

Teach them. Whatever you inculcate in your child when they are young, sticks for life. They grow into responsible citizens.

BY MICHAEL AGABA

Any father worth his name wants to raise responsible sons. But many a father do not know where to start from or what to do because they were raised badly or not raised at all.

There are many things to teach our sons, but here are just 15 that are grounded and practical lessons fathers can pass on to their sons, things that shape character, judgment, and resilience over time.

1. Take responsibility for your actions: We all make mistakes. That is human. But to own them without making excuses or blaming someone else is the true mark of manliness. A father should teach his son that accountability builds trust and respect faster than perfection ever will.

2. Learn how to handle failure: You will lose, mess up, and fall short. Failure is not final. You cannot blame anything else except you. The real skill is getting back up, adjusting, and trying again without losing your sense of self.

3. Respect everyone, especially those who cannot offer you anything

Everyone can be nice to their peers or to those above them because in most cases being nasty to them has negative consequences. But to respect those who owe you nothing (the taxi conductor, the shoe shiner, the shamba boy, the maid, and the waiter), those with less power than you shows character.

4. Control your emotions, don't suppress them: Anger, frustration, and sadness are normal. You are allowed to feel these emotions, but you are not allowed to take them on anybody. You must learn to control them and vent them appropriately in time and place. The lesson is managing them without letting them control your behaviour is a mark of true manhood.

5. Keep your word, even if it hurts: If you say you will do something, do it. This should teach you that you do not just say anything or commit to anything without careful thought first. This is the meaning of think before you say or act. Words carry accountability behind them. Once a word goes out of your mouth, be sure to make it happen. Reliability is rare and valuable in this current age where people just say anything and hope they will get away with it; no accountability or anything. But your word is your reputation. Your "no" is no and your "yes" is yes. Teach your sons to be men of their word.

6. Movement is not progress: I know a man years ago who was a thrifty and reckless. For example, sometimes when we would be driving and meet a jam, he would choose to take the longest routes out of it arguing that as long we kept moving, we were good.

In those times, I would wonder to myself why we would not just be patient and wait... I think he mistook movement for progress, busyness with

effectiveness. True progress involves taking measured, thoughtful steps, being patient to learn along the way, obtaining feedback and adjusting course when needed. A good father, therefore, must teach his son to move but know when to stop and evaluate their steps.

7. Money is a tool, not a goal: Understand money; saving, investing, and avoiding debt, but do not let money define your worth, value, or decisions. Teach your sons that money is a good slave but a bad master. Teach them to look beyond money.

8. Learn practical life skills: Cook basic meals, fix simple things, manage your time, and take care of your space. Independence matters or you will be taken advantage of and spend money on tasks you can ordinarily do for yourself.

9. Choose your friends carefully: The people around you shape your habits, mindset, and future more than you realise, so choose your friends carefully. And not everyone on your side is in your corner. Learn the difference.

10. Always treat women with respect: Scripture teaches us to treat young women as sisters and older women as mothers, with all purity. They are not properties to be owned or objects to be used. They are equal but different from men. Teach your sons to learn that early not as a rule to follow, but as a reflection of their values.

11. Be physically and mentally disciplined: Take care of your body and your mind is not about rigid self-control for its own sake, it is about building the conditions that make consistent progress possible. On the physical side, your body is the foundation for everything else

MIND WHAT YOU SAY...

Words carry accountability behind them. Once a word goes out of your mouth, be sure to make it happen. Reliability is rare and valuable in this current age where people just say anything and hope they will get away with it; no accountability or anything. But your word is your reputation. Your "no" is no and your "yes" is yes. Teach your sons to be men of their word.

15 Lessons every father must teach his sons

you do. Regular habits such as sleep, exercise, and nutrition directly affect energy, focus, and resilience. Moderate, consistent activity improves cognitive performance, mood, and endurance. That means physical discipline is not just about fitness, it sharpens your ability to think clearly, stay alert, and sustain effort over time.

Without that base, even the best intentions collapse under fatigue or burnout. Mental discipline is what turns intention into execution. It is the ability to focus when distractions are everywhere, to keep working when motivation dips, and to delay short-term gratification for long-term results. Together, physical and mental discipline reinforce each other.

When your body is well-regulated, your mind has the clarity to make better decisions. When your mind is disciplined, you're more likely to maintain healthy physical habits.

12. Speak honestly, but think before you speak: Truth matters, but so does timing and delivery because words can build or destroy a soul. The most broken people I have met in life are not those who have been beaten and battered physically but emotionally. Someone said something bad to them and they were never recovered. They carry around demons in their wounded hearts and in turn hurt others. But you can teach your son to consider the following before they speak: Is it the truth? Is it helpful? Is it inspiring? Is it necessary? Is it kind? They may preserve their hearers in the process.

13. Don't chase validation: I recall a meeting of men I attended many years ago. The facilitator asked us to introduce ourselves without mentioning what we do or where we work. You should have seen us. Men fumbled to find the right words. Like everyone else in our society, we have been corrupted by our society to think of ourselves in external terms. We look for external validation even when we seek what is personal to us. But your son can be different. He does not need approval from everyone. He can stand on his values and define himself by the same.

14. Learn to be comfortable alone: Independence is not just financial but also emotional. You should be able to stand on your own and enjoy your own company. People who love crowds most times the not do not love themselves. But dear father, teach your sons to learn enjoy their own presence.

15. Leave things better than you found them: This is about care. It means not just passing through life, but paying attention and doing your small part to make things a little nicer for the next person.

As a father of two boys, I find myself coming back to this lesson almost every day. When I leave the sitting room messy or forget to clear after using the bathroom or kitchen, I am not just untidy.

I see a chance to teach them something bigger. So I remind them sometimes firmly, that someone will come after them, and it matters what they leave behind. But I also learnt that it is not just about correcting them, it is about showing



Be physically present whenever possible for them to learn from you.