



5 Questions Every 24:7 Dad Asks

www.fatherhood.org

**National
Fatherhood
Initiative®**



About National Fatherhood Initiative®

Because every child deserves a 24:7 Dad.SM

National Fatherhood Initiative® (NFI) is the nation's leading non-profit organization working to end father absence. Underlying many of society's most pressing challenges is a lack of father involvement in their children's lives.

Our Mission

National Fatherhood Initiative® (NFI) works to increase father involvement by equipping communities and human service organizations with the father-engagement training, programs, and resources they need to be father-inclusive.

Our Vision

NFI's vision is that all communities and human service organizations are proactively father-inclusive so that every child has an involved, responsible, and committed father in their lives.

To see more about our mission, our partners, our impact, and how we can help you engage fathers, please visit www.fatherhood.org

For fatherhood and family resources, including programs, resources, and other helpful materials, please visit www.fathersource.org.

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The Incredible Importance of Fathers

Every child deserves an involved, responsible, committed dad. You know that, and that's why you're probably reading this ebook. The fact is, you care about being a great dad. You want to see your child (and all children) grow up healthy.

As you think about how to be a great dad, ask yourself the following questions:

- What would it feel like to know you did everything you could to be a great dad?
- What would it feel like to know that you not only helped your child by being a great dad, you also helped other children by helping other dads be great dads, too?

Being a great dad is not only about raising your child to the best of your ability. It's also about helping other dads raise their children to the best of their ability—to ensure that every child grows up with a 24:7 Dad! You're helping [National Fatherhood Initiative®](#) (NFI) combat the father absence crisis in America by creating more involved, responsible, and committed dads. And for that, we're extremely grateful.

As for your answer to the first question, we hope this token of our thanks helps you acquire that feeling. We wrote this ebook with one fact in mind: **Any father can learn to be a great dad—and be a great dad 24/7.** And what's a 24:7 Dad you ask? He's a dad who knows the five characteristics (or traits) of the 24:7 Dad. Read on to learn more about these traits and the vital questions related to each of them.

The bottom line is being a great dad is tied to the five traits of a 24:7 Dad. In this ebook, we unpack the meaning of these traits by posing questions you must ask yourself.



**The great news is that these five questions come with a guarantee:
If you answer each one honestly and take action, you will become a 24:7 Dad!**



Question 1 > How well do I know myself?

The 24:7 Dad is aware of himself as a man and aware of how important he is to his family. He knows his moods, feelings, emotions, capabilities, strengths, and challenges. He is responsible for his behavior and knows that his growth depends on how well he knows and accepts himself. He also knows that his ability to be with his children is affected by the choices he has made and accepts responsibility for his choices.

The 24:7 Dad asks himself: How well do I know myself?

The Importance of the Self-Aware Father

When we say “self-awareness,” what do you think of? Some fancy ninja training? Maybe, but it’s much more meaningful.

Self-awareness is the foundation of being a 24:7 Dad. It involves being self-aware of who you are as a man and dad. A 24:7 Dad knows his role in the family. He knows what it means to be a man. He understands he is a model for his sons on how to be a good man and husband. If he has daughters, he models what they should look for in a husband and father for their children. Basically, he knows the [10 Ways To Be a Better Dad](#).

A self-aware dad knows his moods, feelings and emotions, and capabilities, strengths, and challenges. He is responsible for his behavior and knows his growth depends on how well he knows and accepts himself.



To help you become even more self-aware, ask these kinds of penetrating questions:

- What defines me? Do I have a sense of meaning? How does being a father play into my sense of meaning
- What is my current role in my family? What would I like it to be? What can I do to work toward that goal?
- What are my biggest challenges? Am I ignoring them or dealing with them? If I am dealing with them, is it in a healthy or unhealthy (e.g. self-defeating) way? How do these choices affect my children and family?
- What are my biggest challenges in fathering? What can I do differently to be proactive and show my dedication to my children?

Another way to become self-aware is to consider how you act on a daily basis. Do you know, for example, what part of the day you are likely to be most tired or annoyed? Pay attention to how you treat your children during these times.

If you know, for example, that by 6:00 p.m. you're tired and more likely to become annoyed because you've been at work all day and in traffic, you should schedule at least a few moments to be calm before you open the door and engage your family. If you're frequently frustrated when you enter the house, that's a red flag something needs to change that you can control.

Think about how your daily actions reflect what you know you need to be as a man, dad, and husband or partner. The 24:7 Dad understands he is responsible for his decisions and actions. The 24/7 Dad also knows his ability to be with his children in all the ways they need him—physically, emotionally, and spiritually—is affected by the choices he makes.

The 24:7 Dad asks himself: How well do I know myself?



