

# **The Fatherly Heart:**

## **Involved Fatherhood as Spiritual Practice<sup>1</sup>**

*Reflection Guide for Fathers and Men's Groups*

This reflection guide accompanies Dr. Michael Obsatz's talk "The Fatherly Heart: Involved Fatherhood as Spiritual Practice." It is designed for fathers, mentors, elders, and men's groups to explore what it means to live with an open, caring, and spiritually grounded heart. Each section invites reflection, journaling, and group dialogue.

### **1. Opening Reflection – The Meaning of a Fatherly Heart**

Reflect on what the phrase "fatherly heart" means to you. How do you express care, courage, and compassion in your life? Who were the men who fathered you—not only biologically but through guidance, love, or mentorship?

Journaling Prompts:

- When have I felt most 'fatherly'? What was happening in that moment?
- Who modeled the fatherly heart for me in my life?
- What does it mean for me to 'father' others in my community today?

### **2. The Seven Qualities of the Fatherly Heart**

Dr. Obsatz describes the fatherly heart as caring, receptive, encouraging, inclusive, playful, protective, and empowering. Reflect on how these qualities show up in your relationships and daily life.

Group Discussion Questions:

- Which quality do I embody most naturally? Which needs more attention?
- How can I practice 'boundaries with love'—protecting while empowering?
- How do humor and play deepen connection in my relationships?

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<sup>1</sup> Using the YouTube video transcript and ChatGPT to create this Reflection Guide – November 2025

### 3. Practicing Presence and Listening

Listening is a sacred act of love. To truly hear another person is to affirm their worth. In your next conversation, practice listening without advice or fixing—simply being present.

Reflection:

- What makes it hard for me to listen deeply?
- How does my presence help others feel safe and valued?
- What changes when I listen with my heart instead of my head?

### 4. Passing on Blessing and Wisdom

Fatherhood is a spiritual practice of blessing others into wholeness. We bless through encouragement, truth-telling, affection, and affirmation. Coloroso's six messages remind us to communicate belief, trust, care, and importance.

Journaling Prompts:

- When was the last time I told someone, 'I believe in you'? What was their response?
- How can I become more intentional in offering blessing to my children, partner, or friends?
- What blessings did I receive (or long to receive) from my own father?

### 5. Integrating Fatherhood as Spiritual Practice

Being an involved, compassionate father or mentor is a lifelong spiritual journey. It means choosing love over fear, connection over control, and compassion over judgment. As we grow in this work, we also heal parts of ourselves that were never fathered.

Closing Reflection:

- What does it mean for me to live with a fatherly heart?
- What practices (journaling, prayer, council, service) help me stay grounded in love?
- How can I be a fatherly presence in the world—whether or not I have children?

*“The fatherly heart is not about perfection—it’s about presence, compassion, and connection.”*