

THE FREE 30-DAY RESET FOR AMBITIOUS DADS

How to Protect Your Marriage and Kids Without Losing Your Edge

Last year I was laid off from my high-paying, comfortable, remote job as an engineering manager. In a moment, our entire world was turned upside down. As a father to six kids, I had no idea how I was going to provide once the savings ran out.

Four months and over 1,000 job applications later, I finally landed a position in a different industry. It was no longer remote. Our routines changed. Our evenings changed. The rhythm of our life changed.

That season nearly broke us.

We survived.

But survival is not the standard.

It forced me to ask a direct question. Is there a framework that helps ambitious dads navigate busy seasons and protect their presence in the home before damage is done?

I couldn't find one.

So I decided to build it. Not just from theory or my own experience, but from men who are already doing it well.

I set out to interview 100 of them and distill what actually works. That project is in the early stages, but patterns are already emerging.

These are busy fathers with strong marriages, high-character children, and meaningful careers. I ask them what they actually do to be good husbands and fathers. What do they protect? What do they cut? What rules do they refuse to break?

Across these conversations I keep hearing the same themes. Protect what matters. Cut what subtracts from the family. Build systems that hold when career pressure increases.

This guide is the first operational layer of a much larger framework. It is a simple method, though not an easy one, to push back against a chaotic life that is trying to steal your presence from your family.

INTRODUCTION

The Real Problem Isn't Ambition

Ambition will break your family if it is left unchecked.

Ambition itself is not the enemy. Most of us started out trying to provide well. We want stability. We want our wives and kids to have more than we did.

That is good.

So the problem is not your ambition. The problem is ambition without structure.

Work expands as responsibility increases. Promotions are earned. Income grows. The dopamine hits are real. Without realizing it, your family receives what is left over.

You feel the tension: push harder at work and sacrifice your presence at home, or pull back at work and risk losing your edge.

It feels like a binary choice.

It is not.

The solution is structural:

- Create capacity
- Choose sustainable mechanisms
- Build them into your new capacity
- Execute them consistently
- Decide what becomes your new standard

But this requires a mindset shift. Your ambition must serve your family. That is the main mission. Everything else supports it.

This 30-Day Reset is how you begin to lock in that shift.

Let's get to work.

STEP 1: COMMIT

You Have to Make the Choice

Change does not begin with tactics. It begins with a decision.

For the next 30 days, you are committing to the mindset that ambition serves your family.

Not in theory.

In practice.

If this stays internal, nothing will change. Write it down. Say it out loud. Bring your wife into it.

EXERCISE 1: Commit to the Reset

Write your commitment statement:

Answer These Questions Honestly:

Where have I been drifting?

What has that drift been costing my marriage?

What has it been costing my kids?

Share this page with your wife. Ask her to hold you accountable, to be your greatest cheerleader.

A clear decision and a united front creates the foundation.

Now that you've made the commitment, create capacity.

STEP 2: SUBTRACT

You Can't Add More to an Overloaded Schedule

Most men try to fix their lives by adding something new.

A new habit. A new calendar block. A new rule.

If your life is already overloaded, addition increases the pressure. It does not create progress.

You need capacity. Enough room to install a mechanism that produces a visible shift at home.

Capacity is not free time. It is protected space.

EXERCISE 2: Create Capacity

Non-Negotiables (Do Not Touch)

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____
- 11. _____
- 12. _____
- 13. _____

Pause Candidates (Can Pause for 30 Days)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

Everything Else (Low Return / Dead Weight)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

Now choose what you will cut for 30 days:

Two from Everything Else

One Everything Else + One Pause Candidate

What are you cutting?

1. _____

2. _____

Not forever. For thirty days.

You are reclaiming capacity for something that will make a real difference: mechanisms.

STEP 3: MECHANISMS

Undirected capacity will be consumed almost immediately.

You must install a mechanism into the space. These are observable, measurable, repeatable methods that do not rely on motivation.

They are not just vague statements like "be more present." They are something your wife can point to and say "That changed."

Sustainable systems, executed consistently, are more valuable than intense efforts that never stick.

For the next exercise, visit <https://kenschnetz.com/monolithic-man-mechanisms> to see the most up-to-date list of mechanisms from the Monolithic Man interviews.

EXERCISE 3: Select Mechanisms

Primary Mechanism (Builds Presence):

Secondary Mechanism (Protects It):

Choose carefully. Commit fully.

Now you execute.

STEP 4: EXECUTION

Good ideas fail without execution. Capacity, plus mechanisms, plus consistency, equals real structural change.

EXERCISE 4: Execution Plan

Day(s): _____

Time: _____

Duration: _____

Location: _____

Devices (on/off?): _____

Who is involved?: _____

Preparation required:

Put it on the calendar. Tell your wife. Tell your kids if applicable.

Remove friction before the moment arrives so that there is no excuse!

STEP 5: SUCCESS

The most difficult part of restraining your ambition is that we are wired to win and stack success. At work, this is easy to quantify. But there is no scoreboard at home.

So build one.

EXERCISE 5: The Scoreboard

Success Criteria (Quantifiable & Binary):

Lowest Acceptable Weekly Execution:

Highest Possible Weekly Execution:

Weekly Tracking (write what happened each week):

Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

At the end of each week record what actually happened. Visible progress prevents self-deception and kills self-doubt.

STEP 6: CHECK-IN

Without feedback loops, you will drift. Track wins, review the scoreboard, and plan the next week. This provides real-time data on what you've accomplished and what remains.

Schedule a weekly 10–15 minute meeting with your wife and answer the questions in Section 6 with brutal honesty.

EXERCISE 6: Weekly Check-In

Schedule (Day/Time): _____

Did I execute what I committed to?

What slipped?

Did you feel the difference this week? (Wife's answer)

What needs adjustment?

Over time, this consistency builds trust in your marriage and confidence in yourself.

STEP 7: MAINTAIN

This reset will fail unless you enforce strong boundaries. It will not be easy. It will be worth it.

Maintain the reset for 30 days and you will see a measurable return.

EXERCISE 7: Boundaries

Boundaries for the next 30 days:

- No new major commitments
- No expanding workload
- No reintroducing what I cut

Additional guardrails:

Anticipate resistance. From work. From fatigue. From yourself.

When pressure hits, return to your commitment statement and remember what you promised: "My ambition serves the family."

STEP 8: DEBRIEF

You have completed the reset. Now decide what remains.

EXERCISE 8: Debrief

What improved?

What felt forced?

What should remain?

What should be modified?

What will become part of our long-term standard?

If nothing changes long term, this was a wasted experiment.

The goal is structural change that will last.

CONCLUSION

If you execute this reset for 30 days, something will shift.

You will feel it. Your wife will feel it. Your kids will feel it.

Not because you tried harder.

But because you structured your life, ordered things correctly, and followed a system.

- Subtraction creates capacity.
- Capacity allows mechanisms.
- Mechanisms protect presence.
- Presence strengthens the home.

This reset is not the finish line. It is the foundation.

Continue clearing capacity, executing mechanisms, building presence, and aligning your ambition with the main mission.