

# **A Starting Point For Men's Groups**



**10 Conversation Starters**

***Rex Tignor - Man UP Ministries***

## **A Starting Point**

This book is designed as a tool to help you start conversations as you meet another man (1-5 men) for coffee or breakfast. In *The Starting Point*, you will find 10 conversation starters dealing with some issues men are facing. The idea is to meet him once a week for 10 weeks taking him on a journey.

*\* In the conversation starters you will need to add your own thoughts and life experiences to each one.*

*\* The topics in "A Starting Point" are an overview from the books on the Man UP Ministries Website.*

## **Just A Thought**

As you start meeting with other men, keep in mind "The Jesus Method Of Discipleship. It's a great tool that can help you stay focused and on track.

## **The Jesus Method Of Discipleship**

### **HE...**

- Built a relationship with them
- Walked with them
- Listened to them
- Related to them
- Stood with them
- Prayed for them
- Taught them

Please understand life-on-life relational discipleship is difficult; it can be slow and frustrating. Don't give up because you will see something amazing happen.

**\*\* Permission to print one copy per man in Starting Point**

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## 7 KEYS OF COACHING MEN

Today most men trying to do life alone and they are getting beat up. What would it look like if you met with a man that was struggling coaching him how to get back on the right track?

**1. BE CONSISTENT** - Be dependable and trustworthy as a coach, honor your commitments and keep your promises. Be there for the man you're coaching, this tells him he is important.

**2. BE YOURSELF** - Be thankful for who you are, for your talents, gifts and abilities that God has given you. God knows you, loves you, and if you are reading this He has called you to serve as a coach. Let Him use you just the way you are, don't try to be something or someone you're not.

**3. BE A LISTENER** - Take every opportunity you have to be a good listener. Don't judge and lecture, listen because you care and because you desire to treat the man you're coaching with dignity and respect. You will learn much by listening, which will lead to better advice.

**4. BE HONEST** - Tell the truth always, even when it hurts. Inspire the man you're coaching to be honest no matter what. Build trust and integrity.

**5. BE PATIENT AND FORGIVING** - Do your best to demonstrate unconditional love in every circumstance by being gracious, understanding, slow to anger, patient and forgiving, don't allow failures to destroy the relationship. Be realistic about the expectations you have for the man you are coaching.

**6. BE ENCOURAGING** - Bring the best out in him by being generous with affirmation, encouragement, gratitude and praise. Inspire him to dream dreams and to recognize the potential he has.

**7. Be-Lieve** – Call the best out of them

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## Who's Riding Shotgun In Your Life?

Sad to say, many men today can name 6 men to carry their casket, but cannot name that one man they can call at 2 a.m. when life takes a turn. Let me ask, who has your back? Today we are going to look at 7 qualities of a true friend.

**Proverbs 27:17** - As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

### 7 Qualities Of A True Friend

1. They don't care who you are or where you have been.
2. They are loyal, dependable, trustworthy and reliable.
3. They tell you the truth with love and grace.
4. They are quick to forgive.
5. They stand with you even when you blow it.
6. They are encouraging; they call the best out of you.
7. They walk with you even when others walk away.

**My Favorite:** They never give up on you.

**Which one is important to you and why?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What Is Your Take Away?** \_\_\_\_\_

## 5 Reasons We Get Stuck

Sometimes in life we can get stuck on a sandbar, which can lead to taking a pounding from life's waves. Today we are going to look at 5 reasons we get stuck in life.

**Acts 27:41** - But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.

**1. We get comfortable** - It's okay to be comfortable; however when we hang out there too long, it can be dangerous because we stop trying new things.

**2. We quit dreaming** - Dreams inspire, challenge, and grow us. We will never dream bigger than the dreams God has for us.

**3. We stop taking risks** - We can't succeed at anything without a measure of risk. Playing it safe never grows anything; the call of God always involves risk-taking.

**4. We start maintaining** - When we fall into the mode of protecting what we have, we will start losing ground.

**5. We fail to move** – If you never move, you will never know for sure.

## 3 Questions To Getting Back On Track

- Ask yourself honestly every day

1. What did I learn today?
2. What could I have done better today?
3. What would I change about today?

**What Is Your Take Away?** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Adversities and Difficulties**

Sometimes life can hit pretty hard. During those times you can ask: why is this happening, or what can I learn from this? Never let your adversities and difficulties become greater than your dreams.

