



Being the Best Father You Can Be

Being a father is a great honor. You have the privilege of giving to your children a better chance at life than you had. You are entitled to teach and empower them to make a big impact in the world. It is only you that will teach your child how to enjoy and respect the other sex. It is only you who will show how a man can life with a woman and a woman with a man. What a privilege! You are in fact “en loco dei” – “on location God.”

Here are some of my thoughts about your fathering. I hope will make a difference to you.

1. Respect Your Children's Mother – You Made A Great Choice!

One of the best things a father can do for his children is to respect their mother. Say great things about your spouse If you are married. If you are no longer married, brag to your kids about the great things of former spouse. A father and mother who respect each other, and let their children know it, provide a secure environment for them.

2. Passionately And Intentionally Love Your Wife

With few positive images of husbands around, girls don't know what to look for in a man, and young men don't know how to treat a woman. When you and your wife have a conflict, show your children how two people can make up. The most important area of life you prepare your children for is marriage and family, and their best preparation is to live with a dad who loves their mom.

3. Understand The Mission of Your Family (Be An “Intentional Family”)

Your mission as a father is to present to the world a gift from your home of children who will make a difference in the world after you have gone. What is your family missions statement? Ours is to “make God proud” (our daughter Christine thought this up when she was about 10 years old).

4. Invest Time With Your Children (“Cats In The Cradle” Phenomenon”)

Kids measure love in time. They make no distinction between quality time and quantity time. Treasuring your children will mean sacrificing other things of value, but it is essential to spend time with your children. In our home I instituted days when our kids were “too well to go to school” – these were days when they knew that their Dad loved them.

5. Commit Yourself To Catch Your Kids Doing Right

In the “modern” family, the only time a father spoke to his children was when they had done something wrong. Create time to “catch” your kids doing right. “Punctuate” their successes. More than anything else this will bring them to you to talk when they are in trouble as teens.

6. Discipline Means Character Development, Not Venting Anger

All children need mentoring and discipleship (this is the root meaning of “discipline”) to chart a course for their future. I had 3 statements in “discipling / disciplining” my kids. Here they are:

- “What are you doing?” – this is to cause your child to think.
- “What should you be doing?” – this is to cause your child to make a decision to act.
- “You can do it” or “Go and do it.” – this is the father’s support and empowerment.

7. Decide Ahead Of Each Developmental Stage What You Will Teach

At what age will you teach your kids about masturbating? (“Well, if you don’t teach them, who will?”) At what age do you teach your kids about how to handle stress or rejection? At what age do you teach your child that being successful in life might not have to do with winning the big prize?

8. Break Bread Together As A Family

Sharing a regular meal together (breakfast, lunch or dinner) is an important part of healthy family life that is rapidly being lost in our postmodern culture. In addition to providing some structure in a busy day, it gives kids the chance to talk about what they are doing and want to do. It is also a good time for fathers to listen deeply. Figure out some questions that you can ask as a family pattern. Questions like – “tell us what was the most cool thing that happened to you today.” Or you could ask “what made you feel most special today?”

9. Brag, Gossip, Exaggerate Your Love For Your Kids

Children need the security that comes from knowing they are wanted, accepted and loved by their family. Parents, especially fathers, need to feel both comfortable and willing to kiss and hug their children. Showing affection every day is the best way to let your children know that you love them.

10. You Can Give Your Children Lifelong Self-Worth – So Do It

How your children perceive their worth in dad's eyes powerfully influences their lives. My mother has been a phenomenal influence in my life. But when my dad would say, "Son, you did just great!" that meant so much to me! A man makes a lasting mark on his kids' lives when he gives them acceptance, affirmation, affection (the 3 A's of emotional parenting).