

The Top 10 Qualities of a Real Dad

When you think of fatherhood, what comes to mind? A strict disciplinarian who rarely spends time with his children? Or do you think of a devoted, loving, interactive dad?

Dads can sometimes get a bad rap due to the stereotype of the “deadbeat dad who leaves the family to follow his own pursuits” or the “...wait until your father gets home” kind of dad that instills fear in a child awaiting punishment. Most dads don’t fit in these categories however I met a man the other day who acted so stereotypically that I was spurred into writing this article about fatherhood.

My husband I were at a social function with other families. One man caught my eye because he had three little girls with him. After introductions he explained his wife was out of town for several days and she had left him alone to care for the kids. We complimented him on how well behaved his children were to which he replied, “Well, I don’t ever take care of them....I mean, this has to be the first time I’ve ever been alone with them....it’s not MY job...my wife normally is the one to do that...” The man then drinks from his can of beer and says, “That’s why I have to have a couple of beers just to get through this afternoon”. My first thought was, “Why are you making excuses in caring for your kids?” and then I thought, “...and WHY are you saying this in front of them?” He made it sound as though fathering these kids was so difficult and bothersome. I felt sorry for the children because I know they had heard it. It’s sad enough that dad has his own issues about parenting his kids. It’s sadder yet, when his children may ask themselves, “what’s wrong with me that dad is so

quick to deny that he cares for us?”

This month we celebrate the role dads play in our lives and in the lives of our children. Children relish the time they spend with their dads. They look up to them for guidance, nurturance, and acceptance.

So, to all of you dads out there, Listen up! You are extremely important to your children. You are the role model for your daughter who may marry a man just like you. You are the role model for your son who is learning how to treat his own children. You help form their identities and how they feel about themselves. True, fatherhood is no easy task. However, it is a role that should be celebrated and not denied.

How do you rate as a Father? Are you a real man about it? Here are the Top 10 Qualities every real Dad possesses:

1) AFFECTIONATE Children love to be loved—especially by their daddy. Expressing affection by hugging, kissing and holding hands are just some of the ways you can show how much your children meant to you.

2) INTERACTIVE Whether it is reading a book to them or playing a game, kids don’t really care what you do with them. They just love the interaction with you.

3) ENCOURAGING Help your children to get involved by encouraging them to play sports, join clubs, play an instrument, volunteer, excel in academics, etc.

4) FUNNY Show your kids the lighter side of life. Playing games, telling jokes, and just acting goofy help you bond with your children and enjoy each other’s humorous sides.

5) CARING Teach your children to care about themselves, starting with

yourself. Exercising and living a healthy lifestyle promote those same qualities in your kids.

6) RESPONSIBLE Model good behavior by admitting your responsibility in your actions. Giving excuses or being defensive show children ways of being irresponsible for their own behavior.

7) RESPECTFUL Respect those around you. Raise your kids to respect adults, authority figures, and women.

8) STRUCTURED Even though you may hear your kids complain of the rules you set forth, they actually appreciate them. Children need boundaries and look to you to set them—and enforce them.

9) EMOTIONAL Real men do cry. They get sad, scared, mad, nervous, happy, etc. Show your kids it’s okay to express your feelings. Most people who turn to drugs and alcohol do so because they *don’t* know how to show emotions.

10) SPECIAL Who doesn’t love to feel special? Show your children how important they are to you by going on special outings with them and taking the time to be alone each one.

Of course, the list of qualities could actually go much further. However, these Top 10 Qualities are the core ingredients in being a genuine dad. Embrace your role as a parent! Happy Fathers Day to all of you!

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