

# The Greatest Lesson Spirit-Led Dads Can Teach Their Kids

As parents, we often wonder what our children observe and learn from us. We strive to be good examples, say the right things and explain right from wrong when we have a teachable moment.

We demonstrate our faith and, probably most importantly, let our actions speak louder than our words. Our kids learn most from what they see us do and whether our words and our actions align. Many times, parents have told me they have no right to prevent their kids from doing something wrong because they know that they themselves have done the same thing.

Irrespective, there can be an admission of the wrong, an explanation of why it was a mistake and a teachable moment. But a lot of folks find it easier just to get along. Lesson learned, but probably not the lesson that should be taught.

When I was asked to write about the greatest lesson I've taught my son, a lot of thoughts went through my mind. But none is more important than the ones he remembers. So, I asked him for the greatest among them. His answer surprised me because it was introspective, deep and, at the same time, organic.

He didn't say, *"Oh, it was that time I got in trouble for..."* He said I taught him the following four traits:

–Sacrifice.

–Self-awareness.

–Selflessness.

–Service.

He learned how fortunate we are as a family to be able to serve others. He saw by example a servant's heart. Serving others always has been part of our family DNA. We serve others not only during the holidays but year-round. We serve our family. We serve strangers. We serve those who want to get better at what they do. There is always someone around, someone on the phone, someone in need. Just during everyday life, we serve others as a matter of family culture.

My son picked up on this, and now, as a college student away from home, he sees it as the greatest lesson he learned. There was no one time that I sat him down and said, "The greatest lesson you'll ever learn is in these five words: service, selflessness, sacrifice to others." No, this wasn't an "aha" moment. This was the accumulation of our words and deeds over the years, the gleanings of watching, listening and doing. I tried to take advantage of every teachable moment.

You see, we are a family of faith. The Bible says it is more blessed to give than to receive and that faith is demonstrated by a person's deeds. I am truly blessed that my son has learned this great lesson so early in his life.

It is also a great blessing to see that he was taught by the sum of our words and deeds. There is a great lesson that your son is learning as well. He can see where your words and your actions intersect in life. It's often when we are not even aware that the greatest lesson is being taught.

**Sound off:** What is the greatest lesson you have taught your kids? {eoa}

**Troy Vincent**—*highly respected by business, sports, political and community leaders—earned countless accolades including the NFL Walter Payton Man of the Year Award, NFL Players Association Byron Whizzer White Award, Sporting News No. 1 Good Guy and NFL Athletes in Action Bart Starr Award. He is the only player to have ever received all four in the history*

*of professional football. In addition, Sporting News named him on the 35 or Younger Most Powerful People in Sports and Ebony magazine recognized him as one of the 50 Most Influential People in Sports.*

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