

Hey, Daddy-O; Phoenix Area Dads

Written by Written by Melissa Larsen/Photographed by Cassandra Tomei
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In honor of Father's Day (save the date for June 16), locals share what dadhood means to them.



Dave Pratt of The Doublewide Network and dad to David Jr., 19; Kyle, 17; Sammy, 15; and Maddie, 12

When I learned I was going to be a dad, I immediately called the Phoenix Zoo to ask for a blood test (joking). My wife showed me the test, and then had to explain it to me (not joking). I'm a bit slow.

My most cherished memory as a dad is leaning back in my recliner and having my kids fall sleep on my chest. Of course, it is a bit uncomfortable now with my 19-year-old.

My favorite times with my children are simple times. Just hearing about their day, laughing with them and helping them navigate life.

I would advise new dads to keep one hand over the geyser while changing diapers.

This Father's Day, I hope to spend time with my wife to thank her for a wonderful family. Hug my kids, and visit my own father who passed away over 10 years ago. I still miss him.

The greatest Father's Day gift I received was all of the kids give me homemade cards. They still do! I mark the date on each card and keep every single one. To me, they are priceless.



Mark West, Phoenix Suns Vice President of Player Programs, and dad to Markus, 18; and Markyle, 15

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My favorite times with my children are when we are debating or discussing an issue. It can be anytime, whether we are having dinner, watching a movie, playing a game or doing yard work together.

The biggest challenge I have faced as a dad was giving my sons enough leeway to stand up for themselves, even if it meant challenging their mom and me. I have taught them to have a balance between being respectful and listening, while also fighting for what they believe in and not folding under stress.

I would advise new dads to listen to their children and show patience. Try to teach them all the lessons you wish you would have learned when you were a kid. Find teachable moments in the mistakes they make and praise them on their good decisions and small accomplishments. Try your best to make their childhood the greatest time of their lives. If you do that, I believe it will also become the best time of your life, as well.

My greatest wish for my children is that they live healthy, productive and prosperous lives. I hope they will always love to learn and they find someone special to share their adult lives with. It is also my hope that they will always lend a hand to help others.

The greatest Father's Day gift I received was the first time I was able to spend the day with both of my sons.



Lisa Molina, daughter of G. Darrell Olson of Jewel & Estate Gallery by G. Darrell Olson

My most cherished memory with my dad is when my three brothers and three sisters and I were little. If we were good, my dad would drive us to the end of the runway at Sky Harbor airport, and he would let us lay on the front of the car, resting on the windshield to watch the planes literally fly over our heads as they landed, almost to the point we thought we could touch them. I still love it when I am close to the airport and a plane flies over the car.

My favorite times with my dad are when I get him all to myself for lunch or dinner. Having six siblings, I cherish that one-on-one time with him.

The most admirable thing about my dad is how he overcomes adversity. When he was diagnosed with cancer, he continued to live life to the fullest including moving his business of 40 years to a new location and signing a seven-year lease at age 80. Now that's resilience.

My greatest wish for my father is another 25 years of living life to the fullest in good health, and that I get to enjoy those years with him.

The greatest Father's Day gift I have given has actually happened for the last four years. He and his two sisters, ages 78 and 85, fly up to Canada to join me on the boat to spend four days enjoying our time together reminiscing and creating new memories.

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John Hook of FOX 10 and dad to twins Kendall and Michael, 8; and Makena, 7

When I learned I was going to be a dad, I mildly freaked out and then got really excited. The first ultrasound—seeing two boys in there—was another brief moment of panic. But again, the idea of twins really became so exciting and it remains so every day.

My favorite times with my children are skiing and snorkeling with them (especially when we see something really cool like sea turtles), and watching them perform, whether it's in plays or sports.

The biggest challenge I have faced as a dad is my nighttime schedule. I miss a lot of special moments that happen while I'm at work, but I try to make up for it by getting them ready for school every morning. That gives me time with them and keeps me in the loop.

I would advise new dads to try to see the miracle that children are. The moments are so fleeting. They grow up before you know it. Try to keep your eye on the big picture.

My children have taught me patience.

This Father's Day, I hope to just hang out with the kids and mom. It doesn't really matter what we do. And call my 88-year-old father.



Michael Dee, president and publisher of Media That Deelivers, and dad to Spencer, 11

When I learned I was going to be a dad, I cried with happiness then started to ask dads that I respected for advice.

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My most cherished memory as a dad is the instant connection from the very moment he was born. I knew life was going to change forever. Made me look at life differently.

The biggest challenge I have faced as a dad is having him half the time and making sure the time I have with him is quality time, making every minute count.

I would advise new dads to spend as much time as possible with your children. They grow up so fast, and you can never get that time back. You can always see that client or friend on a different day. Be there always; no excuses.

My child has taught me patience and unconditional love.

My greatest wish for my son is true happiness doing what he loves to do.

The greatest Father's Day gift I received was a note from my son saying, "Dad, I want to be like you when I grow up and spend lots of time with my kids. I love you!"



Aaron May of LBT Restaurants and son of Brad May

My most cherished memory with my dad is traveling. My dad has taken me everywhere, and the opportunity to see the world has really opened my eyes and shaped who I am.

My favorite times with my dad are just enjoying downtime. Relaxing and generally being embarrassed listening to him tell corny jokes.

The most admirable thing about my dad is his ability to laugh at himself. He's never one to get embarrassed and always willing to own up to taking responsibility for himself.

My greatest wish for my father is a long life. I often joke about his age but hope he is around for a long, long time.

This Father's Day, I hope to be around my dad while he enjoys whatever the day brings.

The greatest Father's Day gift I have given was six or seven years ago when my sister and I bought my dad a Cadillac—only to have him crash it two weeks later!