

Dawn Kaffel Blog Archive: The Importance of Father's Day 2017

After the election chaos, the atrocities of the London bombings and yesterday's fire disaster in Grenfell Tower, Fathers Day on Sunday comes as a welcome relief. A celebration first observed in Washington in 1910 to honour fathers and father figures, step fathers, grandfathers and fathers in law. Many families go to great efforts to make special plans, send messages, cards and gifts, to celebrate fatherhood up and down the country.

Fathers' day provides an opportunity for children to express their love and respect for their fathers' and acknowledge the important role they play which strengthens the father child bond. However it can also be a time of mixed emotions where there may be an absent father or one who is only seen occasionally. Other male role models may be more reliable and present than the real father.

In our counselling rooms Fathers' Day gives clients an opportunity to think of the significance of fathers in their lives and perhaps take time out to remember fathers if they are no longer around.

The role of father is often relegated to secondary status compared to a mother. But a father is just as important for a child as a mother is. However research shows that fathers are engaged in caretaking than ever before due to mothers working, longer hours, and there is more recognition of the importance the role of a father plays in family life

Role of fathers

Children depend on a father for emotional physical financial and social wellbeing. For daughters a father is the first man they love and for sons a father is the man they aspire to.

Fathers are central to the emotional well-being of their children. Having an affectionate supportive and involved father can contribute greatly to a child's language and social development, self-confidence, academic achievement and positive opinions of men.

What a father means to his daughter

A fathers 'influence on his daughters life shapes her confidence, and her self-esteem and sets an example to her about men.

In her book *Women and their Fathers: The Sexual and Romantic impact of the First Man in your Life*, Victoria Secunda suggests that those women who grow up with a remote and aloof father and do not feel affirmed by their father, tend to respond to men in their lives like they responded to their elusive father: they seek out the intimacy they didn't receive from their father, but are unable to believe they can trust their partners to deliver.

Working as a counsellor I see many clients of both sexes whose sense of worth as an individual is rooted in their experience of their fathers. How some re-enact their struggles with their fathers onto their adult partners and how having an absent father can remain such a significant influence.

What a father means to his son

The father-son relationship can be complex. Boys tend to model themselves on their fathers. They look for their fathers' approval in everything they do. They copy those behaviours that they recognise. Boys who have an actively involved father tend to develop securely with a strong sense of self.

If a father is loving and supportive, boys will want to be that and if fathers are controlling, and dominating those could be patterns that boys take into their adult relationships.

So on this Fathers' Day, especially after the turmoil of the last few weeks take this opportunity to recognise and reward fathers for being there and playing an important role in your lives. Fathers' need to feel they are special too!

If you would like to discuss things further or to make an appointment, you can call me on **07976 403741** or **(020) 8959 9528**. Alternatively you can contact me by email dawn.kaffel@couplescounselling.com.

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