**Romans 8:29** (The Message) God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son.

### **God sees and knows the “Big Picture.”**

How does that statement strike you?

**1. God knows sometimes it's the only time you will slow down to listen.** Where is God trying to get your attention?

**2. God reveals what or who you are depending on.** God is not so concerned about changing anyone or anything you are dealing with until He changes you.

**3. God uses them to chisel out what does not belong.** What area of your life is God chiselling on?

**4. God uses them to propel you to your “Purpose”** What is God trying to show you? Adversities and Difficulties often unlock your purpose.

**What Is Your Take Away?** \_\_\_\_\_

## What If I Controlled My Words?

You can't fully tame the tongue, but you can learn to control it. It's not difficult to see the problems caused by the wrong use of words. You don't have to look far; more than likely, only as far as your closest relationships. Today we will look at some keys that can help you control your words.

**Ephesians 4:29** Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

**1. Don't say everything you know** - You may know something about someone; but just because you know it and just because it may be true, doesn't mean you have to say it.

**2. Use a filter** - As you think about your environment at home, at work, at church, do your words beat up or build up?

**3. Don't say everything you think** - You don't have to say everything you think. So, remember to think first, speak second.

**4. Don't repeat everything you hear** - The problem with repeating gossip is that it tends to get embellished as it is passed from person to person.

**5. Ask yourself** - What good would it do if I said this or told this?

**What Is Your Take Away?** \_\_\_\_\_



## 6 Keys to Dealing with Conflict

Where life involves people—there will be potential for conflict. Conflict doesn't have to destroy relationships. It can actually be used to make relationships better.

**Philippians 2:3-4** - Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

**1. Affirm The Relationship** – Avoid the blame game here.

When you do A – I feel like B – example: When you don't call me back, I feel like I am not important

**2. Keep Communication Open** – Remember conflict and anger shuts the door

**3. Defuse** – Calm down – make a plan and set a time to talk to the other person – never do it when you are angry or hurt

**4. Stay Focused On THE Conflict** – Stick to the conflict at hand, not all the other junk that may get brought up

**5. Listen Carefully** – It may not be about you - you could have just been in the way. If it is you, use the 1<sup>st</sup> 4 keys

**Forgive** – Let it go, move on

– **3 Promises that need to be made here**

I promise, I will not bring this up again

I promise, I will not hold it against you

I promise, I will not let it hurt our relationship

What would it look like if you made something with these 3 Promises on it and hung it somewhere in your house?

**Remember the 101% Rule: Find the 1% you can agree on and give it 100%**

**What Is Your Take Away?** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Anger**

Anger is a great challenge for so many and in so many ways. Did you know that anger is simply a natural emotional reaction to a displeasing situation or an event. Today we are going to look at how to control anger, because if you don't it will control you.

**Ephesians 4:26-27 - Don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.**

**1st Principle - Admit when you are angry** – Don't deny it – it will only get worst. Ask yourself will it really change anything?

**2nd Principle - Understand It** – Is it helpful anger or hurtful anger? Find out what the root cause is then you can deal with it.

**3rd Principle - Deal with it right away** – Don't let the sun go down... If you do, satan has a foot hole and he can use make matters worse.

**4th Principle - Control it** – Don't allow anger to control you, don't allow anger to steal logical thinking from you.

### **4 Helpful Questions to Ask In Anger**

1. What am I so angry about?
2. Why am I so angry?
3. Will it really change anything?
4. In 10 minutes, will it really matter?

**What Is Your Take Away?** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Forgive**

One of the hardest things you will ever do in your life is to forgive someone that hurt you. I have learned forgiveness is not for them it's for you.

