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Where Hope Resides

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To Our Beloved Fathers: We Are Thinking of You On Father's Day



What do these men all have in common: Abraham Lincoln, Bill Cosby, Mark Twain, Eric Clapton, Leland Stanford, Steve Lawrence, George Washington, Dick Ebersol, Robert Frost, Senator John Edwards, Carroll O'Connor, and Johnny Carson?

Did you get it right? All of these men are famous in one way or another. All of these men are fathers. And all of these fathers lost a child. Of course it does not matter whether you are famous or not when your child dies. To your child, you certainly are a star.

One particular father was a respected and prolific writer, and most of us have read at least one of his books, *Tom Sawyer* or *Huckleberry Finn*. His name was Mr. Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), and his writings—full of whimsy, humor, and adventure—took us to places never visited even in our wildest imaginations.

Mr. Clemens never had a problem expressing himself and regularly marveled at how easily the words flowed from him as he wrote. That is, until that one day—that one day when he was on the lecture circuit and received word about Suzy Clemens, his beloved and adored daughter. Suzy had suddenly taken ill and died. Spinal meningitis had taken her from him. He was never the same after that, even though he continued to write.

Eight years after Suzy's death, Mr. Clemens was still groping to articulate his grief. He finally realized that trying to put his loss into words was futile, and he wrote this: "To do so would bankrupt the vocabulary of all the languages." And in his autobiography, he wrote this about Suzy's death:

It is one of the mysteries of our nature that a man, all unprepared, can receive a thunder-stroke like that and live. There is but one reasonable explanation of it. The intellect is stunned by the shock and but gropingly gathers the meaning

of the words. The power to realize their full import is mercifully lacking.

We all know the truth of those poignant words. On the other hand, children of all ages do find ways to gather up words that truly express how they feel about their fathers on Father's Day. And so we share with you, our beloved fathers who have loved and lost their children, the special phrases of love written by children about their fathers. Know that your children, too, are singing words of love for you this Father's Day.



- ▶ "He is my rock and my example always of the tenderness that such strength can hold."
- ▶ "I want to be just like my dad."
- ▶ "It doesn't matter who my father was; it matters who I remember he was."
- ▶ "My father gave me the greatest gift anyone ever gave to me: he believed in me."
- ▶ "He didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and let me watch him do it."
- ▶ "It was to my father we would run when we were scared."
- ▶ "I just owe almost everything to my father."
- ▶ "To hear the name 'father' was, to me, another name for love."
- ▶ "My mother made me dinner every night, but my father let me have ice cream for breakfast."
- ▶ "My family would not have been the loving foundation it was without my father's love."
- ▶ "I remember my father reading to me at night and how his voice would change as he played the different characters, trying to sound like each one. He always made me laugh."
- ▶ "My father made being a father look like it was the most rewarding experience because he seemed to enjoy every minute of it."
- ▶ "I wish I had one more minute to tell my father how much he means to me, how much he gave to me, and to remind him that the person I became was because of him."

- ▶ “No one is smarter than my dad.”
- ▶ “My father always said he was sorry whenever he made a mistake, and I respect him for that.”



So, today, we honor you,
the fathers whose children are not here,
and shower you with proclamations of love
you so deserve.

We hope the memories you hold
near and dear
will see you through
this Father's Day.

If your children could talk to you
on Father's Day,
perhaps they would tell you
something like this . . .



*“I see how much you hurt, Dad,
and I wish I could ease your
sorrow. If I could, I would. I can see how
much courage it has taken for you to go on in
life without me. I know our time together was
so short, and you would give up everything if
it meant I could come back and be with you.
All I can do now is stand by and love you until
we are together again. Thanks, Dad, for eve-
rything you gave to me and continue to give. I
will see you again soon.*

*Until then,
Happy Father's Day, Dad.”*

The History of Father's Day

Sonora Dodd first had the idea of a "father's day." She thought of the idea for Father's Day while listening to a Mother's Day sermon in 1909.



Sonora wanted a special day to honor her father, William Smart. Smart, who was a Civil War veteran, was widowed when his wife died while giving birth to their sixth child. Mr. Smart was left to raise the newborn and his other five children by himself on a rural farm in eastern Washington state.

After Sonora became an adult, she realized the selflessness her father had shown in raising his children as a single parent. It was her father that made all the parental sacrifices and was, in the eyes of his daughter, a courageous, selfless, and loving man. Sonora's father was born in June, so she chose to hold the first Father's Day celebration in Spokane, Washington on the 19th of June, 1910.

President Calvin Coolidge, in 1924, supported the idea of a national Father's Day. Then, in 1966, President Lyndon Johnson signed a presidential proclamation declaring the third Sunday of June as Father's Day. President Richard Nixon signed the law which finally made Father's Day permanent in 1972.