Question 2 > How well do I care for myself?

The 24:7 Dad takes care of himself. He gets annual physicals, eats the right foods, works to stay in shape, and learns about the world he lives in. He has a strong connection to his family and community, and chooses friends who support his healthy choices. The 24:7 Dad models for his children that he respects and likes himself because he makes good choices.

The 24:7 Dad asks himself: How well do I care for myself?

The Oxygen Mask Rule of Fatherhood

"Seatbacks and tray tables should be in their upright and locked position and carry-on luggage stowed in the overhead locker or underneath a seat prior to takeoff." You've no doubt heard this announcement if you've taken a flight. But before that announcement—and, hopefully, you've paid attention—the flight attendant covers the oxygen mask rule of flight safety.

The typical safety instructions for the oxygen mask are...

Oxygen Mask Rule #1 > The passenger should always fit his or her own mask before helping children, the disabled, or persons requiring assistance. (Read: Take care of yourself. Then you will be able to help others.)

Oxygen Mask Rule #2 > Even though oxygen will be flowing to the mask, the plastic bag may not inflate. (Read: Keep taking care of yourself, even if you don't think it's working.)

This rule applies to fatherhood, too. No, we're not talking about the dad who's only out for number one. We're talking about being a dad who's ready to serve his family because his needs are met. Let's unpack this rule a little more.

1) Take care of yourself so you can take care of others.

You have to place the plastic oxygen mask on your mouth first. You won't be around to help others if you can't breathe. Likewise, the 24/7 Dad takes care of himself. What does taking care of yourself look like?

To start, here are a few ideas...

- You get annual physicals.
- You eat right.
- You exercise.
- You're a life-long learner.
- You have a strong connection to your family and community.
- You pick friends who support your healthy choices.



The 24:7 Dad models for his children that he respects and likes himself because he makes good choices to care for himself. Too many men are raised to not care for themselves and to sacrifice their own health as they care for others. While sacrificing for others is noble, in the absence of self-care it's not the proper way to live.

The hero who isn't healthy, isn't a hero for long. When's the last time you went to the doctor? If your answer to this question is "I go to the doctor every decade whether I need to or not!" you may want to consider modeling a different standard to your child.

2) Keep taking care of yourself, even if it doesn't seem to be working.

The flight attendant reminds passengers that the plastic oxygen bag may not inflate after you put it on. This statement is required in the United States because someone fatally removed his or her mask thinking it didn't work. Don't do this...on a plane or in life.

As a dad, you may not think you need to take care of yourself until it's absolutely necessary. By then it may be too late. Have you ever heard the phrase, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure?" You need to be in the business of prevention when it comes to your health.

When things run smoothly, you may not see the importance of consistently caring for yourself. Don't fool yourself. Even if you think you can go a long time without caring for yourself, you can't! You must be vigilant about caring for yourself on a regular basis to have your physical, mental, emotional house in order (and consistently in check).

Ask yourself these questions to get started:

- Do I have a doctor? Do I know my doctor's name? Have I had a check-up within the last year? How is my overall physical health?
- What's my daily diet consist of? Am I getting the proper nutrition to be mentally sharp, mentally and physically active?
- Do I exercise daily or at least most days during the week? Have I created options for being physically active?
- What are my biggest personal challenges? Am I ignoring them or dealing with them?
- Would my family say I'm a constant learner? Do I read? What do I read daily? Am I learning new things? Which of these things can I share with my children?
- What's my most important goal in caring for myself? Am I working toward that end?

The 24:7 Dad asks himself: How well do I care for myself?





Question 3 > How well do I father?

The 24:7 Dad knows his role in the family. He knows he is a model for his sons on how to be a good man and father and for his daughters on what they should look for in a husband and father for their children. He knows he should be involved in the daily life of his children; from waking them in the morning, to attending parent-teacher conferences and helping them with their homework, to tucking them in bed at night. The 24:7 Dad uses his knowledge of the unique skills he and his wife/the mother of his children brings to raising his children. In other words, he knows the difference between “fathering” and “mothering.”

The 24:7 Dad asks himself: How well do I “Father?”

Three Things You Should Do > Because You're Being Watched

Because you're a dad, you're being watched! As creepy or obvious as that might sound, a lot of dads don't realize how significant it is to be watched by their children. Years ago former-NBA star Charles Barkley said, "I am not a role model." Whether he liked it or not, he was, and so are you. There is no time off when it comes to being a role model.

At NFI, we often say "a father plays a unique and irreplaceable role in his child's life." What does that mean? What's so unique and irreplaceable about you? You bring your unique experience, personality, skills, and example to your child's life. You are, in fact, unique and irreplaceable. This is a great responsibility. And with great responsibility comes great sacrifice.

