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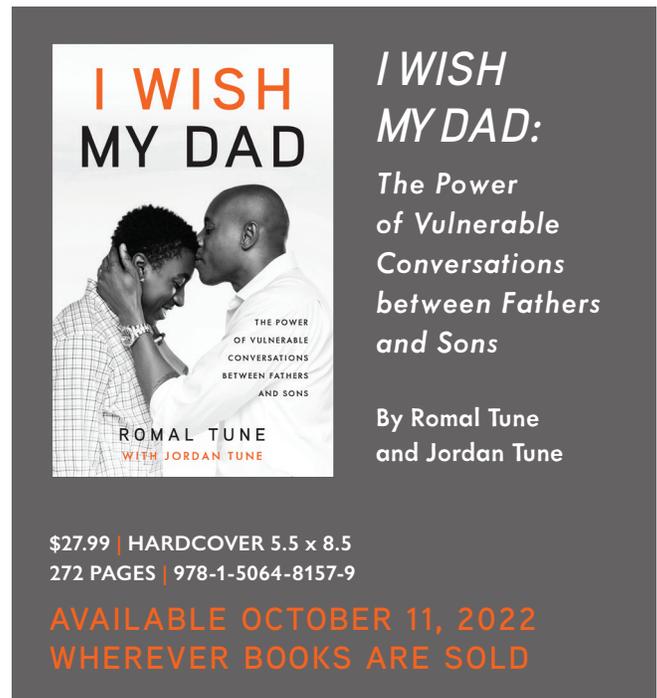
A tour de force for fathers and sons about building emotionally health relationships and healing them where it's needed.

What do sons wish they had received from their fathers? What might honest, healing conversations between fathers and sons look like? From author and speaker Romal Tune, *I Wish My Dad: The Power of Vulnerable Conversations between Fathers and Sons* helps sons and fathers talk about difficult dynamics with the hope of healing.

Tune was raised mostly without a father. He and his dad connected briefly when he was a teenager, and then had no relationship for decades. After years of inner work via therapy and faith, Tune realized that neither he nor his dad possessed what they needed to live up to each other's expectations. He began to wonder if other men also longed to have vulnerable conversations with their fathers—about good memories, about pain, and about what their relationship needed in order to be emotionally healthy.

So, he sat down with seventeen men of diverse ages, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds. He invites us into the room as the men unpack relationships with their fathers, learn to work through emotional pain, recount moments of tenderness and care, and describe risks they took to heal and connect with their fathers. Tune also offers strategies and prompts for initiating our own "I Wish My Dad" conversations.

I Wish My Dad helps fathers and their sons move through the past to find deeper connection and healing where it's possible.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



ROMAL TUNE is a speaker, author, and social entrepreneur. He serves as a vice president at TMS Global and is the founder of ClereStory Education, a nonprofit that offers workshops and coaching about mental health. Tune is a graduate of Howard University and Duke Divinity School and has spoken internationally at conferences addressing topics of inner healing, thriving, and the importance of mental health. He is the author of *God's Graffiti* and *Love Is an Inside Job*. He has two children and lives in Atlanta, Georgia

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ADVANCED PRAISE FOR *I WISH MY DAD*:

“As a father and the product of a fatherless home, I can say: this book is gold. We need tools, roadmaps, and sage wisdom to become who we were made to be and reinvest in the next generation. The heartfelt transparency of the stories in *I Wish My Dad* gives men permission to share their truth, heal, and learn the emotional skills needed for healthy father-and-son relationships.”

—LeCrae, Grammy Award-winning hip-hop artist and *New York Times* bestselling author

“Healthy and vulnerable spaces for men and their sons are a necessity in today’s culture. The stories shared by fathers and sons in *I Wish My Dad* allow readers a glimpse into the emotional needs of men that few rarely get to express. This book shares truths that need to be heard.”

—David Michael Wyatt, singer and songwriter

“*I Wish My Dad* serves as the model for men to have conversations, leading to healing and strengthening of father-and-son relationships that will have a positive impact for generations.”

—Nicole L. Cammack, licensed clinical psychologist, and president and CEO of *Black Mental Wellness*

“Romal Tune’s authenticity and genuine desire to be a better father, combined with the strength and courage of his son, gives us a powerful, honest, humble, and hopeful invitation to become better together through honesty, openness, and love. The stories shared by men in this book will change your life and your relationships.”

—Danielle Strickland, author, speaker, and advocate

“Vulnerability is a contagious cure. Tune models that with every page in this book. *I Wish My Dad* has the potential to cure us from our despair and free us to hope again.”

—John Onwuchekwa, pastor of Cornerstone Church and cofounder of Portrait Coffee

“*I Wish My Dad* is more than a right-on-time read; it is an invitation for fathers and sons to be the curators of the change they are seeking to see in themselves and in their families. The stories in this love-offering of a book will help to heal hearts, homes, and relationships between fathers and sons.”

—Shawn Dove, founder of Corporation for Black Male Achievement and managing partner of New Profit

“*I Wish My Dad* is emotional, insightful, humbling, palatable, challenging, and needed; you will come away not only rooting for these men, but believing there is hope for yourself.”

—A. D. “Lumkile” Thomason, author and filmmaker

“Romal and Jordan masterfully invite us not only into the struggles of father-and-son relationships, but they give a voice to the endless possibilities that can heal those broken relationships. *I Wish My Dad* shines a light on the art of listening and the hope we have when we truly hear each other.”

—Preston Perry, poet, teacher, and apologist

“Hearing these men’s stories has given me access to the conversations my father and I have yet to share. I am more tender, more compassionate now toward my father. There is healing within these pages for sons no doubt, and daughters as well.”

