

# A Boy Called Dad

His daring exploits have included walking the entire coast of Britain, trekking the foothills of the Himalayas and rowing the Atlantic, but becoming dad to three girls has proven to be the greatest adventure for Cambridge dad Chris Howard

Isn't life fleeting? Urgh, I hear you sigh (at my pondering). Yes, I know. . . but hold on just for a second or at least long enough to see if our every-days are in anyway relatable. Like me, are you just holding on?

I'm a dad to three incredible little lionesses; twins, Elsa and Nala (10), and Aria (7). I'm also an adventurer that's walked the entire coast of Britain, rowed oceans, cycled across continents and ran marathons. I've ascended the height of endurance and I have fallen like Faust into the daily decisions, tasks, laundry, deadlines, packed lunches, bills and 15 daily school emails.

When I was young (younger), I set out for awfully big adventures around the world and became the boy that never grew up. I slept a thousand nights under the stars and devoted myself to kindness and commitment to humility. Then one day I woke up to find myself in a life full of pink, no longer on the road but in a fixed family abode. A home.

Each week I relentlessly attempt to channel the stoics I studied at university as conversations about party plans, clubs and performances coming up this weekend (and every other) unfold. There's the costumes, presents, snacks, lost information flyers in someone else's school bag, the costume changes, the present changes (because obviously I got it wrong) the healthier snack replacements. And then there's the party WhatsApp group that pings 40 to 50 times a minute, each time with new shivers rising up my spine. My daughters have better social lives than me, not a surprising revelation but perhaps one I might recall loudly several times in a pub post taxi duty.

I'm constantly puzzled by the end of the summer holidays. Why is there so much washing to do? Where are all the backpacks, what do you mean those shoes don't fit? And where are your wellies?!

Going up a year for them is just going back to see their friends and teachers; for me it's money on shoes that will be scuffed next week, cardigans sure to be lost the week after that and a bombardment of emails that could be condensed into say one 'daily briefing'.

At the end of the holidays, I (like many of you) am always ready for my daughters



Adventurer Chris Howard and his three daughters

to go back to school but with that return comes questions such as 'Daddy, is this a grapheme or a phoneme?', 'Can it also be a split digraph?'. 'Umm. . .' I ponder a response, with the overriding silence in my mind giving rise to the biggest revelation yet: that my children are smarter than I am already (and perhaps, if I just stay quiet, they might not be able to see me). 'Daddy, what's the adult age of an elephant? Daddy? Daddy? . . . night, night Daddy.' Being a dad isn't all bad though. In fact, I love so many facets of the daily adventures we have. My hope is that my wanderlust and adventurous mindset influence my daughters positively and cultivate a bond between us that (as they grow) becomes unshakable. This is confirmed to me by our involvement in junior parkrun. We've run almost every week since my twins were

five and my youngest runs too, albeit a little less willingly.

Earlier this year I committed to running every day and 365 - without fail - each of my daughters joins me (on a day when they're free from all the partying and fun with friends). I love it; I love that we talk, I love that we're outside together and I love that they're actually quite good runners. They are faster than me already and capable of distances beyond my normal training. Again, not an unhappy revelation. I put it down to being lightweight and harnessing the boundless energy of youth. It reminds me just how fleeting things are and that perhaps that boy that never wanted to grow up is getting old. Older.

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Read more about Chris's adventures at [thecoastwalker.com](http://thecoastwalker.com)