

Sage: A Man's Guide Into His Second Passage, by Chris Bruno

Four Primary Movements in a Man's Life

- When you were born
- When you cross from boy to man
- When you recover your true self and cross into your second half
- When you die

First Half Passage - Boy to Man

- Becoming a man is about finding the man within the boy and calling him forth

Second Half Passage - Recover True Self

- Recovering your true self is about finding the boy within the man and bringing him home

Truths:

- If a man does not engage in these passages he will forever remain unfinished
- Elderly men who have not crossed the Second Half threshold will forever remain as First Half men

STORYWORK:

The First Half Man

- Innocent Boy

- The preteen season of life where innocence and naivete are known and experienced
- Full of energy exploring the world as a playground
- Fashions spears from sticks and slays imaginary dragons
- In his innocence is confronted by evil for the first time

- Phallic Man
 - The teenage boy awakened to his body and exploring his sexual identity
 - Experiences awareness and attraction and what it means to fall in love
 - Also experiences the ache of aloneness and desires companionship and fears rejection
 - The enemy sets traps to create false intimacy and false connection

- The Zealous Warrior
 - Brings his hardened muscles, and physical and mental prowess to the battle
 - With warrior energy sets out to conquer career, family, faith, wealth and reputation
 - Digs deep to fight, protect, provide and defend
 - The enemy inflates his ego, sharpens his appetite for more, and emphasizes his accomplishments

- The Wounded Man
 - Limp from the arena with injuries to body, soul and spirit
 - His efforts were not enough, and he has found the end of himself
 - Falls off the cliffs of depression, anxiety, lost identity, purposelessness, loss & grief
 - The enemy tries to convince him life is pointless, hoping he will return to the warrior to continue fighting instead of simply engaging his woundedness

- The Restored King
 - Rises from the ashes of the Wounded Man because he has come to know himself, and not because he has decided to fight longer and harder
 - He is more centered within himself understanding who he is and a little about his "Why?"
 - The enemy is close tempting him to stir a thirst for more power, position or prestige
 - These five stages are all found in a man's first half
 - They are not experienced in beginning and completing each in linear succession, but each new one subsumes the previous ones and they build on each other
 - Men may remain stuck in various stages and must work themselves loose, continuing to grow

- The Wise Sage
 - Emerges as he steps beyond the story of his life, looking back over seasons, relationships, battles, dark valleys, deserts, and domains he has ruled and looks upon it all with curiosity, generosity, and deep contentedness

First-Half Man - Questions / Exercises:

1. Create a Timeline of your life from your earliest memory through 6 months beyond today. Mark the most influential memories and list positive ones above the line, moving higher with the most positive ones, and negative experiences below the line with the worst furthest down. Jot notes near each describing their significance. Then answer the following questions about your timeline.
 - a. What did you learn?

b. Where did you succeed?

c. Where did you fail?

d. Are you stuck anywhere?

e. In what ways do you feel alone?

2. How would you characterize your journey from boyhood to manhood?

3. In what ways did your Father or other men find the man within you and call him forth?

In what ways did they fail to show up?

If you are a father of sons, how have you shown up for your son/s?

4. When did you realize you had become a man?

5. How would you characterize yourself in each of the 5 stages of a First Half man?

a. Innocent Boy

b. Phallic Man

c. Zealous Warrior

d. Wounded Man

e. Restored King

6. Are you stuck in a stage in any way?

7. What is your vision of the future as a Wise Sage?

8. Thinking of your father, what stands out to you about his story in his First Half?

9. True followers of Jesus do not settle for small stories. What is your larger story?

More First Half Problems

Failed Projections

- Looking externally for answers to deep internal questions
- Searching for something to fill the void or emptiness - asking "doing" to meet the needs of "being"
- Taking responsibility for your own identity and meaning
 - IKIGAI - your reason for waking up in the morning
 - You have a purpose and a vision for who you are, why you are here, and what you are to be about
- From an early age we project onto the world our desperate plea for someone to please tell us who we are
 - Projections must be resolved internally and cannot pass the second half threshold

Projections - Questions / Exercises:

1. Upon whom did you project your fears and anxieties, expecting them to satisfy the deep longings of your heart, validate your worth, and affirm your dignity?

2. What questions are you projecting onto your job, ministry, marriage, children, friends and church, and what answers are you waiting for?

3. If you were to ask your most significant relationships, "What does it feel like I am expecting from you?" what would they say? - Ask them...

4. What is your IKIGAI? (reason for waking up in the morning)
In what ways have you taken responsibility for your reason for waking up in the morning?

