

# How to Find Your Fathering Comfort Zone

Do you ever feel lost or out of place as a father?

New dads almost always feel intimidated by the idea of having a child. No one is ever quite prepared for such a radical change. (And that's why we produced our free e-book, *Forming a Lifelong Bond*.)

Even more experienced dads can go through this—I know I still do. Challenges come along, and we freeze up or just avoid the situation. Or we try the first thing that comes to mind, which isn't always the best approach.

Being a dad is challenging, but it shouldn't be terrifying, aggravating or painful. Millions of guys make the necessary adjustments and do great with their kids, and so can we.

So, for dads in any situation or any stage along the journey, here's my word of encouragement: Be *comfortable* in who you are as a dad. And I'm not talking about sitting around in your easy chair all day.

As I see it, being comfortable as a dad requires a balance of two ideas:

- 1. You play an important role.** Dads make a huge difference in their kids' lives. Your children do better when you're present and fully engaged. And they might not admit it or even realize it, but they look up to you; they depend on you. So you should stand tall and be confident that you can handle the challenges that come your way, and you can adjust to meet your child's changing needs as he grows. Be optimistic, believing that you *will* grow in your commitment and in the various roles of fatherhood.

**2. Stay humble.** Do this while embracing the important role and the power you have as a father. Being comfortable in who you are as a dad means you're okay with the notion that you're still learning and growing. You'll never know it all, and you'll never be perfect, and that's okay; you can live with that.

In my home, I ask my wife and my son lots of questions as I keep learning how to be the loving dad I need to be. I need their help! So I periodically ask them how I can be a better dad, and I try to really listen to what they say. I have to be comfortable hearing that maybe I'm not doing so well in this or that area. I can't take it personally or throw in the towel.

Being a great dad is a continuing process, and I'm growing comfortable with the good and the bad in my fathering. I guess that's where maturity and patience come in.

So there you go: Embrace the importance of your role as a father, and accept the idea that you're a work-in-progress. Laugh at yourself! Be quick to apologize and seek forgiveness. Keep listening and keep learning.

Get comfortable, and settle in for the long haul. Being a dad is a lifelong responsibility and privilege.

Do you feel comfortable as a father? Did it come naturally or require a lot of growth on your part? We'd like to get your feedback—either below or on our Facebook page.

### **Action Points for Dads on the Fathering Journey**

- Take the initiative in some way to build a stronger relationship with each of your family members—even if it involves something that's out of your comfort zone.
- What's your plan to keep growing as a father? We believe one of your biggest assets in that regard is the other men around you. Read more.

- Summer reading suggestion: Read a book that helps you address an area of personal growth, such as communication, self-discipline, anger management, fathering, etc. (We have some suggestions here.)
- Ask your children and their mom to suggest one way you can improve as a dad. Really listen, and don't take it personally.
- Are you planning some time away with your family this summer? Those times provide some great opportunities to soak in the joys of being a dad (and sometimes the trials). Here's an article from our online library about this.

**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 who to make the Championship Fathering Commitment. NCF believes that every child needs a dad they can count on, and uses its resources to inspire and equip men to be the involved fathers, grandfathers and father figures their children need. Subscribe to his weekly email tip by clicking here: ["Yes! I want tips on how to be a great dad who loves, coaches, mentors, and inspires my children."](#)

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