

HAPPY FATHERS DAY

Sunday, June 20, is a celebration of all the fathers of the world. It is a celebration that endures every year through a lifetime of highs and lows. What determines who is a good father and who is not? Do we as a society evaluate fathers by wealth, by their enforcement of rules, or perhaps by their resemblance to our own fathers? Do we judge a father by his ability to afford material objects or simply by love? I think love outweighs it all. Love endures when times seem rough and remains the same in our attitude and actions. In a time of changing technologies and ways of living, love remains a constant. How long does the new style of tennis shoe or cell phone last before a new style hits the shelf? Love is a constant force that a father can give a child, but it is not the only force that affects that child. It is true that it takes a village to raise a kid, and sadly as a father I am but one part of that village. I have given my children my heart and soul to ensure that they know they are the most loved people on this planet. But they are faced with a village that is weakened by the cycle of poverty, rampant racism and the flaws of the justice system. These are all part of the village that I grew up in and have brought my children up in. While I have done everything that I can for my children, I see other systems in our village that have failed. There is the education system that is supposed to provide a learning environment and experiences at all stages of a child's development that are humane, just, and designed to promote excellence in order that every individual may be afforded an equal opportunity to develop to his or her full potential. But the policies that are in place provide just the opposite: the national dropout rate is still very high. The suspension and expulsion rates are at an all-time high and unfairly target people of color. There is the judicial system that thinks the same 14 year-old who is not mature enough to even drive a car is mature enough to face an adult court and comprehend what is happening and how severe the punishment might be. Research shows that adolescents don't put facts together and draw conclusions the way adults do. At what age should we determine that someone is an adult? There are many great fathers in this world that come from all walks of life. As fathers we must stand up for what is right for our children and believe that change comes from within. Happy Fathers' Day and allow love to be the center of your life: that's what fathers do!

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