

FOREWORD BY GARY CHAPMAN
AUTHOR OF *THE FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES*

FROM
BROKEN BOY
TO
MENDED
MAN



A POSITIVE PLAN TO HEAL YOUR
CHILDHOOD WOUNDS AND BREAK THE CYCLE

PATRICK MORLEY
AUTHOR OF *THE MAN IN THE MIRROR*

Do you struggle with the leftover pain of childhood wounds? As someone who has worked with men for many years, I can say with confidence that *From Broken Boy to Mended Man* is one of the most powerful resources available to help you understand what happened to you and start healing. Patrick Morley's compassionate approach and practical strategies offer both hope and help to break the cycle for yourself and your family.

DR. TONY EVANS

President of The Urban Alternative and senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship

Pat Morley continues to be one of America's most sane and needed voices on the state of masculinity and manhood. In *From Broken Boy to Mended Man*, he has done it again, tracing our journey from boyhood pain to becoming a whole, healed man.

DAVE RAMSEY

New York Times bestselling author of *The Total Money Makeover*

This is not an endorsement. It is a plea. This book is for you. You must read it. Patrick Morley is one of the most intentional men I have ever known. He doesn't brush his teeth or order breakfast without a plan. This book has been written with the kind of care you'd expect from a surgeon, a fighter pilot, or a multimillion-selling decorated author with something very important to say. You likely don't know it, but you have been waiting a long, long time for this book, from this man. It has the chance to change everything you've thought about everything, starting with your own life. Again, I'm not suggesting you read it. I'm *urging* you to read it. A couple of pages in, you'll understand, and agree. Thank you, Patrick. I needed this book—I and thousands of other men.

ROBERT WOLGEMUTH

Bestselling author of *Finish Line*

Patrick Morley understands what you're going through because he's been there. With precision and simplicity, Patrick will help you understand what happened to you as a child. He will guide you through a hopeful process to heal from your childhood wounds. And he will show you a road map so you can break the cycle of suffering and brokenness for your own family. The pages are packed with practical examples—my favorite is how the hug of a father and a grown son changed the trajectory of an entire family line! *From Broken Boy to Mended Man* will grab you from the first sentence and not let go to the last. Let it guide you to a new freedom and redeem you out of your brokenness.

LOTTIE K. HILLARD, MS

Professional Christian counselor for Patrick Morley

Jesus told us that we need to become like little children, but he most certainly meant the best version of our childhood self—not the broken boy so many of us have been. Pat Morley shows us how to grow up while staying young at heart. God cannot heal the hurts we do not identify. This book will heal old wounds!

MARK BATTERSON

New York Times bestselling author of *The Circle Maker*

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From Broken Boy to Mended Man: A Positive Plan to Heal Your Childhood Wounds and Break the Cycle

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Designed by Jennifer Phelps

Published in association with the literary agency of Wolgemuth & Associates.

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For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Tyndale House Publishers at csresponse@tyndale.com, or call 1-855-277-9400.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-1-4964-7986-0

Printed in the United States of America

30	29	28	27	26	25	24
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

BROKEN, *ADJECTIVE*

- not functioning properly; out of working order
- fractured, ruptured, torn, smashed, or splintered
- infringed or violated
- confused or disorganized
- interrupted, disrupted, or disconnected
- weakened in strength, spirit, etc.
- exhausted or weakened as through ill-health or misfortune
- (of a relationship) split apart; not intact
- (of a family) disunited or divided by the prolonged or permanent absence of a parent, usually due to divorce or desertion
- overcome with grief or disappointment

MENDED, *VERB*

- to make (something broken, worn, torn, or otherwise damaged) whole, sound, or usable by repairing
- to remove or correct defects or errors in
- to set right; make better; improve
- to progress toward recovery, as a sick person
- (of broken bones) to grow back together
- to improve, as conditions or affairs
- to repair (something broken or unserviceable)
- to improve or undergo improvement; reform
- to heal or recover¹

*To Lottie Hillard,
the compassionate counselor who helped this broken boy
process my pain so I could mend.*

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FOREWORD

THROUGH MY FORTY YEARS of counseling men who have experienced childhood wounds, I have never read a book that I have found more helpful for these men than the book you hold in your hands. It is practical, understandable, and doable, I think because it is written by a man who has walked the road.

