



THE ART

THREE SENTENCES THAT CHANGE A GRANDCHILD

The Grandfather's Blessing Formula

Learn the three-part way to say something your grandchild will carry for the rest of his life. By the last page, you will have written one, in your own words, for one real grandchild.

Nick Stevens Author of *The Art of Being Granddad: 7 Blessings Your Family Needs from You*

A Note From Nick

Come sit down. Bring your coffee.

I wrote this because of a sentence I keep hearing from good men. Strong men, capable men, men who built things and raised families and know how to fix almost anything. I ask them to tell their grandkids something that matters, and they look at me and say, “But I’ve got nothing to say.”

That’s not true. It never is. You’ve got plenty to say. What you don’t have yet is a way to say it that doesn’t come out as “good job, buddy” or a piece of advice nobody asked for.

So here’s the whole thing in one line. Your voice, spoken on purpose, can hand a grandchild a piece of who they are. And once they own it, it protects them.

This guide teaches one small skill from my book. Three sentences. That’s it. I’m not going to bury you in theory. By the time you close this, you’ll have written a real blessing for one of your grandkids, and you’ll know how to do it again for the rest of them.

You don’t have to be perfect at this. I’m not. You just have to start.

Nick

Why “Good Job” Usually Misses

Here’s the thing about “good job.”

It’s not wrong. It’s just thin. Your grandkid has heard it from coaches, teachers, the lady at the grocery store, and a hundred cartoon characters. It slides right off. Praise that could be said to any kid says nothing about this kid.

Advice has the same problem, only worse. When you lead with advice, the grandchild hears one thing underneath it: *you’re not quite good enough yet, so let me correct you*. Sometimes that’s needed. But it’s not a blessing. A blessing tells a child who they already are.

Teasing is the third trap, and it’s the sneaky one. A lot of us grew up in homes where affection came out sideways, as a joke or a jab. So we do the same with our grandkids. We rib them. We keep it light. And the real thing we want to say stays stuck in our chest.

Then there’s silence, which is where a lot of good men land. Not because they don’t feel it. Because they can’t find the words, and saying nothing feels safer than saying it wrong.

I’ve watched what the missing voice does. I have a friend who spent her whole childhood hoping her grandfather would pull her up into his lap and say her name with love in it. He never did. The only words she remembers from him are “sit down.” She carried that for fifty years.

Your grandkids are not going to remember most of what you say. They will remember whether you saw them. This guide is about being seen.

The Three-Sentence Method

Most blessings that land are built the same way. I noticed the pattern over years of doing it, getting it wrong, and doing it again. Then I broke it into three parts so any granddad could copy it.

Here's the whole formula.

1. Observe. Name something specific you actually saw this grandchild do.

2. Name. Name the real quality or trait that action reveals.

3. Point. Point toward a future that quality could grow into, without shoving them into a role that isn't theirs.

Three sentences. One that looks back at what happened, one that looks inside at who they are, and one that looks ahead at who they could become.

Why three? Because a compliment with only the first part ("you built that fast") is just a play-by-play. A compliment with only the second part ("you're so smart") is the empty praise we already talked about. It's the combination that does the work. You show them the evidence, you tell them what it means, and you let them see a door it might open.

Here's how the three fit together in plain speech:

"I saw you do X. That tells me you're the kind of person who Y. I think that could take you somewhere real someday, like Z."

That's the bones of it. The next three pages take one part at a time. Read them slow. We'll build yours right after.

Step One: Observe

Start with your eyes, not your opinion.

A blessing only works if the grandchild knows in his gut that it's true. Kids have a good nose for flattery. If you tell a boy he's a great athlete when he knows he rode the bench all season, you've lost him, and you've taught him that your words don't mean much. So we don't start with what we wish were true. We start with what we saw.

Ask yourself one question: *what has this grandchild actually done that stuck with me?*

Not the big trophy moments. Those are easy and everybody already made a fuss over them. I mean the small stuff. The thing you noticed and nobody else did. How she handled it when the game didn't go her way. The way he kept at something long after his brother quit. Who he checked on. What she couldn't stop asking about.

You have an advantage here that the parents don't. Mom and Dad are down in the daily grind, running the schedule, keeping everyone fed and on time. You get to stand back a little. You see the pattern instead of the chaos. That distance is a gift. Use it.

If you're drawing a blank, watch for a week before you write anything. You're not looking for talent. You're looking for a moment that felt like *them*.

Write down the plain facts. No praise yet. Just what happened.

Step Two: Name the True Quality

This is the part most men skip, and it's the part that matters most.

Anybody can describe what a kid did. The art of being granddad is reading underneath it. What character trait, what strength, what way of being in the world would produce that action? That's the thing you're going to hand them.

