



Taking Care of Dad

From the time we are little we look to our Dads to take care of us and keep us safe. They seem so big and strong and invisible. Even when they are not with us or are not able to take care of us we still hold on to the expectation and dream that things will change, they will come back, they will provide for us, they will keep us safe. This theme is carried out in stories, music, traditions and cultures.

While we develop and cling to the expectation that Dads are to take care of us we often do not think about what Dads need to fulfill this expectation or even if this expectation is realistic! To fulfill the expectation and be the Dad we need, and fathers want to be, Dads need our assistance.

Today and every day lets start taking care of the Dads in our lives; Fathers, Grandfathers, Husbands, sons, brothers, uncles, cousins, stepfathers, foster fathers and mentors by:

- **Saying Thank You:** Simple words found in every language which show our appreciation for the efforts made in our behalf. Simple words that bring a smile to Dad and renew their commitment to us. Gratitude should be modeled by other adults and older children to younger children so that appreciation becomes a family value.
- **Being Kind:** Often when we expect someone to do things for us or take care of us we forget the importance of showing kindness. We need to be kind to Dads in both words and actions; tempering expectations with reality, being patient and understanding, not being demanding.
- **Showing affection:** Everyone needs and enjoys hugs and kisses...especially Dads!! Be sure that Dad gets them every day as well as other forms of affection...smiles, winks, silly jokes, sharing special memories and family stories all express affection and love.
- **Doing things for Dad:** We expect Dad to take care of us and do things for us but what about doing things for Dad? Fixing his favorite foods, letting him watch his favorite show without interruption, not borrowing his things without permission, giving him gifts he will enjoy and spending time with him are all ways to do things for Dad.
- **Actually taking care of Dad;** As we get older we need our family to take care of us, even Dads will need care in time. It is important to be mindful and responsible for caring for Dad just as he did for us. Whether that is living with him, having him live with us or being sure to call and visit regularly, remembering holidays and birthdays, bringing favorite foods and gifts. It is important to complete the circle of love and caring for our Dad and for ourselves.
- **Saying I Love You:** Maybe the three most important words we all need to hear regularly. Those words say so much about love, respect, admiration, value, belonging and forgiveness.

None of us are perfect and no one can fulfill another's expectations completely, but we can love, care for, show compassion and forgive. How can you care for your Dad today whether they are here or not?