

EMPOWERING FATHERS
WITH

The
24:7
Dad

MENTORING GUIDE

EMPOWERING FATHERS WITH THE 24:7 DAD MENTORING GUIDE

Purpose of This Guide

This guide is for staff and volunteers who will mentor fathers using *The 24:7 Dad: 12 Habits of Confident Fathers*. The book is filled with proactive, evidence-informed habits that support fathers' desire to become the best fathers possible. This guide includes information to help you select the types of fathers you want to mentor and how to mentor them effectively using the book.

As a mentor, your role is to:

- **Read the Book:** Before mentoring your first father.
- **Facilitate Learning:** Help fathers understand and apply the book's concepts and habits.
- **Provide Support:** Offer encouragement, listen actively, and create a safe space for fathers to share their experiences and challenges.
- **Promote Self-Efficacy (Confidence):** Reinforce fathers' belief in their ability to be good fathers, highlighting their "wins" and helping them navigate "losses."
- **Encourage Customization:** Help fathers customize the book's habits to fit their specific situations and needs.

Understanding "The 24:7 Dad"

I describe the 24:7 Dad as a father who strives to be the best father he can be around the clock, *based on his circumstances*. The 24:7 Dad is a consistent, intentional, and proactive father who strives to have a positive impact on his children's lives. The book focuses on applying and customizing 12 habits, grouped into six cross-cultural traits of good fathers.

- **Self-Awareness:** Accountability Partner, Weekly Reflection
- **Self-Care:** Physical Health, Mental Health
- **Fathering Skills:** Holistic Fathering, Modeling Healthy Masculinity
- **Parenting Skills:** Nurturing Children, Disciplining Children in Healthy Ways
- **Relationship Skills:** Effective Communication, Loving Co-Parenting
- **Stewardship:** Paying It Forward, Engaging Your Community

The book aims to boost a father's confidence in his ability to be a good dad. It addresses common "pain points" fathers face and encourages active participation in their learning with statements to complete, questions to answer, and detailed activities that help fathers develop the 12 habits.

Confidentfathers.com, where you downloaded this guide, includes a worksheet that fathers can download and use to record their responses. Encourage fathers to use this worksheet as you take them through the book. (You can also use the worksheet as a discussion guide.) The website also includes other resources mentioned in the book and features a video from Christopher that offers an encouraging message for fathers.

Types of Fathers to Mentor

The 12 habits help many different types of fathers. You can mentor fathers who fall into these categories:

- **Experience Raising Children:** Expectant, new/first-time, or experienced.
- **Living Arrangement:** Residing with or without their children or the co-parent.
- **Marital Status:** Married, never-married, divorced, single, and widowed.
- **Employment Status:** Employed, unemployed, underemployed, or stay-at-home by choice.
- **Relationship to the Children:** Biological, step, or adoptive. This also includes “social fathers” or “father figures,” such as uncles, cousins, grandfathers, or any male stepping in to raise children who are disconnected from their biological fathers.

The truth is that any father or man who steps into a fathering role with the *desire and commitment* to be a good father can benefit from this book and your mentorship.

Delivery Approaches

You can mentor fathers in person or virtually using these approaches:

One-on-One Mentoring: A direct, personalized relationship between a mentor and a father. Work through the chapters in order or focus on specific habits that address the father’s immediate pain points. Encourage the father to complete statements, answer questions, and finish the “Deep Dive Activities.” Discuss his responses, offer insights, and assist him in brainstorming practical applications.

Group Mentoring: Lead a discussion with a group of fathers. This encourages peer support and shared learning. Assign specific chapters or habits for fathers to explore together. Encourage fathers to share their experiences, challenges, and successes related to what the habits require of them. The “Quick Wins” and “AI Prompts” sections can serve as great discussion starters.

Hybrid Mentoring (Blended Approach): Combines elements of one-on-one and group mentoring. Fathers might work through chapters individually, then come together for group discussions or one-on-one check-ins.