**Ephesians 4:31-32** (*The Message*) Make a clean break with all cutting, backbiting, profane talk. Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you

### **Forgive While You Still Can!**

**F** - Forgiveness is not finding faults in others no matter who they are.

**O** - Opportunity to move on and stop the madness.

**R** - Remember what hurt you and the lesson it taught you.

**G** - Grow from it. What did you learn?

**I** - Invest your time in things that will last.

**V** - Value your life, don't be held back by unforgiveness.

**E** - Example be one, help others forgive.

**S** - Saying sorry is not for sissies.

**What Is Your Take Away?** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\* See Forgiveness Test (Back Of The Book)**

## 5 Things Your Wife Wants From You

There are some common needs most men and women bring to a marriage in order to make the marriage the best it can be. Today we will look at a few of those things.

**Ephesians 5:25** *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”*

**1 John 3:16** *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.”*

- 1. Love** - Do you love her above: your work, your hobbies, your friends?
- 2. Attention** - Wives want to be listened to and know that we believe what they have to say is important.
- 3. Commitment** - Wives want to know you are going to be there, even when times get tough. Can she trust you?
- 4. Appreciation** - Wives want to be appreciated for who they are, as much as for what they do.
- 5. Partners** - Wives do not want to do life alone. They want your participation in raising the kids and making decisions around the house.

### Questions:

- How do you show your wife you love her?
- Do your actions prove your words?

**What Is Your Take Away?** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Father**

Someone said - "My father didn't tell me how to live; he lived and let me watch him." Men the cape is optional but being a hero to your child is not.

**Ephesians 6:4** Fathers do not exasperate (provoke) your children, instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

**F - Faith** - Set an example of what it looks like to be a man of God.

**A - Acceptance** - Your children need to know you love them for who they are not what they do.

**T - Time** - Very simple - Do they only fit into your calendar when there is nothing else going on? Give them a tremendous gift - your time.

**H - Heart** - Let them know you love them and will be there for them. Unconditionally

**E - Encourage** - Build them up - because there will be enough people tearing them down. Call out the best in them, help them succeed in life.

**R - Relationship** - Build one with them, it will last a lifetime. Let them know you are always there.

**Which one do you need to work on?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your take away?** \_\_\_\_\_

## **BE INTENTIONAL**

In life there are very few things that ever change by themselves, today we will look at two words that can change your life in so many ways if you will apply them into your life daily.

### **2 Words That Will Change Your Life - Be Intentional**

(Write down one thing you can do to be more intentional in each area) – (When Starting Pint is over why not spend 6 weeks and work through how you can be more intention in each area as a group)

1. In your parenting \_\_\_\_\_
2. In your marriage \_\_\_\_\_
3. In forgiveness \_\_\_\_\_
4. In your ministry \_\_\_\_\_
5. In your relationship with God \_\_\_\_\_
6. In your workplace \_\_\_\_\_
7. In your career \_\_\_\_\_
8. In your social media activity \_\_\_\_\_
9. In your financial life \_\_\_\_\_
10. In your relationships \_\_\_\_\_
11. In your leadership of others \_\_\_\_\_
12. In your life \_\_\_\_\_

**Which One Do You Need To Work One? – Starting Today**

\_\_\_\_\_

**What Is An Action Step You Can Take To Make It Happen?**

\_\_\_\_\_

## Forgiveness Test

**\* Be Warned -- This is a very difficult test!**

I have learned forgiveness is not for them; it's for you. Unforgiveness has a way of eating at us; please get this. All you have to do is forgive them; what they do is their choice. Today, we are going to look at 4 tests to tell if you've forgiven someone.

**Colossians 3:13** – Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

**The first thought test** - When the first thought you have about them is not the injury they caused in your life, you have probably extended forgiveness.

**An opportunity to help them test** - Ask yourself: Would you help them if you knew they were in trouble and you had the ability? This is a huge test of forgiveness.

**Your general thoughts test** - Can you think positive thoughts about this person?

**The revenge test** - Do you still think of getting even with the person?

**Question:** Is there someone you need to forgive, so you can move on?

**Which one do you need to work on?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your take away?** \_\_\_\_\_

## Man UP – Group UP Cards

Print one for each group member. Get them to put it in their wallet and go over each question as a group each week.

Example - 1. What did you learn this week? Life

### Man UP – Group UP

Meet with 1-5 other men for coffee or breakfast weekly and ask each other these 3 questions.

1. What did you learn this week? *See example*
2. What could you have done better this week?
3. What would you change about this week?

**\*\* In Your - Marriage - Fathering - Work - Life**

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