The reality is that no one chooses their parents. And we are all greatly influenced by those who raised us. That influence may have been positive or negative. We cannot change our childhood history. If you had loving, caring, supportive parents, life will be much easier. If you had parents who inflicted deep emotional wounds, life will be much more difficult. Unfortunately, many men who have childhood wounds will live to repeat the negative example of their parents.

However, the good news is that while you and I are greatly influenced by our parents, our adult life is not determined by our parents' behavior. Most of us know men who had wonderful parents, but instead of following their example, they made bad decisions that wrecked their adult lives. Conversely, it is also possible for men who have deep childhood wounds to

make wise decisions and lead productive, fruitful lives. Again, we are influenced by our parents, but our success in life is not determined by our parents' behavior. God has made us free to choose our own destiny.

Most men who grew up with childhood wounds will need “outside help” on their journey to healing and health. Patrick Morley offers such help in *From Broken Boy to Mended Man*. If you will read and apply the steps in this book, I predict that you will break the cycle of childhood wounds. You can become the person you have always wanted to become. You can have healthy relationships. If you choose to make the journey, God will walk with you.

Gary Chapman, PhD
Author of The Five Love Languages

PART 1

**UNRAVELING
YOUR CHILDHOOD
WOUNDS**

THE FRATERNAL ORDER OF BROKEN BOYS

THERE ARE MILLIONS OF US. We carry around leftover pain from childhood wounds.

As a result of this unprocessed pain, we act out in ways that damage our relationships. We're easily offended. Fragile. We lash out. We withdraw. We're baffled by our behavior. Frankly, we're not even sure what normal behavior looks like.

We all want to silence the voices of the past, but the way forward is shrouded in mystery. We look at our lives and can't help wondering, *Is this as good as it gets?* We're terrified we might repeat the cycle with our own spouses and children, rather than break it.

What we really want—have always wanted—is for our parents to love us, believe in us, and be proud of us. We ache to be

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encouraged, respected, and valued. We yearn for their approval and affirmation—to be the gleam in their eyes. That’s what you and I need to thrive.

When a young man doesn’t get these things from his mom and dad, he ends up as a little boy with a hole. I know. That’s what happened to me.

IT’S PERSONAL

When my mother died from cancer, I didn’t feel anything. I wasn’t sad. I didn’t cry. There was no emotional response. Nothing. At the time, I was fifty-three years old.

Knowing something was off, I made an appointment with a counselor to figure out why. Over eight sessions, my counselor helped me process the father and mother wounds I had never been able to put into words. That allowed me to grieve the childhood I had missed. It empowered me to forgive, heal, and make beautiful, lasting changes.

Not understanding our emotions is more common for us men than you might think. Researchers believe that many men are so emotionally impaired that not only do we struggle to express our feelings but we’re emotionally blind to what those feelings even are.¹

Perhaps you also carry around the lingering, hard-to-put-into-words pain of childhood wounds. Maybe your father or mother was not in the picture. Or maybe one or both were neglectful and distant, or angry and abusive, or self-absorbed. Maybe they just didn’t know any better. But the result is the same, and you’ve never gotten over it.

If that’s you, I want you to know you’re in good company.

THE FRATERNAL ORDER OF BROKEN BOYS

Most of the men with whom you will cross paths today had fathers or mothers who failed them. In fact, renowned addiction expert Terence Gorski wrote, “In the United States today . . . it is estimated that approximately 70 to 80 percent come from dysfunctional families.”²

As many as eight out of every ten men you cross paths with today in your neighborhood, workplace, gym, or church also grew up in dysfunctional homes. You are not alone. Together, we are the fraternal order of broken boys.

What is your starting point today? Is it passivity, resignation, addiction, rage, a critical spirit, poor self-esteem, denial, or lack of confidence? Are you oversensitive to criticism, lashing out when it comes? Do you get moody and withdraw? Are you driven to win acceptance in the world because you didn’t get it at home? Are you an overachiever, a protector of the weak, or a champion of lost causes?

Whatever your starting point, the process is the same. The Bible prescribes a process for healing (and preventing) childhood wounds that has been in constant, successful use for thousands of years. Psychologists, psychiatrists, and counselors refine or restate the process, but it’s also true that there’s really nothing new under the sun. And this process works regardless of your beliefs about God.

HERE’S THE PLAN

In *From Broken Boy to Mended Man*, I’m offering to guide you—as someone who has walked the path already—through this time-tested process. You can take control of your life. You

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can find healing—starting now. Your wounds may *describe* you, but they don't have to *define* you.

