

# The Conversation

## December 2023

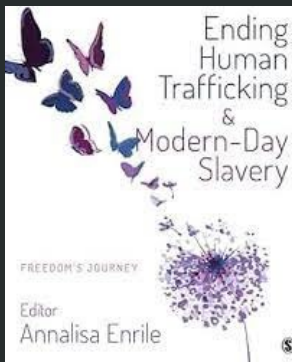
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**Mission:**  
Father-Con inspires, informs and equips men to be the best they can be for themselves, their families and their communities.

**Vision:**  
Our vision is to see an end of human exploitation, and provide child and community well-being through father presence and responsible engagement.

## Books we like

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# FATHER-CON

Never too early. Never too late. Fathers matter

**In this issue: Starting a new column on foster children and their care called Foster-Con**

### Join **The Conversation**

The Founder's Conversation Starter  
Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year!

As the house fills with the scent of pine, candles and cookies, I reflect on this year and the celebration of life that fills my home this December. My younger daughter is expecting her first child, a boy, and my mother turns 100. Love is in the air and the gratitude I feel is overwhelming. Thanks giving is the proper response to looking back on a year of firsts.

The past 11 months have brought many firsts for all of us at Father-Con and plenty to celebrate. We have presented and provided trainings at over 20 venues, from San Diego to Florida and at the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, as well as the 24<sup>th</sup> International Families and Fathers Conference. We held an unforgettable Father-Con 2023 conference with keynotes by human trafficking survivor Amanda Pulley, Fr. Greg Boyle of Homeboy Industries, and 15 expert-led workshops. We are taking every opportunity to connect the dots between father presentlessness and trafficking as well as incarceration of boys and drop out rates, and vulnerability to all manner of exploitation.

**And we are only getting started.** We are fired-up for 2024. We have so much to do in the months ahead, to create families in which children survive and thrive and fathers find their way to measure success in life as parents who realize the greater joy in life is found in loving and living for more than stuff that wilts and rusts. Our delight is not in the con, the lies all around us. We do not wish to be returned to the matrix or settle for porn over presence. There are children climbing out of their bedroom windows at the insistence of their exploiters; there are teens taking their own lives in egregious numbers, and there are men who are surrendering to distraction and getting used to feeling shame. Good men are slipping through the cracks, women are struggling through the wreckage of marriages collapsing or never constructed, and far too many children are being deprived of the security that allows them to take advantage of a world of near boundless opportunity. From 2024, if you too are **not willing to stay on the sidelines**, join us in the fight of our lives.

Merry Christmas and be ready to Rock the New Year!

Fathers make a world of difference, right at home.

**Patrick Erlandson – Founder: Father-Con  
and See it. End it. Film & Arts Festival**

We wish a special thanks to all the hundreds of individual donors, the the sponsorships of companies and organizations like Anthem Blue Cross, the Principia Group, FCI, Maximum Impact Foundation, WFWP, Artists for Change, YWCA Harbor City, Kiwanis and Rotary clubs, and the City of Downey, Supervisor Janice Hahn and Assemblymember Blanca Pacheco. You make change possible for many. Thank you.

Make a world of difference – for our children and the communities they live in. Give generously to Father-Con



New monthly column:

**Foster-Con**

"THE DAD O' COASTER"

As someone who works hard to find safe, loving homes for children in foster care, I'm approached mostly by women. Probably 95%. Why is that? It might be because men are not natural born nurturers. It might be because men are drawn toward ancestry and lineage. It might be because men are protectors and territorial and don't like to invite things into their lives that they can't control. It also might be because they're afraid.

As a man myself, that is not my favorite word. But, afraid of what?

Afraid to not be able to have control. Afraid of the pain that their family will face if the child is reunified with family. Afraid of the pain they will feel. But instead of admitting that fear, we take a deep breath and beat our chests and grunt out, "My tribe!"

For some reason, we think that because a child has our DNA, they are better. We think that we will have more control of how they will turn out. By looking at history and just looking around us, we can see the irony in that, but still in all, we think "our folks" are better than "their folks".

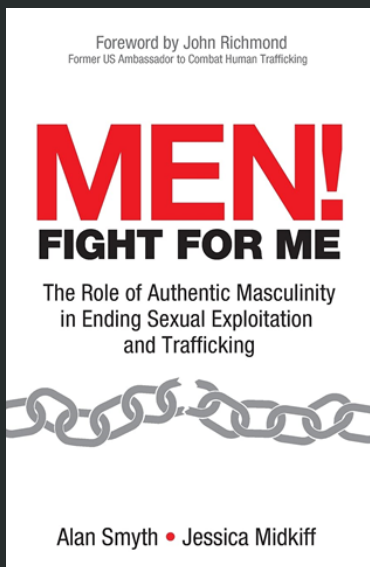
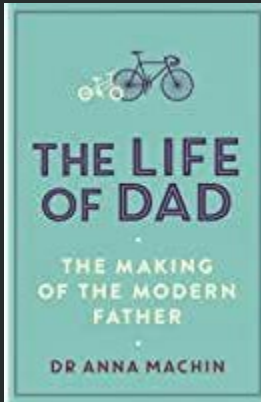
Nothing will heal someone of this faster than when your children hit their "teens".

I'll never forget the day that I looked at my kid and I thought, " Who are you and what have done with my child?"

Parenting is a white-knuckle roller-coaster ride that will have you screaming and shutting your eyes at times. It will come to an end, but it will never throw you off. As crazy as it is, some want to ride it again!

Another funny fear that I hear from both men and women is, " I don't think I can handle it, if the child is taken away." This is funny because, until you've adopted the child, the bio-parent has "first dibs" and that is their child and although it may not be perfect, that really is the best place for the child, emotionally.

It's also funny because, as a parent of biological children as well as foster children, they all fly away! In this generation's culture, they do fly back from time to time, but we all realize that we don't get to keep them.



Available at:  
**Fightforme.net**

It's not so funny, because life is uncertain and sadly sometimes even our bio-children are "taken" away from us for reasons that we cannot control.

Whether it's your bio, or foster or adopted child, you get the unique honor of loving, raising and helping a child that needs you. That is the greatest honor bestowed on us as humans.

Now, who wants to get on the ride?! If you have any questions about foster care or adoption or just being a "dad" please contact me @ [blevy@fosterall.org](mailto:blevy@fosterall.org) 818) 649-8018

## The Conversation Contributions

Father-Con invites you to contribute to our monthly publication – submit contributions at [info@father-con.org](mailto:info@father-con.org)

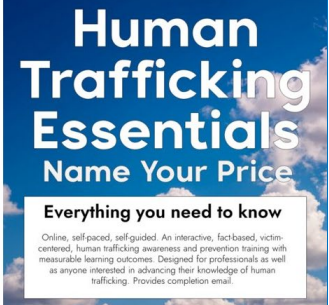
**We are growing and on the rise!!**

**The need for fathers to be informed, inspired and equipped as 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fathers could not be greater. We can turn this ship and make waves of change!**

## From our speakers and sponsors

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“Heart of the Father” award  
 recipient Evan Hess of Homeboy  
 Industries

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 Con 2023 at**  
<https://www.father-con.org>

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