

THE IDEA WORKBOOK

SimpleJoySaralAnand

The Free 8-Week Starter

One question a week. One small step. Written so anyone can do it.

"Don't be awed. Create awe."

No Entrepreneur Left Unsprouted.

How This Workbook Works

This is not a book you only read. It is a book you write in. Each week you will do one small thing with your child, and write down what happened. That is the whole method. Do it for a year and your child will change — not their grades, but how they see the world.

You do not need anything you do not already have: a table, a meal, thirty minutes of real attention, and any notebook. Each week has two pages. The left page tells you what to do. The right page is where you write what your child says.

This book is for everyone — no matter your schooling

This workbook is made to be easy for everyone.

You do not need a college degree. You do not need to have finished school. You do not need any business experience. You do not need to be good with money or good with words. If you can read this page, you can do every page in this book.

Every week is one small step, written in plain words. Nothing here is complicated. Nothing here needs to be looked up. There are no hard words, no tests, and no wrong answers.

This is for every parent and every caregiver — grandparents, aunts and uncles, foster parents, single parents, anyone raising a child. You already have everything you need: a little time, and love for your child.

A gentle note about the videos

Each week you may see a short pointer like “watch this week’s short video together.” The videos are a free extra — never a requirement. Everything you need is right here in this workbook.

The Four Jars

When money comes in — an allowance, a gift, or the first dollar your child earns from an idea — split it into four jars:

The four jars

Spend — what you enjoy now. Small, guilt-free, yours.

Save — what you set aside for something bigger and later.

Invest — the seed money for the next idea, the jar that makes more.

Give — what goes to someone else. Generosity is part of enterprise, not separate from it.

Example: a child earns \$100 from their idea. Spend \$60. Save \$20. Invest \$10 in the next idea. Give \$10. The numbers can change — the four jars do not.

Your 8 Weeks at a Glance

Week	What you'll do	Track
1	The Dinner Table Is Your First Boardroom	Foundation
2	From Parent to Coach — The Hardest Shift You'll Ever Make	Foundation
3	Lead by Example — What Your Child Learns by Watching You	Foundation
4	The Window of Wonder — Why Now Is the Perfect Time to Begin	Foundation
5	My Child Is Already a Teenager — Is It Too Late?	Foundation
6	School Plus, Not School Instead	Foundation
7	The Curiosity Thieves — What Is Quietly Killing Your Child's Innovation	Foundation
8	Teaching Your Child to Fail Forward — Without Fear	Foundation

See It in Action — A Year at One Family's Table

Meet Zoe, age nine, and her dad. They are not a real family — they are a picture of what this can look like. In the pages that follow, the workbook's words are in black. The family's own handwriting is in blue.

Week 1

The workbook asks: If our family were a small business, what would we be really good at?

Zoe writes: "We'd be good at fixing things. Dad always fixes stuff."

Dad's one line: "Week 1 — Zoe noticed we solve problems together. That surprised me."

Week 26

The workbook asks: What have you made or done that you're proud of?

Zoe writes: "I walked the neighbor's dog for two weeks and they paid me! I put \$10 in Invest."

Dad's one line: "Week 26 — She earned her first money and split it into the four jars without being told."

Week 43

The workbook asks: Who could help your idea grow?

Zoe writes: "Mrs. Rao has three dogs. Maybe I can walk hers too. And tell her neighbors."

Dad's one line: "Week 43 — Zoe is thinking about other people now, not just her own idea."

Week 52

The workbook asks: What will you carry into next year?

Zoe writes: "That I can start things. Even small things count."

Dad's one line: "Week 52 — A different child than a year ago. She believes she can begin."

The blue is the family's hand; the black is the workbook's.

The Family Pledge

Say this aloud together before Week 1, and again whenever you need it.

Our pledge

Parent: "I will show you what trying looks like."

Child: "I will try one thing this week that I have never tried before."

Signed by the parent:

Signed by the child:

WEEK 1

Foundation • Build the Habit

The Dinner Table Is Your First Boardroom

Entrepreneurship is caught, not taught.

The Ritual — start here every week

Do three rounds of box breathing together. Breathe in (4), hold (4), out (4), hold (4). It settles everyone before you begin.

This Week's Question

"If our family were a small business, what would we be really good at?"

How to Coach It

- Put the phone face-down. Ask one real question. Write down what they say.
- That is the beginning. One question.
- Go slow. There is no wrong answer here. Your job is to ask and to listen — not to fix.

