

PATRICK COOK-DEEGAN

“For the last year, Patrick has been meeting with my son regularly for mentoring sessions. In that time, Jackson has gone much further with the fledgling apparel company he started, is excited about the future, ambitious, and goal-oriented. I credit Patrick’s support and guidance in part for this transformation in my son.” – Christy White, mother of mentee

Jackson’s Story

Patrick met Jackson at a teen mindfulness retreat in northern California. Jackson was headed into his first year of high school. Patrick has now been mentoring Jackson for nearly two years. Jackson is currently in his final year of high school and applying to UC Berkeley early admissions.

LIFE VISION and PURPOSE. Patrick will explicitly ask Jackson about his goals for the future, what college he wants to attend, and his vision for his life. These discussions will address what values Jackson cherishes, what it means to live a life of purpose, and who Jackson considers his role models. Through these discussions, Jackson can help craft a vision for his life. Patrick emphasizes the importance of *leadership*, *service*, and *intellectual curiosity* in these discussions with Jackson. Often, young people have not been asked to dream big or been given many examples of how to be a creative leader in the world. These discussions help open the door to Jackson creating a vision for his life.

COACHING and GOAL SETTING. Patrick coaches Jackson to connect his long-term vision to his short-term actions. Each session, Patrick and Jackson come up with specific action-oriented goals that Jackson hopes to accomplish over the next two weeks. Examples could include: improving communication with one of his teachers, aspiring/setting intentions to get a certain amount of exercise, or initiating a tough conversation with a friend. At the beginning of each session, Patrick and Jackson check in on these goals and celebrate them if they are reached. This keeps Jackson focused on accomplishing short-term goals to keep him on track to reach his larger vision.

LEADERSHIP Jackson is a young leader. He started his own clothing line and is striving to launch a TEDx event in Oakland. Patrick uses his background in social entrepreneurship to advise Jackson on his projects and help him think through his projects strategically. This includes practical advice—working through business plans, funding sources, and outreach strategies. Discussions also include Jackson’s underlying values—what motivates him to do his various projects? How is this external work related to what is going on in his inner life?

Patrick challenges Jackson to align his values with the projects that he undertakes, emphasizing how this leads to authentic leadership.

MINFULNESS and COMPASSION MEDITATION Jackson and Patrick begin and end the sessions with 10 minutes of mindfulness meditation practice. During the opening meditation practice, Patrick guides Jackson through a series of basic mindfulness exercises including focusing on the breath and body scans. They end the sessions with gratitude and kindness mindfulness practices, helping Jackson to appreciate the gifts in his life and develop empathy for others. Developing these mindful practices has enhanced Jackson's compassion towards himself and others, become more open, and appreciative of his life. In Jackson's words, "Patrick makes me think more. He is knowledgeable, he cares about life, and he motivates me."