

DADS ONLY

Tips for Being a Top Loving Dad or Father Figure

“Here’s the core message: loving your kids is more than a vague feeling of benevolent kindness. Love is something you do.”

— Steve Biddulph, *The New Manhood*

Boy psychology:

- I seek acknowledgment.
- I want it all for me.
- Power is for my benefit.
- I am the centre of the universe.
- I believe I am immortal.
- I take no responsibility for my actions.
- I want a mother.

– Source: Dr Arne Rubinstein, *The Making of Men*

Healthy man psychology:

- I seek that which I believe in.
- I share with my community.
- Power is for the good of all.
- I am just part of the universe.
- I know I am mortal.
- I take full responsibility for my actions.
- I want a relationship with a woman.

Dads & Daughters:

“Many men do not realise the profound and long lasting impact their relationship has in shaping their daughter’s life, particularly her relationships with men. From her father a daughter learns self-respect and acceptance, how to relax around and be affectionate with men without being sexual, that men and women can negotiate fairly and what to expect from a male-female relationship.”

— Bruce Robinson, *Daughters and Dads*

You are your daughter’s first love.

Daughters need dads to help them learn about relationships and the most profound one she learns is the one with herself. A girl’s self-esteem is largely determined by her relationship with her Dad.

Tips

- ✓ Dad dates
- ✓ Dad teach their girls “boy” stuff too
- ✓ Ask your daughter how to be a better Dad
- ✓ Protect her from the sexualised world
- ✓ Never be afraid to shed a few tears
- ✓ Tell her again and again how much you value, accept and love her
- ✓ Value and encourage her character, sense of humour, physical aptitude and her ability to learn, strive and set big goals.

Dads & Sons:

“Every boy needs a dad to ‘download the software’ of how to be a man.”

– Steve Biddulph

The Boy Code: Four Injunctions

1. The sturdy oak
2. Give ‘em hell
3. The big wheel
4. No sissy stuff

– by William Pollack (1998)

Boys often process information differently

- ✓ Prefer to do - Ikea?
- ✓ Single focus
- ✓ Listening??
- ✓ They hear less, up to 70%
- ✓ Get ‘information overload’
- ✓ Memory issues
- ✓ Gentle reminders
- ✓ Have shorter attention spans — dopamine levels
- ✓ Need greater stimulation
- ✓ Growth spurts

Connecting with Kids:

Separation can be bridged – building love bridges with your children

Micro-moments of connection with parents

Help parents be with their child, e.g.:

- ✓ Welcoming – farewell rituals – whistling!
- ✓ Bedtime rituals
- ✓ Record readable stories & messages
- ✓ Take a bite out of toast, sandwich
- ✓ Notes in lunchbox, on bathroom mirror
- ✓ Allow body connections
- ✓ Making memories that matter – stars, rain, fishing, pets, walking,
- ✓ Join them on the couch, in cubby
- ✓ Spontaneous hugs, cuddles and tickles
- ✓ Launch a ‘surprise bedroom attack’ (not for the faint-hearted).

Emotional overwhelm drowns boys (& this can carry into manhood).

Many boys feel deeply flawed and a failure; they believe that those closest to them do not love them. They feel completely misunderstood.

ANGER IS OFTEN THE DEFAULT EMOTION

Boys need:

1. To feel part of a team — belonging
2. Opportunities to explore and investigate how things work
3. They need to kick balls, run races and pit themselves physically against a challenge
4. They need structure and help getting organised
5. They need goals and good coaching
6. They need safe environments and a zero tolerance attitude to ridicule and shaming

— Ian Grant, *Growing Great Boys*

Acknowledgement and encouragement for all children

- ✓ Winking
- ✓ Smiling
- ✓ High fives
- ✓ Gentle arm punches
- ✓ Read bedtime stories in their bed
- ✓ Small secret gestures of kindness
- ✓ Listen deeply
- ✓ Thumbs up
- ✓ Make yourself look silly
- ✓ Share common interest

See the world through their eyes

“Activities and experiences that previous generations enjoyed without a second thought ... have been labelled as troubling or dangerous, while adults who still permit them are branded as irresponsible...”

—Tim Gill, *No Fear: Growing Up in a Risk-Averse Society*

Laughter and Lightness

- ✓ Essential for healthy relationships on all levels
- ✓ Natural endorphins
- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Transforms emotional states

“Telling a joke, particularly one that illuminates a shared experience or problem, increases our sense of belonging and social cohesion.”

— Joseph Richman, Psychiatrist and Professor Emeritus at Albert Einstein Medical Centre in New York.

When humour is inappropriate...

- ✓ Shed humour
- ✓ Paddock humour
- ✓ Sexist
- ✓ Racist
- ✓ Don't be a sissy.
- ✓ You're stupid.
- ✓ You're not even trying.
- ✓ Why can't you be more like your sister?
- ✓ Ignoring them

When Kids Muck Up

Teach our kids (especially boys) that with every choice there will be a consequence.

Examples of shaming language:

- ✓ You ought to be ashamed of yourself
- ✓ You naughty boy!
- ✓ You are acting like a selfish brat.
- ✓ Grow up!
- ✓ Stop acting like a baby.

Helping children with conflict

1. Help them know what went wrong (What was their intention?)
2. Help them to make it right
3. Next time? Gentle reminders?
4. Then forgive and forget
5. Acknowledge the valuable learning experience—growth and awareness.

“At some stage your children begin to outpace you, become smarter, quicker, stronger, sometimes wiser. But you are growing too, and you will be of help to them until the day you die.”
— Steve Biddulph, *The New Manhood*.

Some helpful, quick reads on maggiedent.com:

- ✓ 12 Top Tips for Those in Toddlerland (<https://www.maggiedent.com/blog/ten-top-tips-for-those-in-toddler-land/>)
- ✓ Today's Parents & Teens: The Generation Chasm (<https://www.maggiedent.com/blog/todays-parents-and-teens-the-generation-chasm/>)
- ✓ Being a Dad in the 21st Century (<https://www.maggiedent.com/blog/being-a-dad-in-the-21st-century/>)

Be the dad you yearned for when you were a boy...

It's never too late to start over.

And finally... just a few useful sites for fathers and father figures

www.fatherly.com

www.michaelgurian.com

www.thegoodmenproject.com

www.raisingchildren.net.au

www.ngala.com.au (NgalaDadsWA)

www.sms4dads.com

www.bettermen.com.au

www.bettermen.com.au/doc/Boredom_Busters.pdf

www.thefatheringproject.org

Michael Ray... for single dads. Read his articles on [empowering his daughter](#), his [rules for dating my daughter](#) and search for his article on [if fatherhood hasn't upended your life](#).

www.thefatheringproject.org/activity/family-rituals-are-important

Facebook: @daddydaughterhairworkshops

Facebook: @gooddadsgreatdads

Facebook: @dadmumofficial

Facebook: @howtodad

www.themakingofmen.com

www.stevebiddulph.com

www.theritejourney.com

www.darrellbrown.com.au

More resources at maggiedent.com