

My dad died when I was 6 and I grew up without a male role model. My family was my mother, my 2 sisters and myself. My father was an only child and my mother had one sister who didn't marry. So I grew up with one aunt, no uncles and no first cousins.

I didn't have a natural inclination for sports and never developed one, despite the equal parts encouragement and coercion I got as a schoolboy. By the time I reached my twenties, I was far more comfortable in the company of women than men - not all that surprising really considering my background.

I have been extremely fortunate in my adult life to have found several excellent mentors. Some of these were or are women, but as I'm thinking about things in the context of growing up without my father or a strong male role model, here I'm going to talk about the men who have taken me under their wings and helped me.



Tony Whyte, then CEO of Portiuncula Hospital in Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, Ireland was my first boss when I left KPMG in 1991. Our first few years weren't extraordinary - we had our agreements and differences but for the past 25 years Tony has been someone I could always turn to and still turn to for advice, guidance and feedback.

Pat McGrath, then MD of PM Group and based in Cork, Ireland, who I first met in 1996, is another mentor who has always been there for me and on whose advice I have relied heavily.

Perhaps the most influential one though has been my father-in-law, Dr. Hugh O'Brien-Moran from Tramore, Co. Waterford, Ireland. Although he passed away in 2004, I still feel his presence and influence. Above all else, I remember that he always did the right thing, no matter what it cost him. And he taught me that when you're torn between doing what's right and being kind, being kind is often the right thing to do.

For the past while I've been working with another mentor, with a specific focus on building my business and my online presence. John Thornhill's tag line is "Simple Honest Ethical" and in the year or so I've known him, I can guarantee you that's what you get. You can try him out for \$1 and I encourage you to take him up on the offer - you'll find it [HERE](#)

I'd appreciate hearing from you so let me know in the comment section below if you have any questions or if there's any particular topic you'd like me to talk about.