THE DAD SYSTEM · VOL. I

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THE LEADERSHIP BLUEPRINT

Quick *Reference*

The takeaway companion to the full guide.
For Sunday review. For the road. For framing.

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From The Optimized Father by Darnell Dallas

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SECTION ONE

The Seven Pillars

Style is how you lead. Pillars are what you lead with. Take any one out and the structure becomes something other than leadership.

i
RADICAL RESPONSIBILITY
Extreme Ownership
If your household is failing, the leader looks in the mirror first. **Practice:** Sunday self-review · 10 minutes · three questions, written.

ii
THE STOIC DISCIPLINE
Emotional Regulation
Feel it. Name it. Choose the response. **Practice:** Pause Sequence — box breath, label the emotion, respond with intention.

iii
HONEST DISCLOSURE
Vulnerability as Strength
Silence is not strength. Strength is the courage to speak. **Practice:** One honest sentence about your inner life, in front of your kids, every week.

iv
THE TRUST COMPOUND
Consistency
Children calibrate trust on the gap between what you say and what you do. **Practice:** Three Anchors — three small things done daily for 90 days.

v
TURN TOWARD THE BID
Active Listening
Every question, glance, interruption is a bid for connection. **Practice:** Count three bids a day from each child. Turn toward them deliberately.

vi
LEADERS EAT LAST
Service
You serve your family's *development*, not their comfort. **Practice:** One invisible act per day — no credit asked, none received.

vii
THE LONG GAME
Vision & Legacy
Your decisions today echo for three generations. **Practice:** Write a family mission statement. One sentence. Hang it where you eat.

SECTION TWO

Build & Eliminate

Six patterns that get confused with manhood. Each one has a replacement. Pick the one that stings most and work on it first.

× ELIMINATE

Emotional Avoidance

Going silent when the conversation gets hard. **Stonewalling** — the most heavily male of Gottman's Four Horsemen of marital dissolution. The house learns to manage you by avoiding the topics that shut you down.

✓ BUILD

Emotional Engagement

Stay in the room. If you need a moment, name it — "*I need five minutes to think before I respond.*" Then come back. Engagement is not agreement. It is presence.

× ELIMINATE

Dominance

Volume as authority. Unilateral decisions with no explanation. **Authoritarian** — high demand, low warmth. Produces compliance until the kid is big enough to leave, then estrangement.

✓ BUILD

Authority Earned Through Service

Standards are high. Expectations are clear. *And* the warmth is unmistakable. Reasoning gets explained. Boundaries held with kindness. **Authoritative** in Baumrind's frame — the style with the strongest evidence base.

× ELIMINATE

Control

Over-involvement disguised as protection. Solving problems your child needs to solve. **Helicopter parenting** — 53 studies, 111 effect sizes. Produces anxious, dependent emerging adults who cannot self-regulate.

✓ BUILD

Empowerment as Protection

Step back. Let age-appropriate failure happen. Your job is not to remove obstacles — it is to be the safe base from which your child returns. "*I trust you to handle this. I'm here if you need me.*"

× ELIMINATE

Silence

Not talking because not-talking has been coded as strength. The wife who guesses. The kids who assemble an incomplete father from fragments. The cultural script that says real men do not say what they mean.

✓ BUILD

Communication as Strength

Say what you mean. Name what you feel. Tell your son you are proud in sentences, not just in glances. The courage to speak is the strength. The silence is the abdication.

× ELIMINATE

Provision Without Presence

Treating the paycheck as the entire job. Long hours as the alibi. The assumption that providing the lifestyle exempts you from being in the room. Money buys time. The time is what they will remember at thirty.

✓ BUILD

Provision AND Presence

Both. Not either. Provide well — that is part of the job. Also be at the recital. Also do bath time. Also know your child's teacher's name. **Both, or neither counts.**

× ELIMINATE

Perfectionism

Intolerance of mistakes — your own or your child's. Standards so high they cannot be met. The implicit message that the child is acceptable only when the performance is perfect.

