

My dad taught me

From our executive director, Scott Raecker.

As we celebrate Father's Day, think about what your dad taught you. We would welcome you to take the time to share it with us and, more importantly, if you are still blessed with your dad in this world, share it with him. It will make his day!



My dad was a larger than life presence in my world. He was a loving and devoted husband to my mom and an unconditionally loving father to his three children and our spouses. He was also a joy-filled grandfather who loved making life memories with his grandchildren.

My dad was a well-respected dentist who was a consummate life teacher. To my dad, everything was a teachable moment. When we were young, my brother and I stacked a cord of wood by our house. We were so excited that we did it without direction and knew that dad would be so proud when he got home. Dad arrived home and proceeded to tell us that we had stacked the wood in the wrong way and then helped us restack the entire cord the right way. This didn't actually have anything to do with the wood (which to this day I believe would have been fine the way we stacked it), rather, it was a life lesson to take the time to do things right or you would spend time doing things over.

For me and my siblings, our lives were full of these life lessons. My dad taught all of us how to plant tulips and transplant trees and hosta (and he taught us that the plural of hosta was hosta – not hostas). These annual planting experiences were always treated as lessons of nature and the

cycle of life. As he taught us to filet fish it was always a full biology lesson – including the reproductive system. Dad also made sure we knew why it is called “fishing” rather than “catching” as the sport itself is a lesson on patience. My dad taught us how to shine our shoes and keep our fingernails clean because to be our best we needed to look our best – and that we should be our best in everything we do. My dad knew every constellation and taught us that at the least we needed to know how to find the North Star (in case we got lost), however, the real lesson was that the world is bigger than we could imagine and we should approach it with awe and wonder.

We all learned the difference between excellence and perfection. My dad taught us patience, persistence, and that everything will ALWAYS work out. Dad taught us that the “art” of conversation is found more in listening than talking. Dad also taught us to never end a sentence with the word “at” as it is redundant. We know that nothing good happens after midnight for both teenagers and legislators because of my dad. And yes, he did teach us a dirty limerick or two – mostly after he had anesthesia.

Our dad taught us unconditional love and forgiveness through his actions as well as words. He also taught us the significance of family and showed us how to invest in memories rather than material things. And, he showed us all how to love your spouse and be devoted to your children.

My dad was a man of strong, yet quiet, faith. For our family, he taught us that the Lord’s Prayer is the only prayer we ever need and that we must not only pray “Thy will be done” – we must have the courage to accept His will – whatever it may be. He also taught us to read to the end of the book so we know how the story ends.

He passed away from melanoma on Thanksgiving weekend in 2009 and in preparing for that moment with his family he was intent on passing on his most important life lesson, which is that

each of us can have a miracle finish – which he certainly did.

I asked some others to participate in this exercise and this is what I received.

My mom said that “my dad taught me when it is time to give up my driver’s license without being told to do so.”

My wife said, “my dad taught me to love and trust God through his vocation as a farmer, and to always have a sense of humor.”

In a bold move, I asked our children and they said, “My dad taught me to forgive, love, and work hard to reach my dreams,” and, “my dad taught me to do the right thing.”
(Happy Father’s Day gift to me right here)

Happy Father’s Day!

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