By the end of this journey, you will

- unravel what happened to you,
- understand how you've been wounded,
- see how those wounds affect you and the people you love, and
- develop a positive plan to heal your childhood wounds and break free from any destructive cycles holding you back.

We will also work on building a more compassionate view of our parents, and we'll see how to apply the lessons in a way that empowers us to be better parents to our own children.

Why *compassion*? For longer than I should have, I judged my parents without mercy. But with each passing decade of walking the same roads they had to walk, I've realized that everything is harder than it looks.

Starting in chapter 2, each chapter concludes with discussion and reflection questions to help you process and apply what you're learning. To squeeze the most out of this book, I encourage you to form a small group of men or couples to discuss these questions together. A small group will give you a chance to hear and be heard, to understand and be understood. Over several decades of working with men, I've seen that most meaningful change takes place in small groups. (The "Guide: How to Lead a Discussion Group" in the back of the book has everything you need to get started.) Who are the people with

THE FRATERNAL ORDER OF BROKEN BOYS

whom you would most like to share your thoughts and feelings as you read this book?

Today, I'm not angry. I'm not bringing to you the rantings of an angry teenager who became an angry man who never meaningfully processed his pain. By going through the process described in this book, I learned how to overcome my anger. You can too.

When we remain stuck in anger at our parents, it's only another small step to start blaming them for all our faults and shortcomings. But more importantly, anger diverts attention from the real issues that need healing. I knew healing is what I ultimately needed—and that's what you need too.

With that in mind, let me tell you why I, too, am part of this fraternal order of broken boys.

MY STORY: THE CLIFFSNOTES

For six years I struggled over whether to write this book. On the one hand, men like me who have grown up in broken or dysfunctional families need help. I've received that help, it has made all the difference, and because helping men is my vocation, I feel compelled to pass it on.

On the other hand, I didn't want to throw my parents under the bus. I loved my parents, and I honestly believe they loved my three younger brothers and me. All parents make mistakes, but I believe they made their mistakes out of ignorance, not malice. They were never trained or disciplined in how to parent, nor was it modeled for them. If anything, that's why I want to honor them for doing the best they could.

That said, the damage done to me was the same as if their

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actions, or lack of them, had been intentional: I grew up as a practical orphan. Our home was dysfunctional.

As a boy I always felt like I was on my own. I have no recollection of anyone telling me they believed in me, loved me, or were proud of me. I don't even remember being hugged.

I don't recall anyone telling me that my life had meaning, that I was created for a purpose, or that I could do something to make a difference in the world. I don't remember anyone talking to me about knowing God, going to college, or choosing a career.

I'm not so naive as to say with certainty that none of these things ever happened, but I have no recollection of them. However, even if they *did* happen, the fact that I can't remember them is significant in itself.

Eventually, all four of us boys went off the rails. I quit high school in the middle of my senior year and joined the Army. My next brother, Robert, followed in my footsteps. He later died of a heroin overdose. My other two brothers have had more than their fair share of struggles.

Once I left home, I washed my hands of my parents and didn't look back. If not for the influence of my wife, I probably wouldn't have had any contact with my parents at all. The best word to describe our relationship was *estranged*. That whole picture started to change in my early thirties—the beginning of a journey that has led me to share my story with you.

The risk in telling *any* story is that we tend to make ourselves the hero (or victim) and the other party the villain. This is especially true when we start talking about our fathers and mothers.

The tendency, of course, is to give ourselves the benefit of

THE FRATERNAL ORDER OF BROKEN BOYS

the doubt while holding our parents to a higher standard. But I pledge to give my parents the same respect and benefit of the doubt that I would want from them if they were writing about me. I'm guided by Scriptures that say, "Do everything in love" (1 Corinthians 16:14) and "Honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12). I want to write about my parents with the same grace and respect I hope my children would give me.

Although my mom and dad are no longer living, I think they would strongly approve of this account. I've pictured the three of us in a room, going back and forth over the manuscript, until we could each say, "Yes, that's it—that's the way it really happened. And that's a story that can help others benefit from our mistakes."

That's my goal—to share lessons I learned the hard way so you don't have to. I'm writing to you *not* as a clinician but as an older brother in the fraternal order of broken boys.

Whatever these pages stir inside you, I hope you, too, will share openly with someone else, whether it's your spouse or partner, best friend, small group, or, depending how deep the wounds are, a counselor. That's because most meaningful change takes place in the context of relationships.

Now let me tell you about my counseling sessions. What an eye-opener!

