things and finding out things about timing, like time of day, how hungry I am, how hungry they are.

Speaker 1: [43:55](#) Are we dehydrated? Are we tired, are we, this is so many things right. Or even my wife and I like if our energy is off, I know if I come in with bad energy, it doesn't take long for her to have off energy and then I could see one of the kids asks her questions. She's shorter with them. I started that ripple. I created that energy in our house. I saw it sticking to that real quick. Yeah. When do we probably have the lowest energy? When are we most tired? When are we most short with our energy and our emotions and almost certainly it is from the moment we stepped in the door, five, six o'clock until we get those little ones back in their diapers back in their jammies back into their and have nine seconds to breathe. Yeah. So during the time that we have with our kids, the time that is most sacred, that is actually when we are most beat down by life and the day and they are too.

Speaker 1: [44:42](#) And that's when we're trying to connect and do our best work together. And so Johnny, you talking about man, I'm trying to be in tune with my emotions. I think most of us don't even recognize that we're, we're just thinking like, man, why is bedtime so crappy most nights? Cause you're white and so are they. So to have a little bit of grace to do things a little bit differently on the front side may change the way you go through that nightly ritual. It may allow you to not bring up like the thing that's going to turn into an explosive argument with your wife. Maybe talking about what she said to you during dinner time. It might not be best to bring up at eight 30 when you're still getting the kids to bed. Maybe that's like a Saturday morning walk thing when you got coffee and you're like, maybe I need to bring this back.

Speaker 1: [45:21](#) Okay. You've been with me for four days. I'm not mad about it, but you need to know where I was and so understanding how we show up John is huge. It is huge. Yeah. Anything else on that that's worked for you about managing your emotions? Have

you, do you have an affirmation? Are you, are you meditating? Is it more prayer? What is it for you? Yeah, I mean it's all that stuff you're mentioning. I go through a ritual in the morning. I get up before anybody else. I get up before the sunrises. I, uh, we'll drink how will love this and drink a lot of water. I usually take a hot shower. I know some people take cold showers and then I go off on a screen porch. I usually have a cup of coffee or tea, a journal, sometimes like a meditative or a prayer book and man to the East.

Speaker 1: [46:02](#) I watched the sunrise. Hmm. And I don't care how much you got on your plan for the day, which today, for instance, in st Louis, Missouri, it was dark and then the entire world above my roof just lit up with these hues of purples and pinks and yellows and it was majestic. The darkness faded to light. The birds sang before the light even showed up. Like there's, there's a podcast that will preach there somewhere, man. Like before the light even showed up, the bird starts singing. It's like about to happen. Guys get ready for it. And so for me, that just puts me in in the mindset to get ready to have an awesome day. And then I reflect and journal on what am I grateful for today. Every day I don't look at emails, I don't get ready for the, the Roman front row dads podcast. I am reflecting, why am I grateful today?

Speaker 1: [46:46](#) What do I have? [inaudible] everyday the list gets longer. I don't, I may not have fingers, but man, I got life. I may have scars. Yes, I may have struggles like come back and I may have yelled at Henry last night, but in about 20 minutes I get to go back into his room, cuddle him, love him, brush those blonde bangs out of his forehead and let him know his daddy is there. He loves them. And I got waffles downstairs ready for kids. So, um, there's a lot of reasons to be grateful and if you don't pause to recognize it, you won't see it. So I begin my day every day in prayer, gratitude, reflection, and a journal. And throughout the day I have a whole lot of messaging that I used to keep me on track. But my favorite is I love you. There's nothing you can do about it.

Speaker 1: [47:25](#) I love you. There's nothing you can do about it. It works in a sales call. It works in a podcast that works with my, when my wife brings up that thing that she knows is going to trigger me, I, she knows it. I love you. There's nothing you can do about it. I say to myself, and it changes completely how they respond. I don't think it's a response. It's proactive. It changes how I lead forward. So I love you. There's nothing you can do about it. It has been a critical tool that I used before I respond to anybody or before I walk into any conversation. And then finally, John, at

the end of each day, I asked the question, what more can I do? And in doing so it's a question that, you know, you've heard me speak, you know, I learned it from a guy named Jack Buck who changed my life.

Speaker 1: [48:06](#) Uh, he has full for four decades. He became a hall of fame radio announcer, hall of fame, human being, and changed a little boy named John O'Leary's life profoundly by saying, what more can I do? Well, I've been asking this for seven years. It has elevated my marriage in ways I can't even describe this podcast. Like our marriage is a really good place right now because of that question. It has changed the way I parent. It's changed the way that I work. As a son, as a leader, as a podcast host, as a writer, as a guy who goes by and visits kids in hospitals myself and I do all this today and I show up in the manner in which I show up because every night of my life I ask one question, man, so what more can I do to make tomorrow better than today?

