

Dad,

June 7, 2011

I love you so much, beyond even what words can describe. From the moment we met almost 28 years ago, God created a bond between us that can never be broken. There is no circumstance, or distance, or span of time that could change the way I love you or how special you are to me. I feel truly blessed that God chose you to be my Dad. I believe that no man could be a perfect father but that you were the best father you knew how to be and the best father I could have had.

For a long time I've let myself believe that you were invincible. You could fix anything, make anything, do anything, be anything. And that you knew a little something about everything. I compared everyone to your standard and in my eyes, everyone fell short. You were my champion, my super hero. You are my Dad and quite possibly the greatest man I've ever known. It has been an honor and my privilege to have known you, learned from you and loved you. I hope I can pass even a small portion of your knowledge and wisdom to my children as you have done for yours.

Selfishly I've always considered you mine (more so than anyone else's) even though I've

had to share you. I hope that I'd have you forever, so I never really thought of what life would be like without you.

Recently I've come to the realization that you are more than my father, you are a child of God and He only loaned you to me for an indefinite period of time. Unfortunately for me, He doesn't need my permission to take you back. I would never want Him to take you, but I know that His timing is right and I have to accept that and trust that ~~He~~ ~~is~~ is doing what is best for both of us. ~~His~~ Your legacy is a great one for many people, but especially for me.

I've made a short list of some special things that I've learned from you:

- to love plants, animals, and all nature.
- to be generous and always willing to serve others
- to enjoy and appreciate the art of music.
- to be tolerant of people's differences.
- to love and accept people for who they are and not be judgemental.
- to discipline my children out of love to shape them into the good people they are supposed to become.
- that feeling sorry for myself won't help me achieve what I want or need.

- that the best way to be cool is to be yourself and be a friend.
- that you should spend time with your kids when they are young (even if it's inconvenient) Children long to be included and once they are grown they'll appreciate that you made time for them. (I do!)
- that living a simple life can be rich and fulfilling if you work hard and love what you do.
- that fear often stems from a lack of knowledge.
- that having kids is a true blessing and they can cause you to live a better life than the one you had chosen for yourself before they came along.
- that approaching parenting as a team is best for my marriage and my kids.
- that it's important to nurture a loving relationship with my siblings because it will honor my parents and when they are gone we will be able to comfort and support each other.
- the truth sometimes hurts but not as much as a lie and if you tell the truth to people you love (i.e. your parents) they

- that "can't never could" do anything.
- that if I open my eyes and really look, I can find anything I might have lost.
- to honor my commitment to my husband (and children) even when it may seem easier not to.
- to be respectful to my mother in words and actions.
- that "reading the book" will get me the info I need to answer almost any question.
- that loving someone means taking them at face value, accepting the good with the bad.
- that hard work is good for you and something to be proud of
- to stand up for what you believe and the people you love.
- that "it takes two to tango."
- to be quiet and listen when grown-ups are talking to me. (I'm still working on this.)
- how to camp.
- how to float and swim.
- that education is important and it's never too late to finish what you started
- that you don't need a degree to be a teacher and you're never too old to learn something new.
- that stubbornness can be a good and a bad thing.
- that you don't need money to be happy.

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will still love you even if it's something they didn't want to hear.

- that just because something is used or discarded doesn't mean it's trash. Great things can be done with other people's castoffs.
- that strange foods like sardines and sushi can be delicious.
- that what goes around comes around.
- that love is the greatest gift anyone can give and is all you really need.

And the list can go on and on... because you have given to me so much more than just this list. You've given me all of you.

At this point it seems like it's time for the good byes. You and I have said good bye plenty of times before: when you left for work, or dropped me off at school, when I left for college or camp, and after many weekend lunches at Cracker Barrel. But now good bye seems too permanent, so I won't say good bye. Instead I'll say, "I'll see you later and I love you." Hopefully, "later" will be a few weeks or months! If "later" is a long, long time, I'll miss you a lot, and probably always. But I think I'll be alright because parts

of you ~~are~~ alive and well in me and in my children. Your big ears, blue eyes, tan skin, fat fingers and stubborn nature will always be with us. And I'll think of you often. When a lizard scurries, a wild flower blooms, or a song bird sings - I'll think of you and you'll be with me. I hope we will have many more memories together because I cherish the ones we've made so far. I won't be able to visit this Father's Day but I wish you a ~~great~~ happy one and I hope it will be a good day! I miss you! I love you! And I'll see you later!

All My Love,  
Sara