New Tool This Week

The First Pledge

The Steps

1. Do three rounds of box breathing together — breathe in, hold, out, hold, each for a count of four. Then talk.
2. Call the first family boardroom — this week, hold one deliberate family dinner with no phones and no screens.
3. Buy or find the idea notebook — this week, your child chooses a physical notebook — any notebook, any size, any color — that will be their Idea Notebook for all 52 weeks.

For the curious — the research behind this week (optional)

You can skip this and lose nothing — the week works without it. This is only for parents who like to know why.

Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) remains the most comprehensive framework in developmental psychology for understanding what shapes a child's capabilities across their lifetime. At the center of Bronfenbrenner's model is the microsystem — the immediate environment in which a child spends the most time. Bronfenbrenner's longitudinal research consistently found that the single most predictive variable for a child's adult capability was the quality and frequency of substantive conversation in the home, specifically conversations in which the child was asked for their thinking rather than given an answer.

Albert Bandura's social learning theory (1977, 1997) provides the mechanism: children learn the behaviors and attitudes they observe in their primary environment. An entrepreneurial mindset is not taught through instruction. It is modeled by parents and absorbed by children through sustained observation across years of shared life. Drucker's framing — the best way to predict the future is to create it — is an accurate description of how entrepreneurial orientation is transmitted from one generation to the next.

What We Noticed — Week 1

Date: _____ Who answered: _____

What they said — word for word:

Tell me more... (what else came out):

Parent's one line — what surprised me this week:

WEEK 2

Foundation • Build the Habit

From Parent to Coach — The Hardest Shift You'll Ever Make

Conversations build thinkers; scrolling builds consumers.

The Ritual — start here every week

Do three rounds of box breathing together. Breathe in (4), hold (4), out (4), hold (4). It settles everyone before you begin.

This Week's Question

"Can you remember a time you figured something out by yourself — without anyone telling you the answer? What happened?"

How to Coach It

- Hold back the answer this week. Ask a question instead. Write down what your child finds.
- But it is. And they will find it.
- Go slow. There is no wrong answer here. Your job is to ask and to listen — not to fix.

New Tool This Week

The Coaching Switch

The Steps

1. Do three rounds of box breathing together — breathe in, hold, out, hold, each for a count of four. Then talk.
2. The coaching switch in practice — this week, in three separate moments, hold back the answer you already know and ask a question instead.
3. Notice the response — for each coaching moment this week, write what happened after you asked the question instead of giving the answer.

For the curious — the research behind this week (optional)

You can skip this and lose nothing — the week works without it. This is only for parents who like to know why.

Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978) remains the foundational framework for understanding why coaching produces more durable learning than direct instruction. Vygotsky identified that a child's actual developmental level — what they can do alone — is always below their potential developmental level — what they can do with the guidance of a more capable peer or adult. The gap between these two levels is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The critical finding is that growth occurs in the ZPD only when the guidance is graduated — present enough to prevent complete failure, but withdrawn enough to require genuine effort. A parent who answers every question collapses the ZPD to zero. A parent who asks rather than tells keeps the ZPD productive.

Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) named this graduated guidance scaffolding — the provision of just enough support to allow the learner to reach the next level, with the support systematically withdrawn as capability develops. The most effective scaffolding in a family context is not material support (resources, connections, funding) but cognitive scaffolding: questions that activate the child's existing knowledge and push it one step further. The coaching parent is not less involved than the directing parent. They are more precisely involved — at exactly the level of challenge that produces growth.

What We Noticed — Week 2

Date: _____ Who answered: _____

What they said — word for word:

Tell me more... (what else came out):

Parent’s one line — what surprised me this week:

WEEK 3

Foundation • Build the Habit

Lead by Example — What Your Child Learns by Watching You

Entrepreneurship is caught, not taught.

The Ritual — start here every week

Do three rounds of box breathing together. Breathe in (4), hold (4), out (4), hold (4). It settles everyone before you begin.

This Week's Question

"If you had to teach someone what our family believes, what would you say?"

How to Coach It

- Watch yourself this week with a curious eye. Then do one thing in front of your child that shows what trying looks like.
- What you will see is a child who has just updated their understanding of what adults do when things are difficult. That update is the most valuable thing you can give them this week.
- Go slow. There is no wrong answer here. Your job is to ask and to listen — not to fix.

New Tool This Week

The Mirror Moment

The Steps

1. Do three rounds of box breathing together — breathe in, hold, out, hold, each for a count of four. Then talk.
2. The mirror exercise — this week, write down three things you do regularly that you would want your child to copy.
3. The visible action — this week, do one thing in front of your child that demonstrates what trying looks like.

