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Research group on men and their families.



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## **WHAT DADS CAN DO TO HAVE HAPPIER SONS**

A must for all parents to read and use.

**PETER WEST\***

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# **WHAT DADS CAN DO TO HAVE HAPPIER SONS**

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## **1. SHOW YOUR SON THAT YOU LOVE HIM.**

You can do this through a hug, or a hand on the shoulder, or anything that feels right for you. Your body language is important. Some Dads want to punch their son on the shoulder. Maybe your son likes this. He might prefer it if you just open your arms to him. See what he prefers and follow his lead. Smile at your son.

## **2. LISTEN TO YOUR SON.**

We are raised as males to do things. We don't talk about ourselves as real people, just "I won the raise" or "St George won the footy". Ask your son about his day - the highs and the lows. And then listen to the answers.

## **3. TALK TO YOUR SON PERSON TO PERSON.**

Most males don't like talking face to face, but shoulder to shoulder. Find things to do that get him talking. Walk the dog, walk on a beach, ask him to help you with the car. Read to him or get him to read to you. Talk about things that are important to you. Don't give him a lot of rubbish. Your son wants to know the real you. He doesn't need John Wayne or Arnold Schwarzenegger.

## **4. PUT YOUR LIFE ON A PAGE.**

What do you see? Where did you put time spent with your son? Is it squashed into a corner? Work hard to do one or two special things with your son. Ask him about this- don't just decide to do something he may not even like! If you don't give your son time, imagine what he'll say when you're 70. "He never had time for me, the old fart, so I don't care about him".

## **5. HAVE SOME REAL RELATIONSHIPS.**

Have a partner if you can. And some male friends that you can be yourself with. Talk to them about what you do with your son. Share ideas about what sons enjoy and what they need.

Listen to suggestions- don't just tell your pals what a good dad you are! Other people help us to be better dads. It shouldn't be a task you do by yourself.

## **6. BE POSITIVE!**

Don't tell him all the things he's done wrong. Tell him what he's done right! Maybe it's a school report or a school sports carnival. Give him some praise. Maybe you weren't praised much as a kid.

We have to do a better job than our fathers did. You can make a start.

## **7. DON'T FILL HIM WITH 'DON'T'.**

"Don't be a girl! Don't cry. Don't yell out. Don't..." Show him some positive male qualities: work hard, share a joke, create things, enjoy music, have some great friends. Be happy when you see some qualities you like.

#### **8. BE THERE WHEN HE NEEDS YOU.**

Sometimes you might want to do something with him, and he's busy. Then you're busy, and he wants to tell you something. Turn him away, and he'll get the message Dad doesn't care.

#### **9. YOUR SON IS NOT YOUR FRIEND.**

That comes later. You have your mates; so does he. He needs someone to give him guidance- rules- a rock he can depend on. Most sons have complained about their dads for the past 40 million years.: it gives them something they have in common with their mates.

10. LOVE THE SON YOU HAVE. Maybe you wish he was David Beckham, or Ian Thorpe, or Ronaldo !!?? This is a hard lesson for Dads to learn. These guys have their own problems! Love the son you have. He will love you for it.



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