
THE ARCHITECT

THE ARCHITECT

How to
START BUILDING
Your Family's Ecosystem

By
CONOR GALLAGHER

TAN Books
Gastonia, North Carolina

The Architect: How to Start Building Your Family's Ecosystem © 2025 Conor Gallagher

All rights reserved. With the exception of short excerpts used in critical review, no part of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form whatsoever, without the prior written permission of the publisher. Creation, exploitation, and distribution of any unauthorized editions of this work, in any format in existence now or in the future—including but not limited to text, audio, and video—is prohibited without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible—Second Catholic Edition (Ignatius Edition), copyright © 2006 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Cover & interior design by David Ferris, www.davidferrisdesign.com

ISBN: 978-1-5051-3628-9

Kindle ISBN: 978-1-5051-3664-7

ePUB ISBN: 978-1-5051-3663-0

Published in the United States by
TAN Books
PO Box 269
Gastonia, NC 28053

Printed in the United States of America

CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	1
Chapter 1: Be the Hero, Not the Victim.....	3
Chapter 2: You Are Never Too Busy.....	21
Chapter 3: Be the Architect.....	29
Chapter 4: Saint Benedict: The Master Architect	41
Chapter 5: Build Your Ecosystem.....	49
<i>Conclusion</i>	59
<i>Recommended Reading</i>	63

INTRODUCTION

People always say to me, “How do you raise sixteen kids? I can barely manage two!” And my answer is, “I don’t raise sixteen kids—I manage environments.” They look at me with surprise, and then we have a fascinating conversation.

This little book is part of what I mean when I say, “I manage environments.”

At some point in my parenting career, I realized a profound truth: no one was going to build the environment I wanted for my children other than me and my wife. I couldn’t outsource this, as I could with much of our lives. I had to build something beautiful they could live in—and I don’t mean a house. I mean a “home,” yes, but a social life, a technologically safe life, an educational life, and so on. I was the architect, appointed by Almighty God, to design and build a life, an environment, or better yet, an ecosystem, that would produce virtuous and happy adults, who in turn would do the same thing for their own families.

My wife and I are the architects. And we hope to construct, with God’s help, a masterpiece.

What are you building, dear reader? What is the environment you are constructing for your most important asset to reside in? Are you taking ownership of this eternally important project, or have you left it to the heathens of this world to construct on your behalf?

Are you the architect? Or are you not?

Read on and learn how to be one.

—Conor Gallagher

YOUR LIFE
IS THE FRUIT OF
YOUR OWN DOING

—JOSEPH CAMPBELL

C H A P T E R

1

BE THE HERO, NOT THE VICTIM

The late American author and professor Joseph Campbell dedicated much of his career to studying and analyzing ancient literature and mythology. In his studies, he uncovered certain recurring patterns, ideas, and truths that lie at the heart of some of our most beloved stories and poems. But one quote that is particularly striking is about what it means to be a hero. Campbell wrote, “Your life is the fruit of your own doing. You have no one to blame but yourself.” And elsewhere he wrote, “The big question is whether you’re going to be able to say a hearty yes to your adventure.”

Stories of myths and heroes have permeated our human identity since time out of mind. From epic poems and hieroglyphics to binge-worthy Netflix shows and comic books, we as a culture have long admired ordinary people placed in extraordinary situations. Our hearts race and we bray with elation when good triumphs over evil.

We long to be that hero. We long for the courage to overcome adversity and sorrow.



“Some are born great, some
achieve greatness, and some have
greatness thrust upon them.”

—*William Shakespeare*

For the past fifty years or so, however, I would argue that we’ve buried such courage. We’ve sadly exchanged our role of aspiring to great virtue with self-pity. We’ve become self-made victims in a cruel world. But saddest of all is that this has become an accepted norm for many of us.

Now, what is this self-victimization? The simple definition is self-victimization is the tendency of individuals to perceive themselves as victims, attributing their problems and misfortunes to external factors rather than acknowledging their own responsibility. Why would someone want to do this? Because they desire sympathy, compassion, and frankly, a free hand out. They want someone to take the blame so they don’t have to take responsibility for working hard, overcoming obstacles, and winning on their own merits. In our super-sensitive world, if you are a victim, others will take care of you. If you are a victim, you are entitled.

