

What Do Your Kids Want to Learn From You?

One of the main goals of my blog is to encourage and challenge readers to make the most of every opportunity they have with their children, because our time with them is fleeting.

They grow up so fast, and before we know it they're moving out and getting on with their lives. Also, it's sobering but true: None of us have a guarantee that we'll be here tomorrow. You never know when something tragic could happen.

I'm not telling you all this to bring you down, but to remind you how important it is to have your priorities straight. It's too easy to get caught up in the busyness of life and coast along.

A while back, I heard about a great idea from a committed father named Bob—a way to be purposeful about the time he has left with his three sons at home. Part of living out that commitment includes leading regular family meetings, where everyone has a chance to talk about what's going on and share any concerns they may have.

One day Bob came to the family time with this exercise: Each of the boys had to come up with five things they wanted to learn before they leave home. Bob and his wife came up with five things they thought their sons needed to learn as well.

By the next meeting, the boys had listed things like how to fix various things on the car, how to manage their time, how to find a job, how to cook eggs and French toast and how to fix or replace a faucet.

What would your kids say? Maybe it's time to ask.

I know teenagers often act like they already know everything,

but eventually all kids realize that they don't. They'll leave home one day, and there's a lot of information and skills they'll need if they're going to do well on their own.

A big part of our job is coaching them now as we prepare them for that time. There are hundreds or even thousands of things our children need to see and do and learn, and as dads, we're in the best position to teach them many of those things. It's a never-ending task, so we need to get started.

So, your No. 1 action point for today is to follow Bob's lead and ask your kids what they want to learn from you. Start with five things for now—you can always add to them later—or start a new list once you have the first one checked off.

It's a great exercise to help get some specific goals in front of you for each of your kids. And it might help you keep them as a high priority and make the most of every opportunity you have with them.

I'll also mention that there are several helpful books that go hand in hand with today's topic, and you might want to check them out: *1001 Things Your Kids Should See and Do (or Else They'll Never Leave Home)* and *1001 Things Every Teen Should Know Before They Leave Home (or Else They'll Come Back)*.

What are the most important things you've taught your children—and what do they still want to learn from you? Please tell us in the discussion section below.

Action Points for Dads on the Journey

- Talk with your children's mother about an age-appropriate goal or skill for each of your children to learn (and for you to work on with them) during the next month—tying shoelaces, doing dishes, mowing the grass, finding useful information on the Internet, checking the air in the car's tires, etc.
- Give your children a glimpse of your budget and regular

bills you pay so they gain a better understanding of how much it costs just to keep the lights on and food in the pantry.

- No matter what your child's age, recruit him or her to assist you this weekend as you take care of a routine home maintenance task.
- Help your kids find authors that they love to read.

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