

What My Dad Taught Me

It's true, what most kids learn is through observation. Watching things and people around them they see how things are done and they model the behavior they see and the words they hear. Growing up I was told "you become the person you are by the company you keep." We do mirror the behavior and actions of the people we associate with coupled with, what we watch and what we observe.

Being a dad is not easy. It takes a lot of effort and willingness to share your time and energy to teach and model positive behavior for your children. From a very early age kids watch their dads' and begin to act like them.

From my very first memories and for six decades I've watched my Dad and learned. I remember as a kid watching my Dad get excited each spring when the garden was plowed and he began planting. "Those beans are setting and we'll soon have a mess for dinner and his very favorite announcement that the corn was ready, heat the water and get the butter, I'm heading to the corn patch."

My Dad has been consistent, dependable, and firm when necessary, ready to laugh and always has a story to tell. I've never seen my Dad meet a stranger, as he can strike up a conversation anywhere, anytime with anyone.

My Dad taught me how to enjoy work, how to stick to a job until it is completed, and not worry about things. Dad always says "it will be fine, it will all work out."

As I reflect this Father's Day weekend what my Dad taught me, and really something all Dads' should teach their children, I'm reminded of this story:

One day a young man was walking along with his father. They came upon a storm. The young man asked his father what should he do, his father said "keep walking". Some people began to find shelter, the storm was getting worse. What should I do the young man asked, "Keep walking" his father replied. On up the path he noticed large groups of people **were** stopped and bracing against the storm. He told his dad, I must stop, I can barely see ahead. It is terrible out here everyone is finding shelter. His fathers told him not to give up just keep walking. Now the storm was terrible but he never stopped walking and soon he could see a little clearer. After a quarter mile of walking he was on dry land and the sun was out. His father said now stop and rest. The son said "but why now?" His father said "look back at all the people that gave up and **are** still in the storm. Son you never gave up and now your storm is over."

When times are tough, when the road is long and the load is heavy my Dad taught me to never give up, to keep going, and to help others along the way.

Thanks Dad for the example these many years of what being a father is really about. My wish for you and for all Dads' this weekend is continued good health and much happiness.

Doug Hovatter is a WVU Associate Professor and 4-H Agent in Berkeley County. He can be reached at 304 264-1936, Doug.Hovatter@Mail.WVU.edu or on the web at berkeleyextension.com