

Dads, Hang in There Through Christmas Chaos

Does your family take a Christmas photo every year? Oh the memories!

And sometimes, oh the *headache*.

Last year, we managed to get all our kids and grandkids together in the same location, dressed just right for the perfect portrait. But you know how kids are ...

Most of our grandkids are toddlers and preschoolers, so if I said it was chaos, that might be putting it mildly. What I remember was kids melting down, running off in the wrong direction, or just about falling asleep. Then, a diaper change and a mess on a sweater.

I mean, is it even worth the hassle for a photo?

Those thoughts did go through my mind that day. And I might be overstating it a bit, but for a while it was not fun. And as a granddad, I wasn't even involved in most of it.

But when I saw the photo, I never would have known there were all those challenges. Everyone looked great! And 10 or 20 years from now when I look at that photo, I'm sure I won't even remember what that day was like. I'll just be thinking about my amazing grandkids and how they've grown and changed, and I'll be wondering where those precious years went.

If your family is anything like mine, there are a lot of holiday events and activities like that. You anticipate the "perfect" meal or evening or outing, but things go wrong. The kids argue and fight. Or there's a blizzard. Or you can't get in to see the Christmas play. One thing builds on the last, and pretty soon you wonder if it's even worth it.

Well, I'm here to tell you, it is.

In many ways, I think our kids' memories are like that photo. What they remember in the years ahead is going to be better than what you may feel at the time as the dad. It might be hard for you to get past today's challenges, but I urge you to "see the bigger picture" ... so to speak.

So expect a little chaos. But also expect a great family time this Christmas. Invest yourself 100 percent in connecting with family members and bringing home genuine joy for them.

When things go wrong—and they will—you don't have to worry so much or get stressed out. Just smile, keep rolling with it, and look forward to the next thing on your schedule.

Action Points for Dads on the Journey

- Think proactively during the next week. How can you help your kids—and their mom—be well-rested, calm, and content during your family events?
- Whether or not you take a formal family photo, get lots of candids. Have a contest with your kids for the silliest holiday-related shots.
- Spend an evening going through old photos and/or videos—and talking about the memories—as a family.

Guys, please share your experiences. What's the most stressful family event for you? And how do you make the best of it? Give your feedback either below or on below.

Carey Casey is the CEO of the National Center for Fathering, a nonprofit organization dedicated to changing the culture of fathering in America by enlisting 6.5 million fathers to make the Championship Fathering Commitment.

For the original article, visit [here](#).