

Dads, What Do Your Kids Think of You?

Here at the National Center for Fathering, we consider it “Father’s Day season” as soon as Mother’s Day is over. Among other things, our staff is finishing up interviews with dads and making arrangements for celebration events in several areas of the country related to our Father of the Year essay contests.

These contests give kids opportunities to write about their dads, and we’re always amazed at the remarkable, heartfelt things they write. We probably don’t pass along the great essays often enough.

So, even though we’re still a month out from Father’s Day, I want to share one girl’s essay to help you start getting in the right frame of mind—not so you can swell up with pride, but so you can make this “season” a time to recommit yourself to be the father your children really need.

As you might know, our purpose is to inspire and equip dads. But I’ll tell you up front—this week is pure inspiration. I think you’ll agree.

In this essay, a sixth-grader named Abigail does a wonderful job of capturing the love and appreciation kids feel for their dads, like what your child surely feels for you.

So, just soak this in today. Abigail writes:

My dad makes me feel loved. I can always count on my dad. He makes me laugh so hard. Most of the time, my dad’s actions speak louder than life.

My dad is a short, stubby man, but his smile goes from the east to the west. He makes really, really bad jokes, but we

always laugh. He acts sometimes (imitates) singers and even tries to dance. But he makes his imitations really bad on purpose to make us laugh. He laughs at things I say even if they're not meant to be funny. That makes me laugh.

My dad has all the qualities of a great guy. He's so truthful, honorable, and trustworthy. I can always count on him. He even understands what I'm talking about most of the time.

My dad sees everyone for who they are. He won't judge people but always learns their personalities first. He helps people he doesn't know, and he's always nice to strangers. My dad is kind and always helpful.

My dad is awesome, fantastic, and phenomenal. I love my dad. He's far from perfect, but far past amazing.

Now, after reading this, I was humbled as a dad. And two things came to mind that challenged me.

First, it reminded me that our kids are always watching us. They see the good and the not-so-good in our lives. They know we're far from perfect. And we never know what will register in their minds as significant or even life-changing. That's the power and the great responsibility of our modeling.

And second, I hope this draws out the best in you as a dad, like it does in me. Like Abigail's dad, we make a difference when we make our kids laugh, show kindness to people and prove ourselves to be trustworthy. Our general disposition has a powerful effect on our children—whether they are tiny infants or teens whom we may have to look up to. Be a joyful father, and let it show!

Fatherhood is a high calling, and something to live up to. I hope you'll find ways to be "far past amazing" for your kids today.

Action Points for Dads on the Journey

- Do something crazy to have fun with your kids and make them laugh. Do karaoke. Start a water fight, or a pillow fight, or a food fight! Play dress-up. Have a whistling contest after eating saltine crackers. Use your own idea. (Then let us know how it went.)
- Write an essay about how much you appreciate each of your children, and show it to them (or save it for Father's Day).
- What would your children say is your biggest weakness as a dad? (If you don't know, ask them!) Be intentional about working on that area during the next month ... and beyond.
- How do you treat restaurant servers and other people in service positions during day-to-day interactions? Remember, your children are always watching and learning.
- Come up with a "Father's Day wish list" that includes a lot of activities with family and gifts of time—along with or instead of expensive gadgets.

What challenges you about this essay? Or when have you been inspired or challenged as a dad because of something your child said or wrote to you? Please let us (and other dads) know by leaving a comment below.

Carey Casey is the CEO of the National Center for Fathering (NCF), a nonprofit organization dedicated to changing the culture of fathering in America by enlisting 6.5 million fathers to make the Championship Fathering Commitment. NCF believes every child needs a dad they can count on, and it uses its resources to inspire and equip men to be the involved fathers, grandfathers and father-figures their children need. Subscribe to Casey's weekly email tip by clicking [here](#): I want tips on how to be a great dad who loves, coaches, mentors and inspires his children.

For the original article, visit .