



An Open Letter to My Dad on Father's Day...

Dear Dad,

Happy Father's Day. I thought that instead of a card from Hallmark that says, "I love you," I decided I would write you a letter to tell you what our relationship has meant to me and my life.

There are some things that I would do differently as a father, but maybe every child feels that way at 45 years old? Plus, instead of focusing on the 5% of things that I would have wanted done differently (which is typical of me), I thought instead to focus on the other 95%.

You were a Connecticut State Policeman. I know that you are proud of it. So am I.

I remember your mowing the lawn with a push-lawn mower. You cut down trees with your chain-saw and planted others with a shovel. You also always cleaned the dishes. You vacuumed.



You folded the laundry. You always helped Mom around the house. I am glad that you did. I do it now with and for my own wife. I know she really appreciates it and it makes us a stronger team.

I know that you and mom disagreed and fought. You didn't always like each other. I also know that you always loved each other. You never cheated on her. You worked hard on your marriage. You set a standard as a husband that I try to emulate. I have a wonderful marriage because of it. Because of you...

I remember that you worked thirteen days in a row and then would take one day off to make enough in overtime pay, so my sisters and I had everything we needed. Not wanted, but what we needed. Thank you for working hard – So do I.

I remember that you grew your own tomatoes and you would have tomato fights with us with those same tomatoes. You didn't sit there and watch us throw tomatoes at each other. You played and got dirty with us. You didn't "take us" to the pond to go swimming. You would actually swim with us. I realize now that very few parents do the same. I loved it all. And I make sure that I do the same with my own children. They love it too.

You were big and tough and strong. You protected me, and I always felt safe when I was with you. You never told me not to cry, but I never saw you cry. You were our "rock." Mom and us kids could **ALWAYS** lean on you. Thank you. I try to be the same for my own family. They feel just as safe because of it. You taught me that.

You were a very, strict disciplinarian. I didn't like it, but I understand it. Most importantly, you always kissed and hugged all of us all the time. You told us and showed us just how much you loved us. I do the same with my wife, son and daughter. It is one of the great joys to be able to do as a father. A lot don't though. You did. And now I do too. Thank you for showing me that it is important.

Thank you for never *telling* me how to be a great husband and father. I am so lucky that you spent your life *showing* me how to be both instead. I am my own man. That man just happens to be very similar to you. Because of you...

I have no regrets in my life. I am 45 years old. You are 82. I waited too long to tell you these things. I didn't want to wait so long that I would regret never having taken the opportunity to do so.



I am proud of you. I love you. Happy Father's Day*

*And Happy Father's Day to all of the Dads who mow the lawn and cut down trees, but also wash the dishes and vacuum. Happy Father's Day to all the Dads who are big, tough and strong, but who also kiss and hug their wife and kids frequently. Happy Father's Day to all of the Dads who work hard to provide for their families, but who don't use it as an excuse to not spend time with that same family. Happy Father's Day to all of the Dads who prioritize their wife over their tee time. Finally, Happy Father's Day to all the Dads who understand that their child may become a better swimmer by swimming with a coach, but they would become a better person by swimming with their Dad...

And Happy Father's Day to all of the Dads who do none of these things and who might be thinking, "Eric Kapitulik doesn't understand." Please remember though, your wife and children probably don't understand either...

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