✓ BUILD

Growth Modeling

When you make a mistake, name it and show the recovery. Treat your child's mistakes as data, not identity. "*That didn't work. What did you learn? What will you try next time?*"

SECTION THREE

Nine Daily Behaviors

Identity is not what you believe. Identity is what you repeatedly do. Start with three. Build to nine. By month twelve, the man at the dinner table is a different man.

i ☐ **Morning Leadership Ritual**
Ten minutes before the family wakes. Reading, journaling, breath. The man decides who he will be before the day decides for him.

ii ☐ **The Six-Second Kiss**
Every greeting. Every departure. Six seconds requires presence — the Gottman master-couple marker.

iii ☐ **The Twenty-Second Hug**
For stress, reconnection, and the kids. Long enough for the nervous system to register safety. The conversation that follows is the one that needed to happen.

iv ☐ **Better Check-In Questions**
Replace "How was your day?" with: *What was the hardest moment? Who needed your help? Who made you laugh?*

v ☐ **Weekly Family Meeting**
Thirty minutes, same time every week. Wins · concerns · logistics · discussion · appreciations. The leader runs it.

vi ☐ **Monthly Leadership Audit**
One hour. Three questions, written. *Where am I leading well? Where am I falling short? What will I change next month?*

vii ☐ **Physical Fitness as Infrastructure**
Three to four sessions a week. Not for vanity. For the patience, regulation, longevity, and modeling effect on your children.

viii ☐ **Twenty Minutes of Reading**
Every day. Two books a month. Twenty-four a year. The compound is enormous. Drop twenty minutes of scroll and the time is found.

ix ☐ **Financial Discipline**
Three numbers known by both adults monthly: what came in, what went out, what got saved. Financial conflict is the strongest predictor of divorce. Remove it on purpose.

SECTION FOUR

The Self-Assessment

Twenty behavioral questions. Answer based on what you actually do, not what you wish you did. For each statement, mark a box from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). Six minutes. Then turn the page to score.

		RATE 1–5 → NEV	RAR	SOM	OFT	ALW
01	When my child breaks a rule, I explain the principle behind the consequence — not just enforce it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
02	When my child is upset, I sit with the feeling before I try to fix the problem.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
03	When the household is in crisis, my pulse drops while everyone else's rises.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
04	I know the name of my child's closest friend and what they're most recently in tension over.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
05	My family runs on a written or stated rhythm — morning, meals, bedtime, weekly review.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
06	I can describe in three sentences the kind of adult I'm trying to raise my child into.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
07	When I'm wrong with my child, I name it out loud and apologize within the same day.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
08	I can name what I'm feeling in the moment, not just after the fact has passed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
09	I do not raise my voice when I am the most stressed person in the house.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	I have a recurring 1:1 time with each child that doesn't get cancelled by work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11	I track at least one family-level metric (savings, screen time, meals together) and review it monthly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12	I can tell my child a specific story about my own father — what I'm repeating and what I'm refusing to.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13	I own my role in conflict with my partner before I locate the blame on her side.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14	I turn toward my child's small bids — questions, glances, interruptions — more often than I turn away.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15	I have a daily practice — prayer, journaling, training, reading — I haven't skipped in the last 7 days.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16	My child has heard me say "I was wrong" within the last 30 days.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17	I model what I want my child to do more than I instruct her to do it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18	My phone is not in my hand during meals, bedtime, or hard conversations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19	I have a long-horizon plan (5+ years) for my family — not just for my career.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20	When I look at my child, I see a person to grow — not a project to manage or a reflection of me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SCORING

Your Leadership Profile

STEP 01 For each style below, **add the scores** from the listed question numbers.

STEP 02 **Divide by the max** shown for that style. **Multiply by 100.** That is your percentage.

STEP 03 Identify your **Primary** (highest), **Secondary** (second-highest), and **Growth Edge** (lowest) at the bottom of the page.

AUTHORITATIVE The Commander	Sum questions 01 · 07 · 13 · 16		÷ 20 × 100	
DEVELOPS · ASKS · PATIENT The Coach	Sum questions 02 · 08 · 14 · 20		÷ 20 × 100	
STEADY · STOIC · REGULATED The Anchor	Sum questions 03 · 07 · 08 · 09 · 15 · 17		÷ 30 × 100	
ATTUNED · AVAILABLE · KNOWN The Connector	Sum questions 04 · 10 · 14 · 16 · 18		÷ 25 × 100	
ARCHITECT · SYSTEMS The Builder	Sum questions 05 · 11 · 15 · 19		÷ 20 × 100	
LONG-HORIZON · GENERATIONAL The Visionary	Sum questions 06 · 12 · 17 · 19 · 20		÷ 25 × 100	

MY PROFILE

PRIMARY STYLE	SECONDARY	GROWTH EDGE
_____	_____	_____
Highest %	*Second highest*	*Lowest %*

The Primary is the style your family experiences most often. Read its blind spots carefully — they are predictable from your strengths. **The Secondary** is the version of you your family sees when the primary would have been wrong. **The Growth Edge** is what your family rarely gets from you. Pick one specific behavior from the Growth Edge style and build it over the next 90 days. The goal is range, not type.