



OPINION - A DAD'S FATHER'S DAY GIFT TO HIS KIDS: BEING PRESENT

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Every June, dads across the country receive an array of gifts from their children on Father's Day. Whether it is an eccentric homemade card, or a Popsicle stick picture frame, or a tie that will be worn in public once (*maybe*), or the coveted World's Best Dad coffee mug or trophy, a child will proudly give this sentiment of their love watching joyfully as it's opened.

Dads should also take Father's Day as an opportunity to reflect on their relationship with their children – and how to make it even better.

There is strong scientific evidence that a child's relationship with their parents will have a lasting impact on his life – often stretching generations. [Children with engaged fathers are more likely to have healthy relationships and academic success, while also reducing the child's chances of delinquency and substance abuse.](#) Parental bonding with a baby, from Day One, [strengthens the immune system and cognitive development.](#)

Generationally, we've seen the role of dads change from virtually absent sole breadwinner to co-parent. Fifty years ago, it was rare that a dad would change a baby's diaper; [today men and women equally see being a parent as central to their identity.](#) These are positive developments that help kids grow and succeed.

The pandemic allowed many fathers an opportunity to reevaluate their priorities, specifically regarding the quality time spent with family. Attending a child's school play, concert, or sporting event or volunteering with a son's Cub Scout pack are all positive displays of affection that help kids improve their self-esteem and strengthen the parent-child relationship.

In short, dads being physically and emotionally present for their kids is critical to a strong child, family, and community.

But in order for dads to be present for their kids and eventually, grandkids, they must take steps to promote a long and healthy life. So for Father's Day, here are some tips for dads to get and stay healthy:

- First and foremost, if you smoke – quit. Today. Habitual smoking will cut your lifespan and make your years of life less productive. And second hand smoke will harm your kids.
- Second, limit alcohol consumption. [Excess drinking](#) is linked to chronic diseases such as cirrhosis, pancreatitis, various [cancers](#), obesity, high blood pressure, and psychological disorders.
- Third, be cognizant of your mental health. Men often neglect emotional challenges, traditionally burying their feelings. Repressing feelings of sadness or hopelessness can lead to significant mental health consequences. It's ok to seek the help of a friend or mental health professional.

- Fourth, see your doctor regularly. Be sure that you're up to date on physicals and cancer screenings. Your annual physical could save your life.
- And fifth, get [daily exercise](#). Even with a "dad bod", just 20 minutes of physical activity a day can improve heart health, decrease blood pressure, reduce the risk of cancer, and give you more energy.



As the summer starts, get outside with your kids. Go hiking, biking, or for a walk. You will be teaching them good healthy habits and creating lifelong memories.

If you ask any dad, the best gift they can get for Father's Day is a hug from their child. And this Father's Day, a dad can give the gift of himself to his children and, by taking a few healthy steps, add years to his life and life to his years.