This cycle of self-made victims has become a virus within our culture. It’s a psychological parasite that’s spreading rampantly through this modern age. This isn’t completely ridiculous though. In fact, it’s quite understandable that this would happen in a culture filled with spoiled rotten brats. And remember: it doesn’t take money to be spoiled rotten. My kids have grown up with plenty of money, but they are not spoiled in the least. (They have their issues but being spoiled ain’t one of them.) With the number of kids in our family, they have been forced to work things out, to deny self, to help others when it is highly inconvenient. Even if you are poor, you have the ability to spoil your kids rotten by the way you raise them. We aren’t talking money; we are talking how you raise your kids to be accountable for their own actions.

A story just from the other night may illustrate the point. We were watching the Yankees and Dodgers in the 4th game of the World Series. Imelda (12)

went outside to get something from the refrigerator (the extra one) and a large glass bottle of sparkling water fell out of the fridge, shattering on the garage floor. A huge mess. Tons of little shards of glass. Water everywhere. She came inside and told me. I asked her if she was capable of cleaning up the mess or if she needed me. She said she could do it, albeit a little reluctantly, hoping I might take the burden from her. She asked her brother David (11) for help. He willingly left the game and helped her.

Now, I went outside to check on them three or four times and would have of course intervened if they needed help. But they handled it. They even moved the fridge in order to get the shards of glass that shattered beneath it. I saw little David pushing that fridge with his back, feet up against the water heater giving him leverage. It was a funny sight. It took at least thirty minutes, missing much of the game.

I think most parents would have done the clean up for them, or, had to force a much older sibling to help. I was so proud to see my kids handle such a big mess together. This, my friends, is why my kids end up being excellent employees: they know how to work. They are not the victims of a broken bottle. Rather, they were heroes that solved the problem.

Now, there are many factors and situations that can lead to true, justified victimization. True oppression exists. Real suffering can strike and leave families devastated and ruined. But most people in our culture live with all the modern comforts this century has to offer. Sturdy houses and apartments with running water and electricity; every new piece of technology; all the streaming services; the fastest internet; food that can be delivered at any moment....This is an age of instantaneous abundancy. Those that have it are sucked into it; those that don't have it long for it. It is a spoiled age obsessed with the material. It is a virtual age that despises the virtuous.

It's easy to imagine this spoiled brat on a micro level. You've seen it in movies, read it in novels, known some family that spoils their kids to death. That kid who has been spoiled is destined to see themselves as a victim of their circumstances. This is because they haven't had to persevere. They haven't had to fight through difficulty or truly yearn for something more. They simply complain about every meaningless frustration or things not going exactly as they wish.

My brother Brian makes this funny joke where he'll act like something's really wrong. I'll ask, "What's wrong, Brian?" He'll do this fake pouting cry and say, "My toaster doesn't have a bagel setting."

We have become self-made victims in many ways because our luxury cars don't pair with our smartphones, or our package won't arrive from Amazon instantly. We've lost sight of ourselves because we wallow in misfortune and blame others for it. We've shrugged off our great adventure and instead whine that we have to get off the couch.

YOU MUST BREAK THE CYCLE

The novelist G. Michael Hopf is credited with coining the saying, "Hard times create strong men. Strong men create good times. Good times create weak men. Weak men create hard times."



If you look back through American history (I'd argue back as far as the founding of any civilization) this has been humanity's cycle. It has been especially present in American culture since at least World War I.

Consider the generation that fought in World War I. The trench warfare was horrific and devastating. These young men came home from tragic battles

and went to work, often very hard, manual labor jobs in factories, shipyards, or farms. They worked to build families and make lives after the war, and then the Great Depression struck. They didn't have any extended period of time of ease. These were hard times, to say the least. The Depression and post-war culture wreaked havoc in the country, but the people were tough, they persevered and never gave up.

The children that grew up in the Depression saw mom and dad fighting to have every little thing that they had. They learned to be grateful for what there was and work hard to get just a bit ahead. There was no room to become spoiled. These same children grew up and then went off to World War II themselves, already tough as nails from being Depression-era babies.

Those hard times in American society created strong men and women. They were strong from the Depression. They were strong from the war. They came back home, and wished to build strong lives, strong communities. They built factories and businesses. And through all of this, these strong men and women created good times.

As a result of their hard work, there came a boom in America. Throughout the 50s, 60s, and 70s, technology and industry soared. New homes were built, mass manufacturing made life easy and made necessities easily accessible.

