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# **The Balanced Man: Marriage, Mindset & Modern Fatherhood**

**By Tommy Maloney**

*“You don’t have to choose between being strong and being whole.”*

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## **□ INTRODUCTION: Why Balance Feels Impossible**

- The modern man’s dilemma: provider, partner, parent, protector, emotionally available, mentally strong
  - Why “balance” isn’t perfection — it’s awareness and adaptability
  - What to expect from this book: fundamental tools, honest reflection, and doable strategies
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## **□ PART 1: MINDSET – MASTERING YOUR INNER GAME**

### **Chapter 1: The Noise Inside**

- Overthinking, impostor syndrome, and quiet panic
- Identifying negative self-talk and mental fatigue
- The mindset reset: Presence > Perfection

### **Chapter 2: Emotional Fitness for Men**

- What emotional regulation looks like
- Building a toolbox: breathwork, journaling, therapy, healthy outlets
- Why anger is often a mask

### **Chapter 3: Stress, Shame & the Invisible Load**

- Juggling career, marriage, fatherhood, and personal ambition
  - The cost of carrying it all without help
  - Reframing shame into accountability
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## **□ PART 2: MARRIAGE – PARTNERING WITH PRESENCE**

### **Chapter 4: Marriage in the Real World**

- It's not a rom-com, and that's okay
- Conflict resolution, emotional fluency, and intimacy beyond sex
- Making time when time is short

### **Chapter 5: When You Feel Like a Bad Husband**

- Resentment, guilt, distraction — it's normal
- How to reconnect, rebuild, and show up better
- Conversations worth having

### **Chapter 6: Staying Teammates Through Chaos**

- Parenting stress, career demands, and staying close
- Creating rituals: date nights, tech-free time, check-ins
- The power of curiosity over criticism

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## **□ □ PART 3: FATHERHOOD – RAISING KIDS WHILE RAISING YOURSELF**

### **Chapter 7: The Dad You Want to Be**

- Forget perfection — focus on presence
- Modeling vulnerability, patience, and healthy masculinity

### **Chapter 8: Discipline, Connection & Consistency**

- Discipline without damage
- Building emotional safety
- Creating a home where kids can talk about anything

### **Chapter 9: Co-Parenting, Step-Parenting, and Showing Up**

- Real-life tips for blended families and post-divorce dads
- Respect, boundaries, and presence over performance

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## **□ PART 4: RHYTHM – PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

### **Chapter 10: The Balanced Week**

- Routines that align your life: mornings, movement, meals, check-ins
- Weekly checklists: marriage, mindset, kids, self
- The rule of “1% better” — small changes, significant impact

## **Chapter 11: When Life Gets Unbalanced**

- Crisis management: grief, job loss, relationship strain
- Reset tools for your mind and body
- The power of pause: not everything needs a sprint

## **Chapter 12: The Long Game**

- Fatherhood is a marathon
  - Marriage is a conversation
  - You are a work in progress — and that's powerful
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### **Introduction: Why Balance Feels Impossible**

Today's man is asked to be everything. We're expected to be emotionally aware, physically strong, financially secure, romantically engaged, mentally stable, and ever-present fathers—all without dropping the ball. No wonder many men feel like we're falling short, especially and importantly, the mental piece.

This eBook isn't about perfection. It's about presence. It's about developing the tools to stay grounded when life feels chaotic, reconnect with your values when you feel lost, and build a life you're proud to lead. It is also about being vulnerable and open to asking for help, which is a superpower.

You don't have to do it all. But you do have to show up—and that's where we start.

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## **Part 1: Mindset – Mastering Your Inner Game**

### **Chapter 1: The Noise Inside**

We all have a running script in our heads. It's filled with doubt for some: *"You're not good enough."* For others, it's pressure: *"Don't let them see you sweat."*

Start by noticing that voice. Don't argue with it. Just recognize it. The first step to owning your mindset is becoming aware of the stories you're telling yourself.

**Story Time.** Let's talk about impostor syndrome as a dad. I was fortunate to be a stay-at-home dad for my son, Connor. My former wife advised me that I lacked the experience to stay home with Connor. She reasoned that I was an only child, had never babysat, and had never changed a diaper. Valid points. How could I quiet the negative self-talk in my mind? Would I make mistakes? Hell to the ya! How could my impostor syndrome disappear and help me become the best dad I could be? I have never been one of those people who have the "prove them wrong" mindset, until this moment.

My mantra was, "**I get to** hang with Connor each day. **I get to** watch Connor develop. **I get to** be a present dad." I had to prove to myself, even with a so-called lack of experience, that I could become the dad my son would need. The key was to understand

### **Quick Wins:**

- Practice meditation: 5 minutes a day of no input (I like Calm and the "Daily Jay" with Jay Shetty).
- Write one daily win each day on a sticky note and put it in a jar. Take a win out of the jar when you are down. Give yourself some latitude.
- Replace "I should" with "I get to." This practice was huge for me.

## **Chapter 2: Emotional Fitness for Men**

Emotional fitness is just like physical fitness. You won't get stronger unless you train. That means checking in with yourself, learning to name emotions, and finding release valves that don't hurt you or others.

### **Toolbox:**

- Breathwork (Box breathing: inhale 4, hold 4, exhale 4, hold 4)
- Journaling each morning. Get thoughts out of your head.
- Conversations with a friend, a coach, or a therapist. **Asking for help is a strength.**

## **Chapter 3: Stress, Shame & the Invisible Load**

No one sees the weight you carry, so it feels heavier. Whether it's pressure to succeed, provide, or protect, unspoken burdens can quietly erode our peace.

