

CHAPTER 2

BUILDING A

FOUNDATION



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A strong foundation holds the building blocks of your **character** in place. I was blessed to have had my parents, who were able to provide a solid foundation for me that improved my ability to handle life's challenges.



But if you feel you aren't getting the proper guidance at home, there are others who can help you strengthen your foundation. It might be a teacher, a relative, a coach, a clergyman or a counselor. It should be someone you trust and respect as a person; someone you admire and look up to for his or her accomplishments and solid personality. You can always benefit from the experience of someone older, someone who wants to help guide you along the proper path.

Here are some important **building blocks** for a solid foundation. Each one is necessary for you to become the best person you can possibly be.

1. Keep a positive attitude in everything you do.
2. Stay in control of all your decisions and don't be manipulated by others.
3. Don't blame others for your mistakes.
4. Always respect your elders.
5. Never feel sorry for yourself.
6. Be forgiving in any situation.
7. Treat everyone with kindness, even those who aren't always nice to you.
8. Always...always remember that you are **SPECIAL**.

All of these elements make up your total character and will allow you to be anything you want, as well as a person others will come to admire. Your foundation will make you strong and free to pursue all your dreams and to take that flight you once doubted or feared.

Where ever you find your foundation, you should know that you deserve to make the most of it. Make it special because **you** are special — make it support the ride of **your** life!

What are some important building blocks that make your foundation strong?

Journal on the building blocks that can make your foundation stronger.

A strong foundation is what a person needs to develop a strong, honest and forthright character, as well as an optimistic and positive outlook on life.

Definition:

Foundation [foun'dāSHən]

1. the strong base from which a building is built.
2. the underlying principle or idea on which something is based.

Coming from a family of 20 children and living in rural McLain, Mississippi, I could have been easily lost in the shuffle. Without a strong foundation my whole outlook on life might have been different. I wouldn't have had the character to work hard, the knowledge to dream big, and the desire to achieve my goals. A strong foundation is truly a base upon which to build your dreams while giving you the sound principles that allow you to achieve them.

You've got to remember that not everyone has the same kind of family situation. My family was exceptionally large, but I was fortunate enough to get so much sound advice and personal attention from my parents, especially by Dad. Large or small, a stable family with two caring parents is a blessing, but there are other ways to build a strong foundation using people who care about you, whether they are part of your family or not. What is important is that you identify the people in your life who can help you build a strong foundation. Helping you to do this is one of the reasons I'm sharing my life and the things I've learned with you. I am one of those people you can list who can help you achieve a good foundation.

List all the people in your life who you turn to for help, support, advice, care, and love.



Building a strong foundation, then, can happen in a number of ways. Here's how it happened with me.

A MOTHER'S LOVE AND HARD WORK

With 20 children, my mom always had a great deal of work and I knew how hard my she always worked. She loved us all. When I was born in 1967, there were probably three or four children out of the house as I was growing up, but there were always eleven living at home at one time. With grandchildren already coming, we always seemed to have about 20 there at once. Mom always knew just what to do in any situation. Besides taking care of the younger ones, she cooked and washed clothes. She was busy all the time with one thing or another. If she didn't ask for help, I always made sure to help her whether she asked or not. I enjoyed helping out to lessen her workload. In fact, when I was old enough, I would get up early and go out in the fields with her to tend the gardens and gather vegetables for dinner.



Mom was an expert cook. Like a master chef, she could bake breads and cakes without measuring. She made it a point to share her knowledge of cooking with me or with any of the girls who wanted to learn. Despite all the children and the work she was always active and made it a point to a keep up with her appearance. My Mom would often say, **"Thank God for my husband and for my 20 kids. I love them all."** She could never understand how people couldn't love each other. She always had so much love for people and though my Dad was the leader of the family, I know that behind every man there is an even greater woman. I could see the spiritual chemistry my parents had for each other even though their marriage wasn't perfect. In spirituality they were one with the same objective of raising the family the way God wanted them raised.

When I left for college I remember Mom said that her only dependable helper was leaving her. I chose to be responsible helper at a young age, because I saw how responsible my mother was. Learning to be responsible and understanding how that impacted my mother and our family, became a part of my strong foundation. Seeing the true love and unity from both of my parents also helped build my strong foundation. The positive role modeling from my parents strengthened my foundation and desire to be a strong supporter for others and become a reliable team player.

Observe the people who love you and try to understand what sacrifices they may be making for you. Describe the ways these sacrifices help make your foundation strong.