Here's a truth that took me years to learn. Strengths often show up wearing ugly clothes. The stubborn kid may be a kid who won't quit. The bossy one may be a leader who hasn't been trained yet. The one who won't stop questioning the rules may have a mind built for solving problems nobody else can. A parent worn down by the behavior sees a problem. You get to see the strength underneath the problem and put a name on it.

So look past the surface. If the behavior bugs you, ask what good thing, pushed sideways, might be causing it.

And use what you know that no one else does. You know this child's parents. You know their aunts, their uncles, the ones who came before. You've seen this exact trait run in the family before, and you know where it can lead. That's history the grandchild doesn't have yet. Lend it to them.

Then say the quality out loud, plain. "You're patient." "You notice people." "You don't give up." "You've got a mind that wants to know how things work." Name it like you're sure of it, because you looked before you said it.

Step Three: Point Toward a Future (and one caution)

Now you get to do the thing only a grandfather can do. You've lived long enough to have watched people like this grandchild grow up. You know where a trait like theirs can go. So point at it.

This isn't a prophecy. You're not telling a seven-year-old what to be when she grows up. You're holding a door open and letting her see there's a room on the other side. "A person who notices when someone's hurting tends to become someone people trust their whole lives." "The way your mind works, I could see you building things, or fixing what's broken for other folks." Keep it as a possibility, not an assignment.

Now the caution, because this is where a good intention can turn into a weight.

A blessing has to be true and observed. It cannot be a wish you're pinning on the child, and it cannot be a role you want them to fill.

Here's the trap. You loved football, so you tell your grandson he's got the makings of a great athlete, when the boy's whole heart lights up over his guitar. You meant it as a gift. He hears a job he's going to fail at. A word aimed at the wrong trait doesn't bless a child. It presses on them. Kids will bend themselves into knots trying to become whatever they think will please you, so be careful what you point at.

The test is simple. Are you naming what you actually see in them, or what you'd like to see? Name what's there. Point where it could go. Then let it be.

Two Worked Examples

These aren't real kids. They're here to show you the three sentences doing their job. Watch how each one moves from what happened, to what it means, to where it could go.

Example one: Eli and the dropped plate

What Granddad saw. At the family cookout, Eli's little cousin dropped her whole plate and started to cry. Eli was up before anyone else. He didn't make a show of it. He got her a new plate, sat down next to her on the step, and had her laughing again in about a minute.

The quality underneath. Most six-year-olds would've kept eating. Eli moved toward the hurt instead of away from it. That's compassion, and it came with something rarer, the nerve to act on it without being told.

The blessing Granddad spoke. "Eli, I watched you take care of your cousin today when she dropped her plate. You didn't wait for anybody to ask. That tells me you've got a heart that notices when people are hurting, and the backbone to do something about it. I've known men like that. People trust them their whole lives. I think you're going to be one of them."

Example two: Maya and the bike

What Granddad saw. Maya spent a whole Saturday afternoon in the driveway teaching her younger brother to ride his bike. He fell, got mad, wanted to quit. She didn't let him. She kept steadying the seat and running alongside until he pedaled off on his own.

The quality underneath. That's patience, but it's more than patience. It's the refusal to give up on a person. Not everyone has that. A lot of grown adults don't.

The blessing Granddad spoke. "Maya, I saw you out there with your brother today, running beside that bike till your legs gave out. You wouldn't let him quit on himself. That's a real thing you carry. People who don't give up on other people, they make the best teachers, the best coaches, the best moms and bosses there are. I see that in you already."

Notice what neither of these does. Neither one says "good job." Neither one hands the kid a career. They name a true thing and open a door.

Build Your Blessing

Your turn. We'll build one together, for one real grandchild. Pick the grandchild whose face came to mind while you were reading. Start there.

Grandchild's name: _____

Step one. What did you see? Write one specific thing this grandchild did that stuck with you. Just the facts. No praise yet.

Step two. What quality does it reveal? Look underneath the action. What trait, strength, or way of being made them do that? Name it plain.

Step three. Where could it go? Point at a future that quality could grow into. A possibility, not an assignment.

The curse check, before you say it out loud. Read your three answers back and ask: - Is this true and something I actually saw, or is it a wish I'm pinning on them? - Am I naming who they are, or who I want them to be? - Would they recognize themselves in this?

If it passes, write the whole thing out as one short paragraph, the way you'd say it at the kitchen table:

My blessing:

There it is. That's a blessing, in your words, for a kid you love. Don't file it away. Page eleven will help you pick the moment to say it.

Two More Blessing Builders

You've got more than one grandchild. Each one needs their own. Same three steps. Do these when you're ready, one at a time. Don't rush them.

