

Why Do We Often Choose the Rich and Famous as Our Role Models?

It is easy to look at celebrities, athletes or anyone famous and say, "I want to be like them." More often than not, we look to those who are well-known and we hold them up to be role models, but are they really the best examples for us to follow?

While athletes do spectacular things on the athletic field, and celebrities may be talented actors or actresses, does that mean they are the ones who should become the role models in our own lives or our children's lives? More often than not the answer is no.

While this is a generalization and there are always exceptions to the rule, in most cases athletes and celebrities are self-consumed and focused on a singular goal: success. Little gets in the way as they hone their craft, working diligently to become better at what they do. Though a strong work ethic is more than admirable and developing discipline is a necessary part of growing older, holding celebrities and athletes to this high standard of a role model is not practical.

More than that, it raises the question of why we choose those who are famous to be our role models. Is it because they are celebrated and have reached a higher social status, or is it because they have qualities and character attributes that we want to emulate?

The problem for us is that those we most often aspire to be like are usually from a different socio-economic level. Unfortunately, the wealth that we observe among well-known athletes and Hollywood idols has significant influence on who we would most like to be.

Someone who is wealthy, or is well-known, does not by default mean they are people after whom we should model our lives. In fact, when our definition becomes mostly about what we aspire to have and not who we ultimately want to be, the role model we have set before us is ourselves.

Of late, we as parents have failed to teach our children what a real role model looks like.

A real role model:

1. Has qualities that we would like to have or keep.
2. Is someone who we aspire to be like and is noticeable for how they live their lives.
3. Impacts us and makes us want to be better people.

So what are you going to do and what example are you following? Do they align? If these are not just words, then here are some steps to being a role model for your children and others.

1. Know who you are. That means you will want to have friends who are not pretending to be something they are not.

2. Be unique. It is more than fine to be different. That does not mean being different just for the sake of being different. Instead, it is being comfortable with who you are. One of the most liberating moments in life is when you come to grips with your own weaknesses and you are OK with them.

3. Be kind and focused more on others than yourself. Learn how to give credit to others and notice the example they set. Live in such a way that your life can be seen and respected so that it may be said of you: "Who can argue with a life so well lived?"

God is our Father, and He provides us a picture of how we should father our children. Ephesians 5:1 says, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children."

Drew Read, COO of the Paul Anderson Youth Home in Vidalia, Georgia, is a passionate advocate for youth and strongly believes that the home is the foundation of society. Drew frequently speaks and writes on the topics of identity, technology, culture and high-risk behaviors affecting today's youth. Learn more about the services PAYH provides and its familySTRONG resources at ."