

Want to Be Remembered as a Good Dad? Then Stay Focused on These 5 Tips

I was driving back home when I received the news I had been dreading. A year and a half prior, my close friend Mike called me to tell me he had cancer. Now I received the message that he was gone, leaving behind a lovely wife and two beautiful daughters. A day after I received the news, I flew out to gather with his friends and family to celebrate his life. The experience of losing someone close makes you evaluate the life you are living. One of the most powerful thoughts that emerged was that this life is a vapor. It moves incredibly fast yet is richly significant. I thought about how I would want to be remembered.

Many people spoke at Mike's memorial. A theme developed. He had led a powerfully full life that was driven by relationships. Most of all, he adored his wife and daughters, who will always remember him as a remarkable person who loved them faithfully. We all want to be remembered that way by our children. I learned a lot from my friend. Here are five ways to be remembered as a good father.

1. Just be.

Well before he was married and had kids, Mike knew what type of husband and father he wanted to be. So he put these two words on his bulletin board. It was a reminder to him daily to be that man. Don't wait. Give yourself daily reminders to be the father you want to be.

2. Listen instead of lecture.

Anytime someone spoke with Mike, the focus would inevitably come back to the other person. He wanted to hear what was

going on with them. He focused his attention, asked open-ended questions and spent hours listening to others. In his final moments, the hospital halls were lined with people he had impacted because they felt cared for. Listen to your kids and know what they are feeling and thinking.

3. Be a builder.

He was a builder of people and community. He not only encouraged but came alongside people to help them. It was never "You can do it;" it was "We can do it." Problems were opportunities for people to come together. Let your kids know you are in it with them. Encourage them and build their confidence. Connect your family together and with others.

4. Be a memory maker.

Whether it was fishing, golf, sitting around a fire pit, weekends away, playing, road trips, vacations or other activities, Mike was always making memories. He knew there was value in doing things together, and he consistently initiated it. Take your kids with you when you do the things you love. Plan activities with them that they will remember and talk about for years.

5. Live each day as if it's the full final day.

There is a movie called *About Time*. It's about a father and son who can travel back in time within their own life. The father gives the son the advice of living every day twice. Live it the first time with all of the stress and concerns that tend to blind us of the wonder of each day. Then live it a second time soaking up all of the joyful details we often miss. The son eventually stops doing that, choosing to, as he says, "...enjoy (each day) like it was the full final day of (his) extraordinary, ordinary to relish the remarkable ride."

What daily things in your life give you the most joy? {eo}

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This article originally appeared at .