

What did your father teach you?

Happy Father's Day to all our Dads

I Still Miss My Father, Danny DeVito, the Guardian, June 5, 2012

My father, Danny, didn't get to see my kids. He died 28 years ago. I had just got married. But my father was very important in my life. He was a stay-at-home kind of dad. First he had a candy store on Springwood Avenue, Asbury Park in New Jersey. Then, when I was still young, he decided to go into business where he could work from home and just use a phone. He became a bookie taking bets on horses.

I loved it. I could see him whenever I wanted. If you have a father who wants to spend time with you, which mine did, then you're really fortunate. You get that rush of being with your dad, going places, even if it's just shopping or to the movies. We used to fish a lot, my father and me.

I owe my dad a lot. I mean not to get too far out about this, but as soon as you're born, your parents die. That's it. Everything goes to the kids. Shakespeare said the day you're born is the first day you start to die. I'm paraphrasing, of course. But this is serious stuff. You give up so much when your kids are born. You give up your freedom. You alter your life, your work, your entire sleep schedule. We go through life thinking about number one, as we should. Then you have kids and suddenly it's all about them. I owe a great deal to my father in terms of him always being there.

He also taught me to be prepared. If you feel like going on a hike: well, do you have all the right equipment; do you know where you're going; are you going to get lost? Am I ever going to see you again? All these things you have to think of, and it's the same thing with life. My father taught me to know what I'm doing and be prepared.

I still miss him. There's that emptiness that you have to take with you. But that's part of being a human being.

My Father-in-Law by Scott Phillips

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Almost 37 years ago now I married into a truly wonderful family! I was blessed with my wife and all her family, especially her 100% Italian Heritage. However, I was doubly blessed by gaining a terrific Father-in-Law!

Throughout the years I have been a part of my wonderful in-laws, I have come to hold dear four particular 'rules' that Carlo, my father-in-law, and his family instilled in me though his words, but more often and more importantly through his actions:

- Hold your family dear at all times! Blood is indeed thicker than water.
- Love, embrace, and be proud of your heritage,
- Honor your elders, and
- Do all within your power to flourish where you are planted.

My father-in-law taught me something every time we were together. He was an exquisite entrepreneur. He was an anonymous donor to a multitude of good causes and to people in need. He illustrated daily that your word is your bond. He taught me to try new things and embrace change in life. He also introduced me to true Italian camaraderie and food! Oh yeah — he also taught me how to duck and grouse hunt, but I

keep reminding my wife even to this day, that I did not know about that until AFTER I proposed!

Working a summer job in a bank in Minneapolis, I met a young Italian girl, also working her way through college. Yes, even I, the Bohemian, knew she was Italian right away. Her surname was D'Aquila and her mother's maiden name was Casagrande. After an extended courtship, I found myself making a visit to Virginia, Minnesota to speak with Bis-Nonno and Bis-Nonna Casagrande and seeking their blessing for my proposed marriage to their granddaughter.

Then there I was on a doorstep in Hibbing, Minnesota on a freezing cold February evening ringing the doorbell and waiting to speak with her father and mother in order to ask them for her hand in marriage. I was to find that this was no small feat. To begin with, this would be the marriage of the first of six children and she was not the eldest. Next, I had just spent four and half hours in the car with my future fiancée listening to stories that all revolved around her father **never, ever** liking a single one of her prior suitors and on occasion even scaring them off from his home so badly that they removed significant portions of their picket fence!

The outcome of that evening was my being accepted into a unique family and larger community that I have come to love, respect, admire, and embrace. As I look back now, I realize that what I have learned about the Italian culture and the rich Italian community of Northern Minnesota are some of the most important lessons I ever learned.

While every culture and area have their own strengths and personalities, I believe that the Italian community of Northern Minnesota has a very special identity that is forged uniquely through its combination of ties to their home country, pride of heritage, the ever-present iron ore and the work it took to remove it from the earth, and values that are instilled through centuries of common lineage.

In my 37 years in the family, I have been blessed to hear what it was like in those earlier days on 'the Range' for the Italian immigrants. The stories at the dinner table rivaled those of Aesop!

I have often said I was blessed not with one father and one father-in-law, but with two fathers! I couldn't have asked for a better Father-in-Law than Carl! There isn't a day that goes by that I don't miss my father-in-law.

Prepared by Jennifer Murphy, June 2013