

Five Things Every Dad Should Know

Jim Daly
Jul 10, 2013

When I was an eight-year-old boy, I looked to Hank, the father figure in my life, for all the things the other kids my age seemed to enjoy with their dads. Sadly, Hank wasn't willing to be engaged in my life. He adored my mom, but my siblings and I were simply excess baggage. While my mother was affectionate and nurturing, Hank's love for us was missing in action. As a youngster longing for a strong, caring father figure in my life, it would have gone a long way toward forging a close bond between Hank and my siblings and me if he had:

1. *Shown us appropriate affection*

Children crave hugs, kisses, and even casual contact that communicates, "I love you, and I'm happy to be with you." These simple indications of tenderness and affection play a significant role in developing security and confidence in kids.

2. *Given us words of affirmation*

Nothing can bring a smile to a child's face faster than a sincere compliment by a parent. When moms and dads encourage their children by noticing and commenting on particular skills, accomplishments, and positive character traits, they're helping build into their kids' lives and hearts words that will help sustain them through life's toughest times.

3. *Pursued activities with us such as fishing, hiking/walks, sports*

Kids love nothing more than spending quality, uninterrupted time with their parents. Now that I'm a father, I realize how priceless it is to carve out the time to camp, fish, hike, or even just jump on the trampoline with my boys. This expresses to our kids that they are more valuable to us than the myriad day-to-day responsibilities we have on our plates.

4. *Taken the time to offer advice*

Children desperately need the benefit of their parents' perspective and life experience, even if they won't always admit it! Kids long for those heart-to-heart conversations that make them feel safe and loved in the midst of the ups and downs of growing up.

5. *Provided biblical guidance and wisdom*

This is unquestionably the most crucial thing we can do as parents. As Deuteronomy 6:6-7 instructs us: "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." We sow eternal seeds in our kids' hearts when we place Jesus Christ at the forefront of all we do and say.

Dads, like my childhood experiences, the father figure in your life may not have done it all correctly, either. But I hope you'll take heart that, whatever your upbringing, you can engage in your kids' lives and move forward with purpose and a renewed sense of direction.

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