
THE GENTLEMEN'S GUIDE 2026

Twelve things nobody sat you down and explained.

Not a lecture. Not a pick-up course.
Every chapter ends with one thing to try tonight.

ENOUGH NOW www.enoughnow.co.uk

What this is.

The expectations changed, the law tightened, and every conversation now leaves a written record. Most of us learned what we know from fathers working off a completely different set of rules. Nobody handed men the update.

This is the plain version. Twelve short chapters, no shame, and something you can actually do at the end of each one.

What it isn't

- A pick-up course. There is nothing here about scripts, routines, or getting someone into bed.
- A lecture about how men are the problem. You are being taught a skill, not sentenced.
- Advice to make yourself smaller. Being respectful and having a spine are the same job.

If you are struggling right now, ring Samaritans on 116 123. Free, 24 hours, every day. You do not have to be suicidal to ring them.

01

What actually changed

An honest account of what is different now and why: consent law, digital evidence, and expectations around emotional work. What used to pass without comment and does not any more, explained without panic. Understand the change and the rest of this guide stops feeling like an attack.

TRY THIS

Name one thing you saw your dad do that you would never do now. That gap is what this guide is about.

02

Consent, in practice

Not the legal seminar, the real one. Consent is enthusiastic, ongoing, and can be withdrawn at any point, including halfway through and including inside a marriage. Silence is not yes. Someone too drunk to stand cannot give it. Check in with a sentence that sounds like a human being, not a form.

TRY THIS

“Is this alright?” and then actually wait for the answer. It kills nothing. Uncertainty is what kills it.

03

Reading the room

Most men do not miss signals because they are bad men. They miss them because nobody taught them what to look for. Body angled away, short answers, phone in hand, laughing at nothing. A soft no is still a no, and the polite version counts.

TRY THIS

When you are not sure, step back and give her space to move toward you. If she does not, that is your answer.

04

Listening without defending

The hardest skill in the book and the one that changes everything fastest. When she raises something, your first job is to say it back accurately. Not to explain your intentions, not to point out the time she did the same thing. Explaining yourself before she feels heard reads as a fight, whatever you meant by it.

TRY THIS

Next time you are criticised at home, respond only with “so what you are saying is...” and get it right before you say anything else.

05

Arguing without wreckage

Rows are not the problem. Contempt is: eye-rolling, sarcasm, going for the thing you know will land. Learn to spot the moment you stopped solving anything and started trying to win, and how to call a pause without it looking like storming off.

TRY THIS

Agree a word now, while things are calm, that either of you can use to pause a row for twenty minutes.

06

Repair: coming back into the room

What separates couples who last from couples who do not is not fighting less, it is mending faster. Go back within a day and name your part of it. Your part, not the whole thing, and no “but”. A real apology has no second half.

TRY THIS

“I was sharp with you last night and that wasn't on.” Full stop. Do not add anything.

07

The mental load

Most resentment in a house is built out of admin. Not who does the dishes, but who remembers the dentist, the school forms, the birthday present for her mother. Being asked to help is still her carrying it. Owning a thing outright is different, and she will feel the difference within a fortnight.

TRY THIS

Take one recurring job over completely this week. The whole thing, including remembering it. Do not announce it.

08

Phones, messages, and what lives forever

Everything you send is a screenshot waiting to happen. Never send an intimate image unasked. Do not send anything at 1am you would not read out in daylight. And if a relationship ends badly, the messages you sent in the last fortnight are the ones that get read back to you.

TRY THIS

Before you send anything heated, put the phone down for ten minutes. Nothing good has ever been lost to a ten-minute wait.

09

Saying what you want

Respect is not the same as having no needs. Men who hint, sulk, or go quiet and hope to be read are exhausting to live with, and it is usually where resentment starts on your side. Say the thing plainly, once, and let her answer honestly.

TRY THIS

Ask directly for one thing you have been hinting at for weeks. One sentence, no preamble.

10

Being someone she can lean on

Steadiness beats grand gestures every time. Do what you said you would do, when you said you would do it, without being chased. And tell her early when you are struggling, in one sentence, at the time. Going quiet reads as a wall, not as strength, and it is the thing partners describe afterwards as the worst part.

TRY THIS

Tell her one true thing about how you are doing this week, before she has to ask.

11

Ending it properly

How to leave, and how to be left. Say it in person, once, clearly. Do not keep turning up. Repeated contact after someone has asked you to stop is not romance, and in this country it can be an offence. Walking away with dignity protects her, and it protects you.

TRY THIS

If it is over, put the practical stuff in writing and keep everything else off the phone.

12

What your kids are watching

Your son is learning how to speak to women by watching you speak to their mother. Your daughter is learning what she will accept. Neither of them is listening to what you say about it. This chapter is the reason most men finish the guide.

TRY THIS

Ask yourself what your children would say your marriage sounds like, if a teacher asked them tomorrow.

If today is bad.

You can talk to someone in the next two minutes. You do not have to be in crisis to ring any of these.

Samaritans

116 123

Free, 24 hours a day, every day.

CALM

0800 58 58 58

Every day, 5pm to midnight.

Shout

Text SHOUT to 85258

Free 24/7 text support.

Respect Phonenumber

0808 802 4040

If you are worried about your own behaviour towards a partner.

Men's Advice Line

0808 8010 327

For men experiencing domestic abuse.

ManKind Initiative

01823 334244

For male victims of domestic abuse.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

0808 2000 247

Free, 24 hours. Pass it on.

Combat Stress

0800 138 1619

Veterans' mental health, 24 hours.

Emergency

999

If you cannot speak, listen and press 55.
