

One-On-One Time With Your Kids Produces Fruit

I have a Father's Day challenge for you this week. (I'm giving you some lead time to think about how you can apply it.)

Here it is: Start one new habit that will make a difference with your family.

Think about one change you can make that will benefit your children or bring you closer to them, and then let Father's Day be a time when you make a strong resolution to be that dad going forward.

Let me give you one example of the power this can have. This comes from a dad and granddad named Gary who read the guest blog from a few weeks back about dating your daughter, and he sent us his story.

It started two decades ago, when Gary attended a fathering seminar presented by our founder, Dr. Ken Canfield. After the seminar, Gary was inspired to start a new habit with his two kids: regular one-on-one lunch dates with his daughter and his son at least once a month. Through the years, he was faithful with those monthly lunch dates—not perfect, but he kept them going.

Now, I know that's nothing earth-shattering or over-the-top creative, but it's a great idea and one you might want to try. One-on-one time is extremely valuable in a world that's getting way too busy—for dads *and* kids. The two of you get a chance to escape the frenzy of life and talk about anything, from serious to silly. If you're a man of faith, maybe you would want to include a prayer for your child and his or her future.

I think you'll find that your child will look forward to that

time with you. Kids open up more and relate differently when it's just the two of you. It doesn't have to break the budget either. On a nice day, a brown bag lunch in the park is a great option. (See the Action Points below for more specific suggestions.)

To finish Gary's story, his kids are now in their early 30s. His daughter is married and has two children of her own, and they still live nearby, so Gary still has a regular "lunch date" with her.

And that's cool, but you know what's even better? Gary's daughter's *husband* is doing it, too! Inspired by his father-in-law, he takes his 7-year-old daughter out to lunch on Saturdays.

And not long ago, Gary's son and his bride had their first child, a baby boy. Already this new dad is talking about starting a "lunch time" with his son—just like Gary did for all those years and still does today.

This is the kind of thing I get excited about, because I believe this is an example of how, little by little, championship fathering will change the world for the better. Simple, everyday acts of love and commitment really make a difference in your family.

So, what habit can you start as a father this year that could become a pattern, a way of life, and maybe even be carried on in the next generation? Or maybe you're already doing something that could inspire other dads. Please let us (and other dads) know by leaving a comment below.

Action Points for Dads on the Journey

- Schedule these regular one-on-one times with your child. Don't let your good intentions fall to the side when other, supposedly more urgent matters come along.
- Lunch works great with most girls and some boys, but

often boys communicate better “sideways”—when they’re next to you while doing an activity. So consider making that part of your regular time together.

- Whatever your one-on-one time looks like with your child, think about doing it somewhere other than home. Changing the setting can help your child relax and open up more.
 - If necessary—like with teenagers—fit into their schedule. If lunch doesn’t work, do an early breakfast or late-night ice cream run.
 - Even if you don’t spend much (or any) money on these outings, find ways to make them special, so your child looks forward to it each time.
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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.

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