



# ALLOWING DADS TO BE WHO THEY ARE

Words: Tanya Curtis

**WHAT DOES THE ROLE OF DAD ASK MEN TO BE? WHAT IMPACT DOES THIS HAVE ON ALL FATHERS IN THE WORLD? ARE OUR EXPECTATIONS CAUSING UNDUE STRESS AND ANXIETY ON FATHERS WITHOUT US EVEN REALISING? HAVE WE EVER CONSIDERED THE ROLE AND EXPECTATIONS THAT ARE PLACED UPON DADS ... SOMETIMES WITHOUT THEM EVEN KNOWING IT?**

I remember when I was a young girl I thought my dad was a hero. I thought he knew everything about everything, he was the go-to person and he was better than any encyclopedia because he was 'a dad' (and not just 'a dad' but he was my dad! I used to think my dad was perfect!).

Now, don't get me wrong, I still love and adore my dad and know that he is a pretty awesome dude just for being him. But I also know that my dad is not always perfect in all that he does ... but that's because he is human and none of us are perfect in all that we do!

But how many dads are living with the expectations that they should be perfect in all that they do ... just because they are 'a dad'.

I remember the day that I realised my dad was not perfect. I remember realising that he didn't know everything after all. I remember a feeling of shock, disbelief, being let down and almost of betrayal - "but he's a dad; he should know everything". As I look back on that now I realise how much pressure we are putting on our fathers simply because they carry the title of 'dad'. Why is it because a man has a child these expectations are placed upon him?

I now know that my dad is like every other dad, with strengths, weaknesses, hurts and struggles. Dads have also had both positive and negative experiences in life and may not always have felt equipped to deal with these situations ... just like us all, dads also still have a lot to learn!

I often pondered how this role of 'dad' is impacting on all dads of the world. What pressure do they put on themselves, as a result of feeling the expectations that come from their children, partners, their family, society and even from themselves? Expectations that are setting dads up to fail – a belief that they should be perfect or should just know because they are 'a dad'.



What if we all learnt to embrace our dads as 'people first'. Let's take away the expectations that the title can bring and allow our dads to 'be' them, removing our judgment on what they 'do or do not do'. What if dads removed the pressure from themselves and knew that the only role they have is to simply 'be them'? Dads would come to know that our love for them is founded on 'being dad' and never based on what they 'do'.

Yes, dads have responsibilities and sometimes dads will 'do' their responsibilities well and other times they will 'do' their responsibilities poorly. However with judgment removed on what they do, dads will be left to 'be' them! Removal of judgment allows for understanding and acceptance - acceptance that our dads won't always 'do' perfectly but they are already perfect just for 'being' them.

Judgment and understanding can never exist together. Feeling judgment from others can have significant impact on a person's feeling of self worth, esteem and psychological wellbeing. Allowing all the dads of the world to not be bound by the expectations of being a dad will allow them to simply be the awesome amazing dad, man, being, they already are.

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