



**SEVEN SPIRITUAL LESSONS
FATHERS CAN TEACH THEIR
CHILDREN**

The most memorable picture I have of my father is of him, at the end of long day's work, leaving his job at the foundry where he worked in Ohio. Dad had soot on his face. It's the only photo I have of him alone. I love that picture! It captures the authenticity of who my dad was and the impact of his work ethic. That's the trait I remember most vividly. Joseph Brooks was a traditional blue-collar worker with a strong back and grit under his fingernails—a hard-working man who took care of his family. It is the legacy of many Black fathers of my dad's era. It is a legacy that gave me the gift of perseverance.

Fathers with a strong work ethic cultivate in their children the seeds of persistence, the pattern of never giving up. I'm convinced; their offspring learn to overcome fear more easily than their peers do.

The celebration of Father's Day is always an occasion to remember what having a father really meant. And about appreciating a husband who was present; one who knew instinctively how to *be* a father. We each need people in our lives that will pass along important lessons, through either their words or their example.

Jobs like my dad's have generally vanished from American soil and modern families are much more complex, yet, fatherhood still comes with rich opportunities to demonstrate distinctive, inspirational lessons that last a lifetime.

While watching my dad go to work was a marvelous gift, the greatest gift of my family heritage was spirituality. The gift of spirituality unlocks a child's full potential and smoothes their journey to adulthood. Here are seven intimate, authentic lessons fathers can share with their children. Fathers, tell your children these things:

1. *Feed your thoughts and dreams.* Thoughts and dreams need nourishment. Feed them with good news, good books, and positive people. Nourished dreams have a powerful way of coming true.

2. *Watch your words; words have power.* Be careful of the words you speak. Give away all the words of motivation and encouragement you can. Speaking good words breathes life and light into others.

3. *Know who you are.* You have a divine destiny. Every day, affirm your spiritual identity. Find a way to do something that points you toward your best future. Know Whose you are. The great God of the universe is your close, personal Friend. Talking to Him enriches your life. Listen for the still, small Voice that prods you to be your best self...that's the you with the power to shape the world.

4. *Nurture the boundless power of faith.* Faith lets you accomplish what others label impossible. Faith fills the darkest moments of depression with light. Faith has power to change the future. Because of your faith, you can be certain that the sun will shine and everything will be better tomorrow.

5. *Be grateful.* Gratitude is more than saying “thank you.” It’s about cultivating an attitude of appreciation—valuing what you have and appreciating what others do for you.

6. *Be Forgiving.* When you let go of hurts, you remove a burden from your own heart. Forgiveness isn’t so much about freeing the one who hurt you as it is about freeing yourself. Counting your wounds takes too much time away from all the powerful things you could be doing if you let hurts go.

7. *Love unconditionally.* This last lesson is the most important. Develop a loving, spiritual heart. A heart of love touches and heals like nothing else in the universe. Live with such complete love that it is like pouring out more than you even have to give.

“A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children...”

Proverbs 13:22

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