

## The Faces of Fatherhood

By

Dr. Darlene Treese

*"To become a father is not hard, to be a father is, however." - Wilhelm Busch*

In our ever-changing society, the traditional "dad" role has basically disappeared. We have single dads, divorced dads, step-dads, working dads, widowed dads, distance dads, blended families... with parenting roles and obligations muddled. So in this mix of people and emotions, how does a Dad become a "super-dad" without falling into the trap of being Mr. Disney-Dad Money Pockets who only knows how to buy his children's affections?

What separate the good dad – no matter what his biological relationship to the kids– from a poor dad is patience, humor, honesty and virtues worthy to be carried to the next generation. Fatherhood is about preparing the kids for later life: how to work hard and set/achieve goals, how to think logically. Some dads carry all this to excess in pushing their kids to do more/have more than they had, and overwhelm them with "stuff" to prove to the world what a good dad they are. But what kids really want and need is much simpler.

The first thing a new Dad experiences is that life no longer revolves around his needs alone. The quicker he is able "get over himself" and come to terms with this, the happier he will be. Men tend to be self-centered and don't notice the needs of others around them. It's not their fault; it's how they were raised (have you ever seen a son rise on his own from the dinner table to wait on other family members?). A super-dad will look beyond himself to see what actions he can take to create harmony. He will anticipate needs showing love and support by doing things without being asked. He teaches his kids by his actions how to honor others (especially Mom and siblings) and be of service to them.

A super-dad has lowered his snapping point way down. He has as much patience at home as he does with his friends and co-workers. He doesn't attack, belittle, intimidate or challenge his wife/ex-wife in front of the kids, making them "choose sides". Those discussions are held privately with her, just as a dispute at work would be properly mediated. A super-dad knows how to play. He is able to have simple fun on a daily basis, while still attending to the kids' safety and well-being. He knows that parent rule and has made agreements on how key issues will be handled.

A super-dad is flexible and knows how to be happy in the "controlled chaos" of a busy home. He realizes that spontaneity and improvisation are keeping him young and mentally sharp. He knows how to listen hard to what is said and what is left out. In this way he can address things early on and have a good communication network found in the happiest of homes.

A super-dad values honesty and integrity above all else. He lives what he believes and shows the kids that the right thing is not always the easy thing, but the rewards are far greater. He keeps his word and doesn't make promises that he cannot keep. He allows the kids opportunities to earn what they want, to evaluate their needs vs. wants, to set priorities and an action plan. Rather than succumb to immediate gratification showering them with gifts, he gives them unconditional love, undivided attention, support, and encouragement as they grow through life's challenges.

But most of all, a super-dad knows that he can have a positive effect on every child through the smallest acts of kindness to all of those around him. In this way we honor fatherhood in our family of man and know that every child can have a super-dad positively influence his life, whether it's for a moment or a lifetime. May every day be a very Happy Fathers' Day for all men and all children!

**Dr. Darlene Treese** has been in private practice in hypnosis and counseling since 1983. She is a Diplomate in Counseling with the National Institute of Sports, Past President of the American Psychotherapy and Medical Hypnosis Association and Vice President of the Rotary eClub of Southwest, USA. Darlene has been internationally acknowledged for her positive action and solution-based therapies and work with corporations. "A person for the people," Dr. Dar is always available to help with your questions and dilemmas through office visits, email or telephone consultations. Call her at **850-201-0073** or visit **[www.AskDrTreese.com](http://www.AskDrTreese.com)**