

Timeless Transformations

Fathers Are the Foundation of a Great Solid Family

I love special days like Father's Day. It gives us a specific time during the year to reflect on a particular event, person, or relationship. So of course today, I am going to reflect on your dad! I've always had mixed feelings about Father's Day. You girls know the story. My real dad died and I never knew him. My adopted dad had little to offer in the 12 years that I was with him. Curley had his hands full with six kids of his own that he couldn't take care of. So my experience with fathers is limited, however we can learn as much about life and relationships by what we don't have.

So I ask myself - what is a great dad? That is an easy question to ask but complex to answer. Much of what we have in our minds about what great dads do or don't do is based on our own experiences. As we grow into adulthood, we need a greater context to see our parents in a broader light, including the experience of being parents ourselves.

There are tons of reasons why your dad is so special. I believe one of the reasons for me is that I learned what a great dad is at the same time as you, because I had never been around one. Now that you are in your twenties and will have children in the near future, I thought I would collect my thoughts about how much I admire your dad as me being "the other parent."

1. I admired your dad's ways of **discipline**. As a mom, I knew he was there to do the difficult work for me. I knew he loved you but he wouldn't let you get away with anything that went against what we truly believed was important. He was great about finding ways to prove his point through the power of his words. He enforced rules that were fair.
2. I respected how he **let you make your own mistakes**. He knew that was part of growing up. At the same time, he made it clear that repeating the same mistake over and over would not be tolerated. He provided opportunities for you to learn and grow.
3. I valued his **open-mindedness**. He never tried to maintain some gold standard. He was flexible, and as he learned with each one of you, he changed for the better.
4. I loved how he **appreciated small things**. He knew the value of cooking a great meal, fishing from the pier, watching the sunset, playing with the cats and dogs, and just relaxing around the house. He enjoyed playing with you in the yard, just as he will with his grandchildren. He was just as happy at home with you three as he would be anywhere in the world. He never needed a vacation because being with you was vacation enough.
5. I liked how he **did not expect** you to live the same kind of life as his or do the same kind of work. He respected your opinions and wouldn't hesitate to challenge you if your expectations were different. In the end however, he let you set expectations for yourself, and he supported you always.
6. I treasured how he would **spend quality time** with you. It was always a priority for him to take the time to listen to you, have casual conversations, or help you with your homework, every night if that is what it took. He always put your interests first, always above his. He spent every spare moment of his time, catering to your needs. He was one of the best at being present and enjoying the moment.
7. I admired that he **led by example**. He taught honesty by being honest. He taught hard work by working hard. He taught respect by giving respect. He taught how to deal with conflict by being firm but reasonable. He set examples of good behavior. He kept it simple: Don't be Lazy and Don't Lie. He lives it.

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8. I cherished how **loyal** he was to our family. If I didn't know anything else in our lives, I knew our needs, our safety; our life came first, above his. I have never known anyone that is more reliable and committed than him. If he said he would be there – he was there. If he said he would do something for you, come hell or high water, it would be done. No doubts or no questions. What a great way to be brought up!
9. I knew he was your **defender**. He was there to stand up for you. You knew you could turn to him if anything went wrong and no matter what, he would give 100% of his time and energy. You better not let anyone take advantage of you because he would be all over them, even if it were the president of the United States. No position or level of authority would stop him.
10. I admired how he wanted you **to be the best you could be**. He gave you challenges to help you develop into responsible women. This meant giving you some freedom to face setbacks and resolve conflicts on your own. He developed independence in you so you had the confidence to follow your dreams and ambitions.
11. I appreciated his willingness to **sacrifice** his needs. The best example is with our vehicles. To this day, he still hasn't bought himself a new or semi-new truck or car. He is the example of personal sacrifice. I always know that he stayed with Exxon and retired, as a commitment to our family!
12. I loved how we felt **safe** at all times. He was your protector from the first day you were born. You knew if there was an intruder or anyone that tried to take advantage of us, that person was as good as dead. Your dad would not hesitate to spend every last day of his life in jail or face the death penalty, if that is what it took to keep us safe.
13. I felt he showed **unconditional love** at all times. This is one of the greatest qualities of a good father. Even if he was upset with any of you, he loved you no less. I bet you can never think of a time that you doubted that he loved you. You always knew it from the depth of your heart.
14. I longed for the type of father-daughter **affection** that he showed you. He was never afraid to show affection with his hugs and kisses. He loved to kiss your cheeks and hands when you were young, just as he appreciates your hugs and kisses now. He jumped at the opportunity to bond because he knew it was the beginning of starting a life-long close relationship with you. He understood that his relationship with you was one of the first healthy emotional relationships that you would have. He took that seriously.
15. I admired how he was **unconventional** in parenting. He didn't expect me to do the things that are traditionally considered "mom" duties - changing diapers, feeding, bathing, etc. He was there to help out as much as he could. He was completely up to sharing any type of household chore as equally as possible.
16. I love how he taught you to **regard yourself with high self-esteem**. He did this by making you feel valued, worthy, encouraged, and confident. He taught self-discipline because he expected you to work and help around the house. Some of the skills he taught were useful skills that required good old common "horse" sense. He created the desire in you to be helpful.

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17. I appreciated his steadfast outlook on saving for the future and **protecting our financial resources**. Though I accused him of being frugal, I knew he had thousands of dollars saved back for us if we needed it. I knew he had health and life insurance. That is a sense of safety that creates peaceful living.
18. Most of all, a treasured how he showed you how much **he loved me**. You know your dad loves me. You have never seen him flirt with another woman or even look at another. You know he loves me more than any other women in the world, and he thinks I'm the most beautiful. :) My greatest hope is that when you are "the other parent" – your children will know this too. I love this quote: "*One of the most important things a father can do for the family is love the mother.*"

I chose 18 key admirations, and I could have gone on and on, but 18 is the age when you are an adult. These 18 admirations are what have set the foundation for our family. I can only hope as you have children in your future – where you will become "the other parent" - you can experience these great admirations with your children's father. Mothers are the glue that binds the family together. **Fathers are the foundation of a great solid family.**

Your dad and I love you more than all the breaths we have left in our lives – Love Mom