5. Who do you need to relieve of their duties?

Personas: The Masks We Wear

- Personas are the masks we accept from others and wear proudly over our own faces
- roles we are asked to play, people we are required to be on someone else's stage
reading someone else's script
- Becoming the person someone else wants you to be
- We become who we are expected and rewarded to be
- With every mask we put on, we distance ourselves from the person we were designed to be

- Our identity is formed by external expectation and reward, and not by inward exploration and expression
- We approach the second half when we ask ourselves what lies behind the masks we wear - we learn how to take off the mask and show up as the person we are instead of the one we are expected to be

Personas - Questions / Exercises:

1. How would you know if you were wearing as mask?
2. Who did you need to be for your family growing up?
 - a. Your parents, siblings, coach, grandparents?
3. As an adult what masks are you wearing?
 - a. For your spouse, church, boss, community, children?
4. What fears do you have when you think about removing a mask?
 - a. Who will it upset the most?

Midlife: "A Choice Point"

- Midlife is an opportunity to experience a choice point, the choice to continue living in the first half, or make a transition to the second half
- Some men choose not to exchange their external script for one created internally, and instead of entering the second half they continue with the first half projections and personas making the old script work
- Others choose to recover their True Self
- This internal freedom does not require external change. It is an internal awareness of the Masterpiece God has created in each heart
- A midlife choice point requires work preparing for the crucible of suffering - it will come at some point
- A man who desires to impart wisdom will only be giving advice if he does it without doing the work of the second half
- First half men want to know how to reclaim their lives and live out of their authentic self - Second half men need to be able to help them know how to do it, by having done the work themselves

- The Soul's Journey - two tasks of the first half
 - First... develop enough ego strength to leave father and mother and enter the world as a man
 - Second... explore and engage the various seasons of life and learn from each the lessons they teach

MidLife Choice Point - Questions / Exercises:

1. When was your midlife choice point and what did you choose?

Sage of the Second Half

- The Sage's Enough: Settled Contentment
- The Sage's Welcome: Spacious Inner Hospitality
- The Sage's Great God: Generous Spirituality
- The Sage's Death: The Crucible of Suffering
- The Sage's Companion: From Loneliness to Solitude
- The Sage's Boy: Bringing Him Home

The Sage's Enough - Settled Contentment

- What do these verses have to say about contentment?

Philippians 4:11-13

Luke 12:22-31

John 4:30-34

- There is a holy settledness in the heart of a Sage that comes from experience and a constant absorption of God's grace and goodness
- Rohr - "Your concern is not so much to have what you love, but to love what you have."
- "Enough" is about being satisfied. This is accomplished not by the killing of desire, but by the fulfillment of it.
- Many of us run to quench the thirst before we wonder what it is we're thirsty for. How often we metaphorically stand at the door of the refrigerator or pantry and look for something to satisfy, when it isn't food at all that we are looking for.
- The pursuit of enough does not depend on our own scrappiness to provide, but on our recognition of the provision of God, who himself is our enough.
- There are two opposing poles on the spectrum of enoughness - on one end the fire of demand, a battle-frenzy pursuit of the ever-elusive "next thing", and on the other end the cold winterland of abdication where effort and attempt are meaningless. Somewhere in between we find the intersection of true desire and true enough. We find peace.
- **The Sage models contentment and invites anyone to examine his inner enough**

Questions/Exercises: "Settled Contentment"

1. What does it mean to you to be satisfied?

2. What do you know of your own scrappy boy? How have you had to provide for your physical, financial, emotional, psychological or spiritual needs?

3. How do you decide when enough is enough?

4. In what parts of your life are you settled, and where are you not?

The Sage's Welcome - Spacious Inner Hospitality

- What do these verses have to say about creating space in your life for others?

Philippians 3:4-11

Proverbs 8:13

Proverbs 16:18

James 1:9-11

- The Sage possesses an inner sanctuary where he finds rest
- When the Sage enters, others can enter as well, because the Sage no longer has to be the most important person in the room
- Hospitality requires us to create emotional, psychological, mental, and spiritual space for others to enter and find a space to sit
- The Sage learns how to take up less space, as all of us are narcissists to some degree
- The Sage communes with God and experiences an existence entirely different from and superior to the life of the expert
- The Sage offers the gift of presence, realizing his life is not about him, with nothing to prove and nothing to gain
- **There is space inside the Sage for others to find rest**

Questions/Exercises:

1. Have you had experience with men who considered themselves better than others, and how did that feel to you?
2. In what ways does narcissism feel good to a person?
3. What fear drives a person to puff up and self-aggrandize?
4. What does it feel like to be in the presence of a sage who creates spacious hospitality for you?

The Sage's Great God - Generous Spirituality

- What do these verses have to say about understanding God?

Isaiah 55:6-9

Psalm 145:3

Proverbs 3:5-6

1 Corinthians 14:33

- Too many of us have a rigid belief system
- The education/training/teaching we get from our early years can be detrimental to our theology if our leaders are not careful
- Sages move away from "God in a box" toward the mystery of God, a God who refuses to be defined by his creation

- We do tend to craft our own images of God we believe to be the most true, right, and accurate - Idolatry
- We accept the reality that there are things we just cannot know
- Wisdom is what is knowable plus prayer, including immense and confusing suffering, and the breaking of inner idols
- We must learn to trust God and allow him the space he desires to work - and to work to accomplish his goals his way
- We learn to live in the liminal space, the space in between... a God who is both near and far, present yet absent, human yet God
- **The Sage refuses to worship God in a box**

Questions/Exercises:

1. What has your theological journey been like?
2. Along the way, where did you wrestle with doubt, confusion, and "not knowing"?
3. To what extent do you need proof in spiritual things, and to what extent are you comfortable with mystery?