But the next generation, the "baby boomers," disrupted much of this. My father is a quintessential baby boomer, born in 1950. When he turned 18 or 19 years old, what was going on in America? It was the sexual revolution. Woodstock and long hair. Suddenly, it's the anti-war movement, anti-patriotism, race wars. Some things improved, but many things began to fall apart, and major division entered society in unprecedented ways. The age of entitlement began.

MACRO CAUSES OF A VICTIM MINDSET

Mindsets changed in such drastic ways in a short amount of time. No longer was focus placed on family or communities or even a country, but instead it was shifted to the individual. JFK's famous line, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country," was a prophetic warning of the upside-down mindset becoming prevalent. Ever since that baby boomer generation, the mindset has been "What can my country do for me?"

Advertising became aimed at the individual. Music and television provided narratives of self-centeredness. And at the same time, there was no longer worry or need to have a family or remain chaste, because the invention of “the pill” brought a new form of sexual freedom. Suddenly men and women become spoiled in a whole new way because there were no consequences to their sexual deviancy.

Babies became commodities. Families became customers. War became an industry because it was good for the economy.

So, in post-war America, these strong men and women made good times. My father’s generation grew up in the good times, but those times created weak men and women.

Politically, this baby boomer generation embraced big government. With welfare and social programs holding over from the post-Depression years, what was supposed to be momentary relief for a devastated country became a foothold for power hungry politicians. The philosophy of the 60s was one of radical individualism. It should come as no surprise that a spirit of entitlement possessed our nation.

You can even see this weak-men-mentality manifesting itself in economic policy of “big government’s going to have to take care of us.” No longer was there a pride of place, of ownership, or community. Mindsets became “what can they do for *me*?”

MAKE YOUR KIDS CLEAN UP THE BROKEN GLASS

Those good times created these weak men and women. These weak men and women created an economic policy of entitlement and victimization. While welfare and social support for the poor is needed, big government used such programs to essentially victimize the populace, divide races, knowing that they could continually be put in office and elected when they promised to make things better and give things away. It became a game of weakening already weak people, promising to help but doing nothing in the end. And that dynamic is still going on politically and economically. Perhaps this was no better demonstrated than upon Barack Obama’s election when people literally started asking, “Where’s my new car?”

If you make the people weak, they will always need you. It's a constant circle of taking out legs from under people so that they must lean on someone else. Such a government and cultural zeitgeist becomes a tyrant, posing as savior.

“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”

—*Eleanor Roosevelt*

This weak generation has been in charge for a long time and has continued to feed this cycle of victimization. The baby boomers are in their seventies and beginning to retire now. But they have created a weak generation, and thus we are on the threshold of hard times. The cycle continues on.

Another striking theory poses a similar kind of cycle. Throughout history, nations have gone through a cycle of peace and war, peace and war. If you look at a generation that's in the war, they witness firsthand the devastation and horrors of war. There is nothing romantic about it.

Those people go back home, take on political offices, and they don't want to go to war again. They know what it's like, so they strive for peace. Generation two, their children, watched dad come home broken and traumatized. They heard the horror stories of war. So, they too promote peace.

But then generation three, the grandchildren, came along and didn't grow up with the sense of war. They didn't have a close connection and or see grandpa's PTSD. This generation thinks these policies of peace are silly and unnecessary. Without that terror of war, they begin to lead the country down dangerous paths and soon enough back to war again¹.

1 The Strauss–Howe generational theory, also known as the Fourth Turning theory, was developed by William Strauss and Neil Howe and outlined in their 1997 book “The Fourth Turning: An American Prophecy.”

The theory proposes a recurring generational cycle in American history, consisting of four turnings that repeat every 80–100 years: High (First Turning); Awakening (Second Turning); Unraveling (Third Turning); Crisis (Fourth Turning). According to this theory, each turning lasts about 20–25 years, and the cycle is driven by generational archetypes that react to the previous generation's excesses. The generation that experiences a major crisis or war (Fourth Turning) emerges with a desire for stability and peace. Their children, raised in the aftermath, continue to value peace and institutions. Grandchildren begin to question the established order. Great-grandchildren come of age during a time of crisis, potentially leading to another major conflict.

I think we're at a time where our country has experienced a long time of peace. We've had war in the Middle East and various countries, of course, but we have not had an all-out war like Vietnam or WWII. The general population has had a generous gap between such horrific violence. We don't have a cultural memory of the horrors of war. We do things that will jeopardize our peace and throw ourselves back in war, beginning right here in our own society.

Such paradigms only go to show we are in a wimpy era. Not that we need war or a Great Depression to make us strong, but we must pass on the virtues that come with perseverance through sorrow. We must uphold human dignity in order to break these cycles.