Mentoring Schedule

No matter which approach you choose, before starting the mentoring process, develop a schedule that details how often and how long meetings will be, along with how much content a father needs to read between meetings. For example, if you'll meet with a father one-on-one, a schedule with weekly one-hour meetings that considers the amount of content in the book's chapters might look like this:

- **Week 1: Meet & Greet**

Give the father his copy of the book and the worksheet from confidentfathers.com. Learn more about the father and his fathering journey, especially the challenges he faces. Share your own fathering (or mothering) journey. Tell him about what to expect in the coming weeks. Use what you learn about the father to focus on the content in the book that might be most helpful for him. Assign reading the content for next week's discussion.
- **Week 2: Preface, Introduction, & Chapter 1**

Use the Preface to learn more about the father's upbringing, the Introduction to share what the father can expect in the rest of the book, and Chapter 1 to get him excited about the power of habits in transforming his life. Assign reading the content for next week's discussion. Remind him to use the worksheet.
- **Week 3: Chapter 2**

Discuss the Self-Awareness Habits. Start by exploring what he found most insightful and useful. Let the conversation go where it needs to for the father to benefit the most. Use his responses on the worksheet to keep the conversation going if it stalls. Leave at least 5-10 minutes at the end to discuss how he'll apply the accountability partner and weekly reflection habits.
- **Week 4: Chapter 3**

Discuss the Self-Care Habits. Follow the previous week's guidelines, but for these habits.
- **Week 5: Chapter 4**

Discuss the Fathering Skills Habits. Follow the previous week's guidelines, but for these habits.
- **Week 6: Chapter 5**

Discuss the Parenting Skills Habits. Follow the previous week's guidelines, but for these habits.
- **Week 7: Chapter 6**

Discuss the Relationship Skills Habits. Follow the previous week's guidelines, but for these habits.
- **Week 8: Chapters 7 & 8**

Discuss the Stewardship Habits. Follow the previous week's guidelines for these habits and add a wrap-up about the father stepping out of his comfort zone.

Work in a discussion of the value in married fatherhood (the topic of the Appendix) if and where it makes sense, based on the father's situation.

Key Principles for Effective Mentoring with This Book

Regardless of the mentoring approach or setting, keep these principles in mind:

- **Build Trust and Rapport:** Begin by creating a strong, trusting connection. The father must feel safe and respected before he'll open up.
- **Active Listening:** Genuinely understand what the father is saying, both through words and non-verbal cues. Ask open-ended questions.
- **Empathy and Non-Judgment:** See the father's point of view without judging. Recognize his challenges and praise his efforts.
- **Focus on Strengths:** Assist the father in recognizing and using his existing strengths, building on his "wins" as the book suggests.
- **Goal Setting:** Work with the father to set realistic and achievable goals for practicing the habits. Break larger goals into smaller, manageable steps.
- **Accountability (Supportive, Not Punitive):** Gently hold the father accountable for his commitments, offering support and problem-solving help when he faces obstacles.
- **Encourage Reflection:** The book emphasizes the importance of weekly reflection. Foster that habit and give him space to process his thoughts and feelings.
- **Promote Customization:** Show the father how he can adapt the habits to fit his unique family dynamics, cultural background, and personal circumstances.
- **Model the Habits:** As a mentor, demonstrating self-awareness, self-care, effective communication, and other habits can be powerful.
- **Use Artificial Intelligence (AI) Prompts (Optional):** If you and the father are comfortable using AI—specifically, large language models (LLMs) like ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini—AI can help the father customize his habits and overall fathering. The book includes hypothetical prompts as examples for each habit. Stress the importance of critically evaluating AI responses (outputs). See the note at the end of this guide for further information.
- **Celebrate Progress:** Recognize and celebrate every step of progress, no matter how small. This builds confidence and motivation.

Thank you for everything you're doing to strengthen fathers, families, and communities!

Please share this book with fathers and professionals you know who serve parents and families. If the book helps you mentor a father, please leave a review of it on Amazon.com, Barnesandnoble.com, Bookshop.org, and other retailers. That will help other fathers and aspiring mentors learn about this valuable resource.

A Note of Caution: As I point out in *The 24:7 Dad: 12 Habits of Confident Fathers*, using LLMs isn't required to be a 24:7 Dad. They're an optional tool to help fathers ingrain and maintain habits. There's a risk in using them (fact-checking). Questioning and confirming their outputs is essential because LLMs can "hallucinate," producing inaccurate summaries and conclusions and fabricating sources of information. Even when you challenge an output, they can use persuasive tactics—called "persuasion bombing"—to defend their original output. Effective prompting can help reduce the risk of hallucinations and persuasion bombing. Although newer versions generally decrease error rates, fathers should avoid using LLMs if they have concerns about them. It's not worth the stress or risk.