

Dad's Top Ten Lessons in Life

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1. Be nice to everyone, including those who are not as fortunate as you are.
2. Always give 100% in everything you do! No excuses, you give your all, or stay home.
3. Winning isn't everything, but it sure beats losing!
4. Please excuse the language in this one, but this was one of dad's favorite quotes while teaching us to suck it up and be tough. If you ever hit him with an I can't, or a reason why you couldn't do something, he would hit you straight between the eyes with a very firm, HEY, Don't Be A Pansy Ass Wimp! Suck it up, and get after it! You know, I never did find the definition of a Pansy Ass Wimp in the dictionary, but I sure knew I didn't want to be one!
5. Late dark 30 isn't a time of day; it's how you dive inside someone on the racetrack, leaving your braking until the last possible fraction of a second in order to make a pass.
6. When driving a car on the street, and the light turns yellow, it doesn't mean to slow down and proceed with caution as they teach you in drivers ed. It means to take it into late dark 30 and get through the intersection before it turns red. I almost got kicked out of drivers ed trying to explain this to my instructor after I squealed the tires around a left hand turn during a yellow light.
7. You can race just about anything on wheels, and find a way to turn darn near every situation in life into a competition, even a friendly game of checkers with a 6 year old.
8. When you're with someone you really care about while driving in the car, you don't have to say a word, and you can sit in total silence and really feel the love you have for one another. I will miss those quiet rides sitting by your side dad.
9. When I was in my early 20's I had to sit down and ask dad why he was so hard on me verbally. I was trying to understand why he was always pushing me so hard in everything I did. He explained to me that he was raised by a father who was very hard on him physically, and he was beaten by his father. He made himself a promise that he would not do the same to us kids, and he was very sorry for his harsh words at times. When I heard him tell me these words, I forgave him on the spot, and loved him unconditionally from that point forward. It made me realize that I could then break the cycle when I had a wife and children. What I've found over time, is that everyone has baggage of some sort from their past, and it shapes their actions, and who they become. All I ask is that you take the life lesson of forgiveness I learned from loving my father, and put it to use in your own life. If you've been harboring bad thoughts about someone, or if you've been hurt by a family member or someone you love, I pray that you can find it in your heart to sit down and realize they may be doing the best they can based on how they were raised. Open your heart and find forgiveness, and you will be amazed with the loyalty and love you will receive from the one you forgive.
10. This last one I learned over the past couple of years as I saw dad's heart really soften. He and I spent many Sunday's sitting side by side here at Life Center. During worship when one of dad's favorite songs was played, you could hear him singing from his heart. Here would come this booming voice from beside me. Man did that make me feel good inside. Mom told me that recently when she rode in dad's car he had the radio tuned into the same Christian radio stations I listen to, and she would hear him walking around the house humming the song "Shout to the Lord." In a few moments we're going to sing this song. In dad's honor, please sing from your heart and let him hear you, even if you're out of tune, as he was so many times!