For the curious — the research behind this week (optional)

You can skip this and lose nothing — the week works without it. This is only for parents who like to know why.

Albert Bandura's observational learning research — beginning with the Bobo Doll experiments (1961, 1963) and extended across six decades of social cognitive psychology — established that children learn complex behaviors, attitudes, and emotional responses by watching models, without any explicit instruction or reinforcement. The mechanism is not passive. Children actively select, attend to, retain, reproduce, and are motivated by what they observe in adults they trust and admire. Crucially, the emotional salience of an observed behavior predicts how deeply it is encoded — a child who watches a parent handle a business setback with calm dignity encodes that response more durably than the same parent explicitly explaining how to handle setbacks.

Rizzolatti and Craighero's mirror neuron research (2004) provided a neurological basis for this finding: the human brain activates the same neural circuits when observing an action as when performing it. A child who watches a parent negotiate with calm dignity, persevere through difficulty, or handle money with responsibility is neurologically rehearsing those behaviors. The observation is not passive preparation. It is practice.

What We Noticed — Week 3

Date: _____ Who answered: _____

What they said — word for word:

Tell me more... (what else came out):

Parent's one line — what surprised me this week:

WEEK 4

Foundation • Build the Habit

The Window of Wonder — Why Now Is the Perfect Time to Begin

Conversations build thinkers; scrolling builds consumers.

The Ritual — start here every week

Do three rounds of box breathing together. Breathe in (4), hold (4), out (4), hold (4). It settles everyone before you begin.

This Week's Question

"If you were completely in charge of our family for one whole day — what would we do?"

How to Coach It

- Include your child in one more real thing this week than last week. That is the seed.
- One more real thing. That is the seed.
- Go slow. There is no wrong answer here. Your job is to ask and to listen — not to fix.

The Steps

1. Do three rounds of box breathing together — breathe in, hold, out, hold, each for a count of four. Then talk.
2. Include them in one real thing — this week, include your child in one real decision or real task that you would normally do alone.
3. The seed question — at one dinner this week, ask your child:.

For the curious — the research behind this week (optional)

You can skip this and lose nothing — the week works without it. This is only for parents who like to know why.

Heckman's landmark return-on-investment analysis (2006) produced a curve now widely cited across economics, education policy, and child development: investment in a child's development between ages six and twelve produces the highest measurable return across any subsequent period of life. The mechanism is not simply that earlier is better. It is that early learning builds the platform on which all subsequent learning stands. A child who develops curiosity, persistence, and problem-solving habits before age twelve finds these habits easier to sustain and easier to extend into new domains in adolescence and adulthood.

Giedd et al.'s longitudinal neuroimaging research (1999) provides the biological basis: the prefrontal cortex — responsible for planning, executive function, risk assessment, and self-regulation — undergoes its most rapid development between ages six and twelve, with a second burst of plasticity in early adolescence. This is the period during which habits of thought form most readily. Piaget's Concrete Operational Stage (ages seven to eleven) identifies this same window as the period when children develop logical reasoning grounded in real, observable experience — exactly the kind of experience that entrepreneurial family practice provides. The child between eight and twelve is neurologically built for the kind of learning this program offers — practical, observational, iterative, and grounded in real stakes.

What We Noticed — Week 4

Date: _____ Who answered: _____

What they said — word for word:

Tell me more... (what else came out):

Parent's one line — what surprised me this week:

WEEK 5

Foundation • Build the Habit

My Child Is Already a Teenager — Is It Too Late?

Entrepreneurs are not born — they are ingrained, nurtured, and raised.

The Ritual — start here every week

Do three rounds of box breathing together. Breathe in (4), hold (4), out (4), hold (4). It settles everyone before you begin.

This Week's Question

“Can you think of one thing you once thought you could never do — and then you did it anyway? What happened?”

How to Coach It

- Have one honest conversation with your child this week. Ask what problem makes them angry. Write what they say. That is the first draft.
- You are not late. You are starting.
- Go slow. There is no wrong answer here. Your job is to ask and to listen — not to fix.

New Tool This Week

The Second Draft

The Steps

1. Do three rounds of box breathing together — breathe in, hold, out, hold, each for a count of four. Then talk.
2. The first draft conversation — this week, at a time when your child is not rushed, ask:.
3. The second draft question — after the First Draft Conversation, wait twenty-four hours. Then come back and ask:.

For the curious — the research behind this week (optional)

You can skip this and lose nothing — the week works without it. This is only for parents who like to know why.