### **What Helps:**

- Normalize talking about the hard stuff.
  - Schedule intentional time off, not just vacations. After putting the kids to bed, have a quiet time. Or get up 30 minutes early each day for your alone time. Read/listen to the book “The 5AM Club” by Robin Sharma.
  - Be comfortable being alone while spending time in nature.
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## **Part 2: Marriage – Partnering with Presence**

### **Chapter 4: Marriage in the Real World**

Your partner doesn’t need a perfect man. They need a present one. Real love isn’t a highlight reel; it’s made in the mundane: how you listen, touch their hand when overwhelmed, and handle tension.

#### **Focus Areas:**

- Active listening (reflecting back on what you hear before reacting) is essential. You need to listen and be present before responding.
- Checking in weekly: “What do you need more or less of?”
- Making time, even if it’s 20 minutes a night. Holding hands and being present.

### **Chapter 5: When You Feel Like a Bad Husband**

Every man has moments of guilt or distance. What matters is what you do next. Instead of shutting down, lean in. Vulnerability is repair in motion.

#### **Try This:**

- Have open and honest dialog.
- Sometimes, having (my wife has used this on me) an “adult timeout” is a good time to have quiet time for oneself.
- Ask for a reset, not perfection.

### **Chapter 6: Staying Teammates Through Chaos**

Kids. Careers. Crises. The goal isn’t to avoid stress—it’s to face it together. Strengthen your bond by building rituals that bring you back to each other.

#### **Ritual Ideas:**

- Tech-free coffee dates.

- Spend time: go for a morning walk, listen to a podcast in the car, or watch some silly show occasionally to decompress.
  - At bedtime, start by cuddling (non-sexual).
  - Schedule date nights. **YES SCHEDULE!**
  - Schedule a date night with each of your kids. **YES SCHEDULE!**
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## **Part 3: Fatherhood – Raising Kids While Raising Yourself**

### **Chapter 7: The Dad You Want to Be**

You don't have to be your father. And you don't have to get it all right. Kids don't need a perfect dad—they need a real one. Present. Honest. Curious.

#### **Daily Practices:**

- Put down your phone after work, and be present for your family.
- Ask questions beyond schoolwork: “What made you laugh today?” “Who did you sit with at lunch?”
- Let your kids be kids at home. Meaning they, too, have bad days. If they act out at home but not at school, that means they have a safe environment at home.

### **Chapter 8: Discipline, Connection & Consistency**

Discipline isn't punishment—it's guidance. Connection makes that guidance stick. Be the safest place your child knows.

#### **Foundations:**

- Explain the why behind your rules. This is key if there are separate households in the case of a divorce.
- Let consequences teach, not shame.
- Consistency in your home will make it look different from other homes. Explain the “why” and do not use the “because I said so” phrase.

### **Chapter 9: Co-Parenting, Bonus-Parenting, and Showing Up**

Family doesn't always look traditional. Whether navigating divorce or blending families, your steady presence matters more than perfect coordination.

#### **Tips:**

- Keep communication child-centered. **DO NOT USE THE KIDS AS PAWNS.**
- Respect different parenting styles when possible. Talk to the kids to explain why your values or rules are your family's. Each family is unique.
- Show up when you say you will—every time.
- Change your labeling. In our house, we use “bonus” instead of “step.”

Story time. When I got remarried, Ann, my wife, and I had a conversation about discipline. My role was to deal with the “Wonder Twins,” A.K.A. my son Connor and Ann’s younger daughter Becca. They look like they could be brother and sister. Ann would handle the (if any, ever) discipline of her oldest, Betsy.

We never used the word “step” because it does not have a positive vibe. I am unsure how I heard the phrase “bonus,” but it has stuck with our blended family.

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## **Part 4: Rhythm – Putting It All Together**

### **Chapter 10: The Balanced Week**

Balance isn’t built in a day. It’s crafted over weeks and years. Start small. Build rhythm, not rigidity.

#### **Sample Weekly Check-Ins:**

- Mental: Did I slow down and reflect?
- Marriage: Did I connect with my partner intentionally?
- Kids: Did I play, talk, or listen without distraction?
- Self: Did I move, rest, or create?

### **Chapter 11: When Life Gets Unbalanced**

Life will hit. Hard sometimes. The key is knowing how to pause and reset.

#### **Reset Tools:**

- Take a day or a weekend to be offline.
- Revisit your values list.
- Talk it out before you spiral inward.
- Journaling is an excellent way to get out of your head.

### **Chapter 12: The Long Game**

You’re not just building a season—you’re building a legacy. Fatherhood is a marathon. Marriage is a journey. Mindset is a daily discipline.

Stay flexible. Stay engaged. Stay human.

You've got this.

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## Resources

### Journal Prompts

1. What does being a “balanced man” mean to me?
2. Where do I feel most out of sync?
3. What do I want my kids to remember about me?
4. How do I want my partner to describe me?
5. What am I proud of right now?

### Connect Further

- Subscribe to the newsletter for monthly reflections, challenges, and tools.  
<https://tommyaloney.substack.com/>
  - Email: [hello@tommyaloney.com](mailto:hello@tommyaloney.com)
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**Thanks for showing up. The work you do inside reflects in every room you walk into.**

**Stay steady. Stay open. Stay balanced.**