In short, we are a spoiled generation, one that has been spared the atrocities of war and have drowned in a tsunami of abundance.

Dear parents, the culture will not make your child tough; it will make your child weak. Making them tough is up to you. And this is not done by making your kid pump iron in the garage, but by making them clean the broken bottle in the garage. This is done by creating an environment of accountability, self-reliance, and grit.

A SPOILED MINDSET

The dawn of extraordinary technology has only further propelled our spoiled and corrupted dispositions. We no longer suffer in the same ways as previous generations, which is a blessing, but we suffer differently. We have severe poverty, but it is a different type of poverty.

Now, spoiled can take on many meanings. While a great many of us have been materially spoiled, I think it is more of an entitled mindset. Whether or not we have luxury cars or iPhones, our society tells us that we *must* have it, that we *deserve* it. This is our spoiled nature; this leads us into becoming self-made victims, demanding that we deserve.

As I mentioned earlier, if you're a spoiled brat in a mansion, it's somewhat easy to see that your life crumbles when somebody doesn't make the shrimp cocktail the way you like it. Of course, it's silly and absurd, but you can see that kid melting down and say, well, no wonder. We can stand back with smug hauteur at such a scene, but the reality is we would all act totally

spoiled if we were all totally spoiled. We wouldn't know otherwise. And this is the case now. Culturally, we're spoiled in unprecedented ways.

Not only are we following the typical cycle and entitled mindset, but we really do have a material abundance that the world has never seen. Mass production of food, clothing, shelter, and technology, everything, and quite literally everything, is at our fingertips, just a click away.

THE DAYS OF OUR LIVES

So, how and where does this self-victimization begin? I would argue it is generally within our control. We cast ourselves into the role of a victim. Perhaps society at large initiated it, but we perpetuate it.

Think of a teenage girl who has sat and watched endless amounts of dramas on T.V. Every good story has a certain story arc to it. There's the situation and drama, there's a villain and the hero. The hero somehow becomes a victim and must overcome some feat in order to restore things back to how they should be, often much better than before. We've all seen this story. There are only a few basic storylines that are repeated time and again, after all.

Romeo and Juliet has been retold a million times. *The Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, and *The Matrix Trilogy* all have basically the same premise of "the chosen one." A drama builds on itself with situation after dire situation until the tension is almost unbearable.

In this example, this teenage girl has seen all of these dramas countless times in every T.V. show and movie she's ever watched. Her whole cultural worldview is based on this drama. And every good drama has to have some kind of sacrificial victim, has to have some kind of bully. It's hard to be redeemed if you're not a victim, after all. And because society has done away with a sense of the true victim, which was us as a result of Original Sin and our need of a true redeemer, Jesus Christ, this teenager is left searching for that dynamic to be present in her life.

Such people place themselves in the movie. They place themselves in the T.V. show and they cast themselves as the victim. They want to be in the reality show or the soap opera, they want to be the hero with the horse or the beautiful couple getting married. This becomes almost a coping mechanism.

They do have legitimate problems. They have broken families, live in a crazed, manic society, and are bombarded with the world 24/7.

The social environment that they're being raised in, along with the technological environment, the religious environment, the recreational environment, the educational environment, and the professional environments, those six environments (we'll talk about these in more depth in later chapters) are really harsh environments for most people. They have not been built to foster a sense of peace and security, but rather isolation and anxiety. So, becoming a victim is a natural consequence.

This isn't entirely their own fault either. There's certainly legitimacy to this. But there is also a clear manipulation at play. This victimization is a manipulation of others, veiling truth and telling them they have nowhere else to turn. It turns attention entirely to self and self-interest.

“True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic.
It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost,
but the urge to serve others at whatever cost.”

—*Arthur Ashe*

Much like the Greek myth of Narcissus, the beautiful young man who falls so deeply in love with his own reflection in the water that he falls in and dies, we too have become obsessed with our own reflections.

With social media, with the way our school systems and sports teams work, the world has become a mirror. Everywhere you look, every environment that you're going into, it requires people, particularly young people, to be extremely self-conscious of how they look, what are they wearing, how they're performing, what they are saying, what group are they in. Of course, these sorts of social hierarchies have been present in society throughout history to some extent. Even the ancient Romans had hierarchies of greater togas and lesser togas (the cool kids wore nicer togas, of course).