Carol Dweck's foundational research on implicit theories of intelligence (2006) is essential here. Dweck identified two orientations: the fixed mindset — in which a person believes their abilities are fixed at birth and cannot be substantially changed — and the growth mindset — in which a person believes their abilities develop through effort, strategy, and learning from setbacks. Critically, the growth mindset is not an innate personality trait — it is a learned orientation that can be developed at any age. Dweck's intervention research showed meaningful mindset shifts in adolescents, adults, and even elderly populations. The teenager who is introduced to this program at fourteen is not behind. They are at the beginning of a growth mindset intervention.

Erik Erikson's Stage 5 — Identity versus Role Confusion (ages twelve to eighteen) — identifies adolescence as the period when a young person actively constructs their sense of who they are and what they are capable of. This is not a closed window. It is an open interrogation. The teenager who encounters entrepreneurial identity during this stage can incorporate it into their developing self-concept more deliberately than the eight-year-old, who absorbs it without conscious choice. A later start is not only recoverable — in some respects, the adolescent brings advantages the younger child does not have: abstract reasoning, genuine commercial awareness, and the capacity for deliberate commitment.

What We Noticed — Week 5

Date: _____ Who answered: _____

What they said — word for word:

Tell me more... (what else came out):

Parent's one line — what surprised me this week:

WEEK 6

Foundation • Build the Habit

School Plus, Not School Instead

Conversations build thinkers; scrolling builds consumers.

The Ritual — start here every week

Do three rounds of box breathing together. Breathe in (4), hold (4), out (4), hold (4). It settles everyone before you begin.

This Week's Question

“What did you learn in school this week that you could use in real life?”

How to Coach It

- This week, ask: what did you learn today that you could use in real life? Write what they say. Then show them how.
- The fractions homework becomes the business plan. The textbook stays open.
- Go slow. There is no wrong answer here. Your job is to ask and to listen — not to fix.

The Steps

1. Do three rounds of box breathing together — breathe in, hold, out, hold, each for a count of four. Then talk.
2. The fraction bridge — this week, find one piece of maths or science homework your child has done or is doing.
3. The business maths challenge — using the fraction or maths concept from Step 2, set your child a real business question:.

For the curious — the research behind this week (optional)

You can skip this and lose nothing — the week works without it. This is only for parents who like to know why.

John Dewey's experiential learning theory (1938) identified the central problem of formal education as the production of inert knowledge — information that a student can recall on a test but cannot apply in a novel context. Dewey argued that knowledge only becomes genuinely useful when the learner can connect it to experience — when they have a reason to use it, a context in which it matters, and the opportunity to discover that it works. The entrepreneurial family program provides precisely this: every week, the child's existing school knowledge is connected to a real context in which it is immediately applicable. The fraction does not stay abstract. It becomes a split of earnings between two children running a business together.

Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences research (1983, 2011) provides further support: when a child applies knowledge across different domains — when the maths of fractions appears in the business of sharing profits, and the science of ecosystems appears in the analysis of a market — the knowledge is encoded more durably, retrieved more readily, and connected to other knowledge more productively than knowledge that exists only in its original domain. OECD-PISA research across seventy-nine countries (2019) found that students who perceive their schoolwork as relevant to their lives outside school significantly outperform those who do not — across all subjects, all countries, and all income levels.

What We Noticed — Week 6

Date: _____ Who answered: _____

What they said — word for word:

Tell me more... (what else came out):

Parent's one line — what surprised me this week:

WEEK 7

Foundation • Build the Habit

The Curiosity Thieves — What Is Quietly Killing Your Child's Innovation

Conversations build thinkers; scrolling builds consumers.

The Ritual — start here every week

Do three rounds of box breathing together. Breathe in (4), hold (4), out (4), hold (4). It settles everyone before you begin.

This Week's Question

"What do you see that nobody seems to have fixed?"

How to Coach It

- This week, protect one hour. Put the screens away — without drama. Play the Curiosity Game. Ask what your child notices. Write it down.
- It is also more fun than it sounds.
- Go slow. There is no wrong answer here. Your job is to ask and to listen — not to fix.

New Tool This Week

The Curiosity Hour

The Steps

1. Do three rounds of box breathing together — breathe in, hold, out, hold, each for a count of four. Then talk.
2. The curiosity hour — this week, on one afternoon or evening, put all screens away for one hour.
3. The curiosity game — the Curiosity Game has one rule: look at ordinary things and find what is unusual, broken, missing, or improvable.

For the curious — the research behind this week (optional)

You can skip this and lose nothing — the week works without it. This is only for parents who like to know why.

