



A FIELD GUIDE FOR MEN · ANDERS HOLTEN

The *Wrong* Manual.

*A short field guide for the man who's
done with the old playbook.*



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I was the *common denominator.*

Ten years ago I was in fetal position on the floor.

I had done everything right according to the books. Romantic. Prioritizing her. Trying to be the man she'd want and keep. And I'd just been left.

It took me a while to admit the part I'd played in it ending. And it wasn't just that one - I'd been the common denominator in every relationship I'd thought was "the one". They all ended the same way. I'd been handed the wrong manual to life.

Fifteen years ago I struggled to call myself a man. I didn't like sports. I liked Backstreet Boys. I had more female friends than male friends. I had to reach a kind of rock bottom to ask the question that changed the rest of my life:

*There must be more. I see men who are happy. I
find them authentic.
What do they have access to that I don't?*

This is the manual I wish I'd had.

Soft where you should be *strong.* Hard where you should be *open.*

Most men are inverted.

We go soft in the moment that asks for ground - the hard conversation with our partner, the decision we've been circling, the boundary that needs to land. We dodge, we fix, we explain, we people-please. We collapse to keep the peace.

And we go hard in the moment that asks for openness - when she's crying and we shut down, when our kid needs us to be moved and we're irritated, when grief shows up and we get busy. We armor up to avoid feeling.

Both come from the same place: the boy who learned that being himself wasn't going to be enough.

There is one thing in the shadow of every man: his inadequacy.

His not-good-enoughness. The whole machinery of his life is often built to outrun it.

The wrong manual taught us to push through, achieve more, provide harder, never need anything. It never taught us the thing we actually needed:

How to put it the right way around.

Most men skip *leg day*.

Picture the macho man. Big chest, six-pack, strong arms - and underneath, chicken legs.

That's most of us. We've trained the top half - the achieving, the providing, the showing up - but we were never taught to carry the weight of our own emotions. We've never squatted our own grief.

So when life leans hard - when she's upset, when the work doesn't land, when the fear shows up at 3am - we either snap or collapse. Both are the legs giving out.

Carrying your own weight is the leg day. It's also the foundation under everything else.

Stand *ground*.

Let her feel what she feels - without losing your own power. The easy move is to fix it or shut it down. We don't take the easy move.

Be *moved*.

You can feel grief, fear, longing - and still hold the room. Vulnerability isn't collapse. It's leg day.

Say *the thing*.

The conversation you've been editing. The truth you've been softening. The place you've quietly drifted out of alignment with yourself.

Drop the *armor*.

Mature presence isn't soft and it isn't hard. It's a man who's met what's underneath, and stopped running from it.

The questions I *actually* ask men.

Pick one. Sit with it for ten minutes today. Don't try to solve it.

01 What is real here, and what is something you're just telling yourself?

A fact and a story aren't the same thing. Most of what men suffer over is the story.

02 What is the cost of that belief?

Every protection has a price. Name the price you've been paying for the version of you that's kept you safe.

03 Where are you soft when you should be strong - and hard when you should be open?

Most men are inverted. The work is putting it the right way around.

04 If you've chosen this life - what is it you're here to learn right now?

Not a five-year plan. The lesson sitting in the room with you this week.

Not a formula. An *invitation*.

This isn't five steps. It isn't a system. The work of becoming a man who carries his own weight, stands his ground, and stays open is individual - and it's slow.

It's also not done alone. Most men try to figure it out as lone wolves. That model is dying because it doesn't work. The way through is brotherhood, accountability, and a willingness to be seen by one man you can trust.

*Men respond very badly to being told what to do.
The very best way to be invited is to be inspired by
someone who's living it.*

If something in these pages lit up - that's the work.

Pick one of the four questions. Sit with it today. Then have the conversation you've been avoiding - even if it's only with yourself first.

IF YOU WANT TO GO FURTHER

Book a free *Discovery* session.

Not a sales call. The work itself, in 90 minutes. By the end, you'll know whether this is yours to do.

BOOK THE CALL →