We've now reached an all-time high where the styles and fads change so rapidly, and there are abundant resources to buy and adopt new fads so



Narcissus. Circa 1600, Caravaggio.

quickly that just to keep up with it is almost impossible. We're endlessly looking at ourselves, weighing, measuring, analyzing, just to make sure we're up to date and not left behind. It's constant. And there's so much abundance that it is impossible to keep up. We have so much "stuff" we think is so important. And when we don't have it, all we can do is obsess over getting it.

We've become spoiled to the point of believing our happiness and peace lies in getting what we want, and not what we need. We're spoiled to the point where we're bubbling over with pride and self-interest. It's purely a spoiled culture and its yolk is too much to bear.

YOUR BURDEN OF ABUNDANCE

The biggest problem with this self-victimization is that parents are adopting this troublesome notion at alarming rates.

Parents, especially younger parents, have grown up in this spoiled culture. They've grown up with total abundance (again, not only material, but in self-serving entitlement too) and it has become a great burden. Tremendous abundance is a very difficult thing to bear.

Imagine two hikers set out through the forest on a long journey. The first thinks of everything. In his pack he has a tent, plenty of high-quality food, extra pairs of clothing, pans, dishes, a little fan in case it's hot, lawn chair in case he wants to rest. He has everything with him on this long and treacherous journey, but it weighs him down. He grows more and more tired, having to stop and rest. His legs are ready to give out not even halfway through the journey. He has never been taught how to pack lean. He thinks that all of this garbage that he's carrying is necessary to survive. While at the same time, the second guy on the other trail has brought only the bare essentials. He has a small backpack and only brought what he truly needed, and he's getting through the journey so much better.

You can look at these two people and feel sorry for the idiot who is burdened because everyone told him, "Don't forget to bring your extra neck pillow." He's helplessly burdened by abundance.

Parents today feel helpless in similar ways. They feel they are victims, and you can see that parents have adopted this psychosis of self-victimization. They have a middle schooler and a high schooler, and they are so completely and totally overwhelmed.

Why? Well, there are a number of reasons. But whether it's kids in sports, both spouses having to work two jobs just to pay all the bills, keeping up with teachers at school, keeping up with the house and cars and all the day-to-day struggles, it quickly feels like you're treading water but never making

it to the shore. As they grow more exhausted by the spinning world, the constant demands on them from their kids, friends, family, people slip right back into this mindset of feeling like that can't break out. They'll never get ahead; they'll never find peace. This turns into blaming everyone but themselves, and they are playing victim once again. Why? Because it's always easier to blame someone, something else than to pull yourself up and start changing your life.

So many people feel they must be perfect and do extraordinary at everything. They must work hard to move up in work, while being a perfect spouse, perfect parent, and they must be improving themselves and upgrading their life all the time. The mindset of perfection and abundance surrounds you. It's an exhausting system that traps you and makes you feel like there's no way out.



“The most extraordinary thing in the world
is an ordinary man and his ordinary wife
and their ordinary children.”

—G.K. Chesterton

I think this abundant, busy mindset is a major culprit for making parents feel like victims. That recreational environment takes a ton of time. I remember when we were a big-time baseball family, and we had five kids on four different baseball teams at once. I certainly felt helpless. It was constant and all-consuming. The idea of my boys not playing little league baseball was anathema. So, we had to start making some tough decisions. We decided to take one season off from little league. And we never went back. These days, we wait much longer until our kids get into organized sports. Admittedly, I have 16 kids. So my situation is a little more complex than the average family. But I wish I had considered this much earlier than I had. Even with five kids, we were spinning out of control. We needed to slow down, but I was scared to do so. I wanted to “feel” like a good dad taking my kids to the field every day. Now, I’m focused on being the architect of an incredible ecosystem that provides what my kids really need to become virtuous, competent, and tough as hell.

The key thing is that these parents feel helpless because they are allowing the culture to build their infrastructure, their ecosystem, as opposed to the parents themselves building the ecosystem.

I'm not against sports. I'm not against kids playing instruments. I'm not against kids doing ballet. I'm not against vacations or any of that stuff. But parents today must remember that if the history of humanity was a 24-hour clock, kids have been playing organized sports for 20 seconds. (I did the math.²)

It is remarkable how parents have adopted extraordinary convenience and luxury things that we have, such as organized sports, as absolute necessities for well-being. It's something that just walked on to the stage of humanity, and we assume that it's absolutely necessary to fulfill a thriving life. Parents allow the culture to build their life. Parents allow culture to be the architect of their family and they're too weak to stand up and do something about it. This is a major problem.