Blessing Builder (Grandchild): _____

What I saw:

The quality it reveals:

Where it could go:

My blessing:

Blessing Builder (Grandchild): _____

What I saw:

The quality it reveals:

Where it could go:

My blessing:

When and How to Say It

You wrote it. Now you have to say it, and that's where a lot of us freeze. Let me make it easier.

Say it in person if you can. Words spoken to a child's face, with your hand on their shoulder or their knee, land in a way a text never will. Touch matters more than we admit. If distance is in the way, a phone call beats a message, and a handwritten note beats nothing at all. Do the best your situation allows and don't wait for perfect.

Pick a small moment, not a stage. You don't need a graduation. Some of the best blessings get spoken on a car ride, at the end of a fishing trip, or right before bed when the house has gone still. One grandchild, no crowd, no pressure. That's plenty.

Look them in the eye and use their name. "Come here a second. I want to tell you something I noticed." Then say your three sentences. Don't rush to fill the silence after. Let it sit. It's supposed to feel like a little bit of weight.

Don't undercut it. This is the hard part for men like us. The urge to end on a joke, to rib them, to shrug it off so it isn't awkward. Resist it. Say the real thing and let it be real.

If they get embarrassed or brush it off, that's fine. They heard it. Kids remember these long after they pretend they didn't. And if you say one that turns out a little off, don't sweat it. Say a truer one down the road. The relationship is what carries the weight, not any single line.

You won't get a script. You'll get better at this. That's how it's supposed to work.

Bonus: The Seven Blessings Field Guide

The three-sentence method is one tool. In *The Art of Being Granddad*, I lay out seven kinds of blessings your family needs from you. They're grouped by the three pieces of a person's identity: where I came from, who I am, and who I can become. Here's the short version, so you know what you've got in your hands to give.

Where I came from

Heritage. The stories, values, and history you carry. You can tell your grandkids more about who they are than any DNA test can. Somewhere in your family there's a "box in the attic," a story nobody's told. Find it and tell it. *Prompt: What's one family story that would die with you if you never said it out loud?*

Faith. What you believe and why you chose it. Your grandkids need to know what anchors you, not just that something does. *Prompt: What's one thing you trust when life goes sideways, and how did you come to trust it?*

Who I am

Love. The plain, spoken message that they are loved and accepted as they are, no strings. It has to be said out loud. Being present doesn't say it for you. *Prompt: When did you last tell each grandchild, in words, that you love them?*

Transparency. Your mistakes, told honestly. As Nick puts it in the book, "My mistakes did not define me, neither do yours." The stories of your blunders often teach more than your wins. *Prompt: What failure taught you something you'd want a grandchild to know?*

Who I can become

Vision. Seeing what's possible in them before they can see it. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." (Proverbs 29:18, KJV) Your years let you spot potential a parent is too close to notice. *Prompt: What could this grandchild become that they'd never guess about themselves?*

Wisdom. Not lectures. The end of the matter. Wisdom is understanding where a road leads before you're far down it, and handing that map over. *Prompt: What's one thing you know now that you wish someone had told the younger you?*

Formal Blessing. The rare, prepared one. Spoken at a graduation, a wedding, a milestone, with your hand on them and the family listening. It's the three-sentence method dressed up for an occasion. *Prompt: What upcoming event could you speak a blessing at, if you started preparing now?*

About Nick, and Your Next Step

About Nick Stevens

Nick Stevens has spent more than eighteen years leading men's ministries and speaking about fatherhood and grandfatherhood. He holds a Master of Education from Texas A&M. He and his family put down roots in Colorado, where he's climbed more than twenty of the state's fourteen-thousand-foot peaks and used them to teach life principles.

He's a father of four and a granddad to seven. He also knows loss from the inside. In 2008, an avalanche on a Colorado peak took his daughter Lygon. Out of that grief came a conviction that has shaped the rest of his life: our words are one of the few things we can still give when time is short, and a grandfather's words carry a weight that surprises even him.

The Art of Being Granddad: 7 Blessings Your Family Needs from You is his invitation to every grandfather who ever thought he had nothing to say.

Your next step

You built one blessing today. There are six more kinds your family needs, and a whole book on how and when to give each one.

Read the book. *The Art of Being Granddad* takes the three-sentence method you just learned and opens it all the way up, one blessing at a time.

Book a Granddad Game Plan Call. If you want a second set of eyes on the blessing you wrote, or help figuring out the right moment to say it, book a short call. Bring what you drafted. We'll pressure-test it together and build a simple plan for the grandkids on your list.

You've got plenty to say. Now go say it.

Nick