Radesky et al.'s longitudinal cohort research (2014, 2015) on mobile device use in children aged three to twelve found that increased passive screen time was associated with measurable decreases in executive function — the cluster of cognitive capabilities that includes attention regulation, working memory, impulse control, and cognitive flexibility. These are precisely the capabilities that entrepreneurial thinking requires. Kahneman's System 1 vs System 2 framework (2011) provides the mechanism: short-form algorithmically optimised content is specifically engineered to engage System 1 — the fast, automatic, effortless thinking system. Sustained use of System 1-optimised content trains the brain to expect immediate gratification and low cognitive effort, making the slower, deliberate, uncomfortable work of System 2 thinking progressively harder to sustain.

Critically, Lillard and Peterson's controlled experiment (2011) found measurable decreases in executive function in children aged four to six after just nine minutes of fast-paced media exposure. The effect was not permanent — but it was immediate and measurable. Anderson et al. (2017) confirmed the distinction between active and passive screen engagement: content that requires the child to think, create, or problem-solve produces different neural outcomes from content that requires only attention and reaction. The research does not condemn screens. It condemns passivity. And it confirms the most important finding for this program: curiosity, once eroded, is always recoverable — through conversation, observation, and the simple act of giving a child time with a problem and no algorithm to solve it.

What We Noticed — Week 7

Date: _____ Who answered: _____

What they said — word for word:

Tell me more... (what else came out):

Parent's one line — what surprised me this week:

WEEK 8

Foundation • Build the Habit

Teaching Your Child to Fail Forward — Without Fear

Entrepreneurship is caught, not taught.

The Ritual — start here every week

Do three rounds of box breathing together. Breathe in (4), hold (4), out (4), hold (4). It settles everyone before you begin.

This Week's Question

"Ji-woo lives in Seoul and goes to school in one of the most pressurised exam systems in the world. She keeps a Scientist's Notebook. What do you think she writes in it?"

How to Coach It

- This week, when something goes wrong — for your child or for you — ask: what would I try differently next time? Write the answer.
- Your child's first entry does not need to be about a business. It can be about anything they tried this week.
- Go slow. There is no wrong answer here. Your job is to ask and to listen — not to fix.

New Tool This Week

The Scientist's Notebook

The Steps

1. Do three rounds of box breathing together — breathe in, hold, out, hold, each for a count of four. Then talk.
2. The scientist's notebook — in the Idea Notebook, create a new recurring section called THE SCIENTIST'S NOTEBOOK.
3. The parental response experiment — this week, when your child experiences a setback — any setback, large or small — practice the incremental attribution response:.

For the curious — the research behind this week (optional)

You can skip this and lose nothing — the week works without it. This is only for parents who like to know why.

Carol Dweck's research on attribution theory (2006) identifies two fundamentally different ways a parent can respond to a child's failure — and demonstrates that the parent's response, not the failure itself, determines whether the child learns from the experience or retreats from it. The entity attribution response — "you are not good at this," "you are not a maths person," "this is not your strength" — treats the failure as evidence of a fixed characteristic. The child internalises this as identity and avoids future challenges to protect that identity. The incremental attribution response — "you have not mastered this yet," "what would you try differently?" "what does this tell you about the approach?" — treats the failure as evidence about a strategy, not a person. Longitudinal studies show that children who receive incremental attribution responses develop significantly higher academic and entrepreneurial resilience over time.

Amy Edmondson's research on psychological safety (1999, 2018) provides the environmental condition: failure-to-learning conversion only occurs in environments where the child believes it is safe to fail. Psychological safety is not the absence of standards — Edmondson's highest-performing teams had both high standards AND high psychological safety. The family that holds a child to high standards while also making clear that a failed attempt will not result in withdrawal of love or support produces the conditions for genuine entrepreneurial growth. Sarasvathy's effectuation theory (2001, 2008) further shows that expert entrepreneurs do not treat failure as an endpoint — they treat it as the beginning of the next experiment.

What We Noticed — Week 8

Date: _____ Who answered: _____

What they said — word for word:

Tell me more... (what else came out):

Parent's one line — what surprised me this week:

Continue the Full 52 Weeks

You have finished the Foundation — the first eight weeks, and the hardest ones to start. The full Idea Workbook carries you through all 52 weeks: the ten skills your child will build, the Four Jars, and the year-end letter your child writes to the world.

Find the complete 52-week Idea Workbook at simplejoyfamily.com.

"Don't be awed. Create awe." Raising An Entrepreneur · SimpleJoySaraAnand · No Entrepreneur Left Unsprouted.