

Generations

What makes a good father?

I wanted to do something different for Father's Day for this column, so I did some research on the topic of what makes a good father.

There were plenty of do's and don'ts, advice from famous fathers, advice from famous sons, advice from women, advice from experts in the field, and so on. I finally decided to borrow some parts of an article on www.askmen.com. To me, the writers seemed to be right on target in responding to the question.

The first response was pretty basic: A good father loves his children, but he doesn't let them get away with murder. He strongly disapproves of his children's misdeeds, using tough love to prove a point and does this through the power of his words, not his fists.

He also doesn't reward his children for actions that are expected of them, such as helping with house chores or performing well in school. A good father realizes that his children are human, and that making mistakes is part of growing up. Spending money recklessly, getting into minor car accidents, getting drunk and sick for the first time, etc., are rites of passage, and a good father recognizes this. However, he makes it clear that repeated irresponsibility won't be tolerated.

Second, he teaches his children to appreciate things and never take what they have for granted. From the food on the table to the good education he and his wife are paying for, a good father will make his children see the value in everything they have. He doesn't let his kids treat him like an ATM.

Third, he's open-minded. He

understands that times, people and tastes change over the years, and doesn't try to maintain some gold standard of his own time. He allows his children to be citizens of their day and age.



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Fourth, he accepts that his kids aren't exactly like him. He won't expect his kids to live the same kind of life he does, and do the same kind of work. He also respects their values and opinions, as long as they don't harm the family or anyone else.

Fifth, he spends quality time with his children. He supports their endeavors in sports or the arts and makes time when he can to cheer them on. He helps with homework and listens to what his children have to say even if he disagrees.

Sixth, he's supportive and loyal. He's his children's public defender, standing up for them when needed, and waits for privacy to administer discipline. A safety net, a good father is also the person his kids turn to when things go wrong.

Next, he challenges his kids. This means giving them some liberty to face setbacks and resolve conflicts on their own.

A father molds his kids into well-rounded members of society. He especially instructs them in being honest, keeping their word, and on being thankful.

He does his best to provide security and necessities for his family and puts his own safety on the line to keep them out of harm's way. This is how a father instills in his children the importance of personal sacrifice.

The greatest quality of a good father is that he shows unconditional love. Even though he gets upset at his children's faults and may lament that they did not attain what he hoped for them, a father loves his children no less for it.

I thought this list was pretty darn good. My son, David, fits every single one of these traits as a father, and that makes me very proud.

Ending this column, I thought I'd share one other thing that I found online called "The Stages of Fatherhood," and I hope you enjoy this as much as I did. It is a narrative as seen through a child's eyes from age 4 to age 65 and beyond:

» 4 years of age — "My daddy can do anything."

» 8 years of age — "My dad knows a lot."

» 12 years of age — "My father doesn't really know quite everything."

» 14 years of age — "Naturally, Father doesn't know that, either."

» 16 years of age — "Father? He's hopelessly old-fashioned."

» 18 years of age — "That old man? He's way out of date."

» 25 years of age — "Well, he might know a little bit about it."

» 35 years of age — "Before we decide, let's get Dad's opinion."

» 45 years of age — "Wonder what Dad would have thought about it."

» 65 years of age and beyond: "Wish, I could talk it over with Dad."

Happy Father's Day to all the fathers reading this. Mine has been gone for so many years, but he continues to live in my heart.

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