4. What is God asking you to trust Him with?

The Sage's Death - The Crucible of Suffering

- What do these verses have to say about suffering well?

Psalm 77:1-20

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Romans 5:1-5

James 1:2-4, 12

- Suffering is a necessary part of a man's life, purifying his heart by melting it and removing the impurities
- It is recast and remade by being poured into a new mold - the mold of a second half Sage
- Paul wrote that suffering produces
 - It generates something new in us, but leaves its mark on us at the same time
- Possible responses to suffering
 - Denial - (an unhealthy response)
 - Contempt - (an unhealthy response)
 - Reflective Acceptance - (a healthy response)
 - Turn toward it, lean into it, give yourself to the gift of grief
- Living inside every man is a boy who knows pain, sorrow, suffering and grief
- Rather than deny the wounding or rage against it, we must acknowledge the depth of our losses, mourn with our younger part, and tend to our broken heart
- **The Sage has learned how to suffer well, and to sit with it when necessary**

Questions/Exercises:

1. How was suffering engaged in your childhood home? Was it?

- What do these verses have to say about solitude?

Exodus 34:28-29

Mark 1:35

Psalm 46:10

Matthew 6:6

Matthew 26:36-46

- Loneliness is now epidemic in the world today, especially for those over 50 yrs old

- When we rely on those in our external world to bring validation, purpose, meaning, and identity to fill the chasm of our unmet needs, loneliness can be consuming
- Loneliness is borne from the pain of our disappointed projections
- We can transform our loneliness by learning to be comfortable with ourselves and comfortable face to face with God inside us
- The Sage must master the discipline of solitude, because solitude and loneliness do not coexist
- Solitude is not to be loneliness or lonely - but is communing with the Father, Son & Spirit, where we are alone in a "Circle of Four"
- Solitude involves pursuit as well as withdrawal, creating space for the heart to hear the voice of God, and silencing the noise and distraction that keeps us from connecting with God
- Silence paired with solitude transforms a man from the god of his own world to a Sage for the High King
- Brotherhood is a major goal of the Sage - to connect to a brotherhood of men and thus become true men
 - Who are the Kings at my table?
 - By learning to be vulnerable with other men, the Sage learns to be vulnerable with himself
Solitude connects us with the KINDNESS of Jesus
- **As we meet in solitude with Jesus we are able to experience his kindness, from him to us, and then from ourselves to ourselves**

Questions/Exercises:

The Sage's Boy - Bringing Him Home

- What do these verses have to say about coming home?

Romans 2:4

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Luke 15:11-24

- "I am still every age that I have ever been"
- I ask my younger self how he is and what he feels - just checking in with my younger self
- Home is both the beginning and the end, and our little boy must find his way home

- Boys exiled by our shame need to be forgiven
- **The KINDNESS of God leads us to repentance and the KINDNESS of God brings them back home**

My Younger Boys (Bring home in the second half)

Consider each of the younger parts living within you, and make some notes below about how you are aware of for each and in what ways you identify with them, or how you don't identify with them.

- The Scrappy Boy
- The Scared Boy
- The Either/Or Boy
- The Wounded Boy

- The Lonely Boy

Bringing the Younger Boy Home - Questions / Exercises:

1. From a posture of curiosity rather than judgment, what happened to that boy, and what did he have to do to survive?
2. How might you offer that boy the kindness of God? What does he need from the adult part of you to be welcomed back home?
3. Imagine all those boys gathered as individuals around your table sharing a meal with you. What does this homecoming make possible in your life moving forward? How does it make you feel?
4. What still remains that could keep you from moving forward, and what help do you think you need?

We are participating in the restoration of all things, God's promise to a broken world.

Making all things new... again.

Storywork In the First Half - Questions / Exercises:

1. In what ways have you become aware that you have a story?
2. Describe ways you are slowing down, being curious and not being judgmental or diminishing your story?
3. Explain how you are being kind to yourself as you enter your story narrative, where you may have not entered before, and how you are giving yourself a blessing as a weapon of hope

Storywork in the Second Half - Questions / Exercises:

1. In what ways have you reintegrated, blessed, and restored your first half narrative as part of your True Narrative Identity, agreeing with God as to what is your True Self?
2. How have you chosen to shut down externalized projections and taken responsibility for your own needs?
3. How have you invited back untended, hidden, and denied parts of yourself, and given them light and life?
4. In what ways have you been living fully in the Kingdom, completely dependent on God for your entire being?
5. Describe how you are realizing your story is only a story within the Great Story of God, and not a separate story of your own?