“You live in a deranged age, more deranged than usual because, in spite of great scientific and technological advances, man hasn't the faintest idea of who he is or what he is doing.”

—Walker Percy

When someone else is the architect and forces you to go this way and that, and you have to do this and you have to do that, you have to buy these clothes, you have to drive this car, your kids have to do these activities, you have to live according to the standard—of course you will feel like a victim.

2 300,000 years of human history = 24 hours

- 1 hour = 12,500 years
- 1 minute = 208.33 years
- 1 second = 3.47 years

Now, let's calculate how many seconds 70 years represents:

$70 \text{ years} \div 3.47 \text{ years/second} = 20.17 \text{ seconds}$

Therefore, if the entire 300,000-year history of humanity were compressed into a 24-hour clock, the last 70 years would represent approximately 20 seconds.



The Tower of Babel. Scorel, Jan van (1495-1562). Cameraphoto Arte Venezia / Bridgeman Images

In a sense, you are a victim, but you allowed yourself to become one, and you allow it to continue. And remember, this sense of self-victimization is a choice. It's a mindset we've adopted. It can absolutely change, but that requires change from you.

So, do you have the guts to say no, mom and dad? Can you say, "I'm not going to let this culture dictate how my family is built. I'm going to build it myself."

YOUR FALSE FEAR OF FAILURE

Parents also feel like victims because they feel like there's nothing they can do about it. And the reality is that this is a devastatingly shortsighted sense of their own creative powers to build a family that they choose to have.

For some reason, when people build a business, they're much more creative. They often get excited and courageous, saying, "No, this is my business. I'm going to do it the way I want to do it."

They don't let the outside world dictate to them their entrepreneurial efforts. People are far more independent and autonomous and creative and imaginative and resilient against external pressures when it comes to entrepreneurship or creativity.

But when it comes to family, we just tuck our tails, fall in line, and do what we're told.

Why is this? We have a longing to be our own person. We have a longing to be creative and imaginative and innovative and strategic and to be different than our competitors. We have a family because we longed for one and were blessed with one. Yet every day, many of us do nothing to better our families.

Many people have an extreme sense of ownership over something they've made and don't want anyone else to mess it up. They're not afraid of their business or creative work standing up and walking away saying, "I don't like what you did with me." It's theirs. It came out of their creativity.

But kids do this every day. They stand up at some point in their life and say, "I'm done with you, dad and mom. I don't want you to be my dad anymore. I don't like what you've done." Spouses do this with each other, and it's terrifying.



"Nothing is so strong as gentleness;
nothing so gentle as real strength."

—*St. Francis de Sales*

We've become conditioned to the falsehood that love and family and marriage are conditional. We cower when real conflict arises because we don't want to "lose" our kids or spouse. Or, on the other hand, we become overly aggressive and walk away ourselves, thinking we deserve better. But we don't work on fixing things when they're broken. We hide or walk away and allow something or someone else to take the lead.

How many parents have I met in my life that cannot bring themselves to discipline their children, particularly dads, because they are scared to death that their kid is going say, “Screw you. I’m out.” Especially when they’re teenagers. They are scared to death that their teenage daughter is just going to get in her car and drive away.

This goes right back into playing victim. They say, “I’m helpless here. I can’t even discipline my kid because everything’s against me: my spouse, my kids, my job, culture...EVERYTHING!”

I see so many dads who are scared of their own children. And they love their children. They don’t want their kids to leave. So, they compromise, and compromise and compromise and compromise. Thinking that that’s going to keep them close, when in reality, it doesn’t.

Instead, dad and mom must demand respect but also give affection.

I think we fall into a dichotomy of thinking we can only do one or the other. But you have to give both. You have every right to. God the Father wrote it in the Ten Commandments. Honor your father and mother.

You are owed respect from your children. And they are owed affection from you.

We get into this mode of playing victim because, on some level, we’re afraid of failure. We’re afraid to stand up and take the reins of our family because what if we screw up? What if something happens and everyone leaves? So, we just let others take the reins and we whine and complain and remain helpless.

But you must recognize this is a false sense of failure. You must see that the culture that you have grown up in has created a self-victimization psychosis, one that is stronger than ever before in human history. If you don’t recognize it, you can’t fight it.

Once you do recognize it, then you’re able to say, “Ok, I’m not a victim. I’m the architect.”

YOU SHOULD
BE BUILDING,
NOT BUSY