Speaker 1: [48:46](#) So that that's part of my daily ritual. There's a lot more to it, but those things keep me on focusing on track. And the final thing I'll add is this, 94% of new stories in 2018 were negative. So if you were pulling into the, to the office or the school carpool line or getting ready for dinnertime conversations and you're like, man, life is crap. I just heard all about it on the radio. My encouragement to you is turn off that radio and turn it into the front row or live inspired podcast, which not all the reads tuned into stuff that is life giving, that is affirming, that doesn't hide from the difficulties, the fires, divorce challenges with parents yelling at a kid last night at dinner time. It doesn't hide from it, but it doesn't live there. It doesn't promote it. It doesn't celebrate it. That's what the news does. They celebrate fear and they tell you more about it when they come back from the commercials that they're there to sell you. Crap. Quit tuning into the gimmicks. Life primarily is good. It's not perfect this side of eternity, but I think when you focus on what you got on what's in front of you and on your opportunities to make it better, you will realize how sacred your life is and how empowered you are to make it even better. You are called to be a front row that act like it. Don't live it passively.

Speaker 2: [49:54](#) Hmm. John, thank you so much, man. That is a great way to end this show. I think that's brilliant. What you just shared and a boy, I'm feeling very fortunate to have spent the morning with you today and I really mean that. Guys, for anybody out there listening, I want to ask you to do, do a favor here for me and for John

Speaker 1: [50:12](#) and here's what it is.

- Speaker 2: [50:13](#) I'll grab a copy of his book, read it right. I'm a review. That would be good. And share one with somebody else. It's an awesome book. It's called on fire, seven choices to ignite a radically inspired life. I just think it's so powerful and it's also, I want to share with you that I've been listening to audio books with my 10 year old in the car and I think it's an outstanding way to have, you know, one of our pillars is continuous, is that intentional parenting. So listening to audio books with your kids, not listening to audio books so you can be better with your kids is listening to them with them. Right? This is an excellent choice. So I wanted to mention that the podcast is great. By the way, your book, you just have 501 Amazon. That's my mom and dad are really active on million saying, you know, so that, that 501 when Simon and Schuster printed that book, the cover of it was a picture of me with my arms crossed looking smugly at the camera.
- Speaker 2: [51:06](#) And then I wrote him an email and I said, Hey, did you guys read the book? And uh, I think they did. They thought that was the image they should go for. And I'm like, guys, that's not what this book is. And so when they read it, the cover, they use kind of flamey on fire letters. But if you look at it very closely there mirrors. Yeah. And the idea of the cover is to make sure the reader or the list your case, John, that they recognize that the little boy got burned is in channel area. It's John Broman that the dad who shows up completely unprepared for this experience with this child, that emergency room isn't Denny O'Leary [inaudible] that the doctors, the nurses, the janitors, my mother, this community that shows up in a mighty way. It's not somebody else whose smugly succeeded, but it's us.
- Speaker 2: [51:47](#) As we trip our way forward, we pick ourselves up together and we commit to doing better tomorrow than we did today. And so I'm, I'm really grateful that there's 500 and a one five star reviews. I think it's because people who read that book or listen to it realize it's their story. Yeah, it's, it's just, it's like their story and it's a story of imperfection and scars and brokenness and yet redemption and beauty. Well guys, I'd love to get you a copy of the book for free. Here's how you can get one. If you leave a review on the front road dads podcast by going to front row dads.com/reviews screenshot it, email me, John J, O n@frontrowdads.com with a screenshot of that and your address for the first three people that do that. I will send you a copy of John's book for free and then you can check it out. So I want you guys to get this. I want you to share this episode also with somebody else that you think would benefit from hearing these stories and these strategies that we got into today. John, thanks again for being on the show, man. This was really

wonderful. [inaudible] you're a great dad, a great friend and great at what you do as a speaker and as a podcast or a man. So congratulations and thanks for uh, sitting next to me in the front row. That's awesome man. Thank you buddy.

Speaker 3:

[52:55](#)

Hey guys, if you haven't already done so, go right now to front row dads.com/facebook and join the conversation that's happening right now on line. We designed this group for guys who are entrepreneurial in their thinking are high performing guys with low egos. We're looking for the dads that believe in teaching their kids how to think, solve problems and be real leaders. We're looking for guys who believe in being family, men with businesses, not business men with families. We're looking for the who have great knowledge, but also believe that they have so much more to learn. And we're looking for men who want to add value by sharing their wisdom and those that are willing to ask the questions that we all need and want answers to. That's front row dads.com/facebook or simply go to Facebook, type in front row dads and you'll get to our group and what we put in there, links to all the podcasts and videos and other resources that you can't get access to anywhere else except for in this group. We want to give you the best ideas to help you with your marriage, balancing work and family life communication strategies with your spouse and also your children, travel ideas and even suggestions on the latest gear that would save you time and helped you be more effective. We've got updates on upcoming events and so much more. Go right now to front row dads.com/facebook and join the conversation. I'll look forward to connecting with you there.

Speaker 4:

[54:23](#)

[inaudible].