—Juanita Rasmus, author of *Learning to Be: Finding Your Center after the Bottom Falls Out*

Q&A WITH ROMAL TUNE

1. How was the experience of working with your son Jordan on this book?

I enjoyed having the opportunity for us to do something together. He kind of felt like he wasn't contributing a lot, since I conducted all the interviews with guys. But for me, I really enjoyed that my son was able to share his thoughts and his story. Plus, having the two of us on the cover is really special for me. The older I get, the more I cherish things like that.

2. How did you choose the gentlemen who are featured in the book?

I reflected on the relationships I have with men I've known for years and a few I haven't known very long at all. I pay attention to how people show up in the world: their personalities, the things they talk about, what they care about, things like that. So, I picked the men based on my curiosity about the relationships with their dads because I had a sense that who they are in the world is somehow shaped by the relationships with their dads—or the lack thereof.

3. In the book you describe the complications of your relationship with your own father. How is your experience of being a son connected to your writing?

My experience of being a son was the reason for the book. For a long time, my dad and I had a challenging relationship, to say the least. In recent years, my heart has softened toward him. That's due to a lot of therapy and working on myself. As a son, I both wanted and needed things from my dad, but I didn't receive in the ways that I needed them. As a son I needed love, affection, and his time in ways that would have built my self-confidence and ability to both give and receive love. When I decided to write the book, I thought about what I needed, and I knew I wasn't the only guy feeling these things, so I just jumped into it.

4. What would you say to men who have not been able to heal from the absence of a father in their lives or whose fathers have died? What might healing look like for them?

That's the story for several men in the book. A few of them were very young when their dads died, and few others had very distant relationship—or none—with their dads. I think guys looking to heal from the absence of their fathers can learn a lot from these stories. One thing I've learned is that the absence of a father doesn't mean a person can't heal. There is healing in naming what you needed, wanted, and hoped for. There's something liberating about not holding it in anymore. It's like having held your breath for years and finally exhaling and giving yourself permission to breathe. The thing about naming what was missed is that it also sheds light on what you still need. Those emotional needs are still there and can be met by other people once there is a willingness to receive. It's not the same as receiving it from a dad, but allowing people to love you in ways that you've always desired it feels great.

5. What has the response from readers been like? Are you finding a community of readers ready to deal with topics of fatherhood, vulnerability, and emotional and relational healing?

The response has been really positive. People are saying that reading stories from men about the need to hear “I love you,” receive hugs, and open their feelings is refreshing. Women who read the book have said they didn’t know men had these types of emotional needs. When it comes to communities being ready, the words I hear are that this is long overdue. The more I listen to people talk about *I Wish My Dad*, I realize that society has been waiting for someone to give voice to what so many are experiencing. That’s what I love about this project: it’s giving people permission to say things they’ve always wanted to say but felt like they would get shamed for: not being strong or for being perceived as weak. But all they really are human. The “Strong Man” persona is fatiguing and often a heavy burden we’ve been expected to live into; up until recently, no one has shined a light on the downside. It’s isolating and often lonely. People want to be vulnerable and connect more deeply on a relational level; they just need safe spaces for it to happen. That’s what *I Wish My Dad* does. It removes the mask so that people can be truly seen and their needs valued.

6. Which of the personal stories from the book do you think will resonate the most with readers?

Wow, that’s a hard question to answer! The beauty of these stories is the diversity of *I Wish My Dad* experiences. I can’t say that any one story will resonate more than another, because each reached will identify with the stories differently, based on their own life experiences. I think readers will resonate with the vulnerability and courage it took for each man in this book to share their hearts with the world. You simply can’t read this book and not see how sons yearn to be loved by their dads, in the ways that they need and in the moments when they need it most.

7. Many fathers have regrets about their parenting and wish they could heal their relationships without feeling shame. What do you recommend for fathers who feel too ashamed to heal broken relationships?

That was—and perhaps still is—me! I had many regrets. I still feel sad at times, when I think about some of the mistakes that I made. But I’ve learned that who I was then is not who I am now. I think that fathers who want to heal their relationships have to realize that shame is a thief that tries to steal your right to heal and thrive. For fathers who feel too ashamed to heal broken relationships, I highly recommend that they read *I Wish My Dad*. It will show them that healing is possible. Their children want it just as much as they do as fathers. You conquer shame with humility and truth. Owning mistakes and saying “I’m sorry” takes courage. Once it’s done, it’s liberating. No one has to carry it anymore. The secret is exposed, and that creates room for healing. I’m a Christian, and often time when I sense the feeling of shame coming into my thoughts, I remind myself that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. The things that some would deem shameful often-times become the very stories that give people an example that change and healing is possible.

8. Is there something else that you would like to share about fatherhood that you didn't share in the book?

If there is one thing that I may not have shared in the book, it is that the stories in *I Wish My Dad* transcend gender roles or fathers and sons. This is a book that allows readers to see how important it is to communicate and meet the emotional needs of the people you love. How we show up for people has the power to shape their lives. Loving people well, in the ways that they need it most, gives them what they need in order to thrive.

9. Do you hope to write more books about parents and children?

Yes. I'm really excited about *I Wish My Dad* and believe it has the potential to do very well. When that happens, I want to do with my daughter what I did with my son Jordan. I want us to write about the power of vulnerable conversations between daughters and dads. I already have a list of women waiting to be interviewed! Perhaps after that, I can work on *I Wish My Mom*. I think a series of stories around daughters and moms would be very powerful, and the same goes for sons and their moms.

10. What do you hope *I Wish My Dad* does for readers lives and their relationships?

My greatest hope is that it causes people to start conversations that strengthen or heal relationships. I hope it's a global conversation, because what I have learned is that everyone wants to be seen, heard and valued, especially by their dads. ”