The 24:7 Dad Understands Fathering Skills

The 24/7 Dad knows his role in the family. He knows he should be involved in the daily life of his children, as much as that's possible; from waking them in the morning to attending parent-teacher conferences, helping with homework, and tucking them in bed at night.

Consider the following tasks and whether you and mom have agreed on which one of you should handle each role (you might share some roles):

- Who's responsible for dressing the kids daily?
- Who's responsible for packing lunch?
- Who's responsible for cooking dinner every night?
- Who's responsible for attending parent-teacher conferences and other events?
- Who's responsible for volunteering at school?
- Who's responsible for supporting your child's weekly sports practices, events, and other interests/activities?
- Who's responsible for helping with homework?
- Who's responsible for reading to your child?
- Who's responsible for tucking your child in at night?



This list contains just a few ideas to get you started thinking about exactly how you'll be involved. Remember, fathering is about making sure you're involved as much as possible.

We say that a 24:7 Dad "uses his knowledge of the unique skills he and his wife/the mother of his children brings to raising his children." Either we live like dad makes a difference or we don't. But, the truth is, whether you're a good dad or a bad dad, you make a difference because you model something to your child every moment of every day.

Here are three helpful tips you can use to be an involved dad.

1. Know Your Child's Interests.

You must be a model for your child on how to care about others. Caring about others starts with you. It's easy to get wrapped up in your own interests and not consider others' interests. Say you have a daughter who likes American Girl dolls? Well, you once thought American Girl dolls are stupid. That thought presented a problem...but not anymore! Now that you're a 24:7 Dad, you care about American Girl stuff. You're now the resident American Girl Doll expert. Find a way to learn about them. You know the difference between Addy and Josefina because your daughter does.

What's that? You have a son and the American Girl Doll example doesn't resonate with you? Does your son play with Legos? Well, maybe you don't like spending your day playing with Legos. But, guess what? If your son likes Legos, you must become a master builder.

Ask your children about their favorite things. Be intentional about creating daily time, maybe at dinner, to let your kids not only talk about their favorite things, but also to come up with a list of things they would enjoy doing.

Set a reminder on your phone of intentional daily activities. It will help you create the space—the time—to connect with your child. If you don't have a lot of time at first, don't worry. Just set aside some time to get started. You should have at least enough time—even if just a few minutes—to talk with your child to show how much you value them.

2. Know Your Schedule.

Consider stopping unnecessary routines and starting better ones. The point here is to reflect on your daily or weekly routine and see where you can make changes. Are you constantly working late? Is there something you can change during the day to get home earlier? Stop and think about how you can best manage your time.

Do you have enough energy for the day? If not, consider steps to feel better. You shouldn't always feel tired or hurried. Dads who are always too busy are the dads who are often the least involved with their child because they aren't in control of their schedule. It's a difficult balance, and some days are better than others. You can learn to better manage your schedule so you don't carry around regrets.

3. Know Your Family's Schedule.

Dads often don't realize there's a family event until the evening of said event, even when someone in the family told them about it. Create appointments in your calendar to remind you to check in weekly to ensure you know your family's schedule. It's too easy to get busy and consider everything as important when, in reality, not everything is important.

You need to be clear about your role in the family—how you father and how everyone expects you to father—for your family to function well. Talk with your wife or partner and your children to ensure you know exactly what they expect of you. The man who understands his role in the family is the man and dad who carries himself with a higher purpose. That's a 24:7 Dad. Remember...you're being watched!

The 24:7 Dad asks himself: How well do I “Father?”



Question 4 > How well do I parent?

The 24:7 Dad nurtures his children. “Nurturing” is just another way of saying that, as a dad, he understands what his children need and when they need it. He knows how his parenting skills help develop his children’s physical, emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual, and creative needs. His children trust and feel safe with him because he cares about and nurtures them through the use of proven parenting skills. The 24:7 Dad uses discipline to teach and guide his children, not to threaten or harm them.

The 24:7 Dad asks himself: How well do I “Parent?”

Pretty Much Everything You Need to Know To Be a Master Nurturer

What? Being a "Master Nurturer" not on your bucket list? It should be. Remember, we've been talking about how you, as dad, are unique and irreplaceable in your child's life. When it comes to parenting and your relationship as a caring nurturer to your child, it's no different. We often say that a good dad does three things well: provides, nurtures, and guides. Here's how you can do all three better.



The 24:7 Dad Understands Parenting Skills

The 24:7 Dad nurtures his children. Yes, nurturing is not just for mom. You should know how your parenting skills help your child physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially. Your child trusts and feels safe with you because you care about and nurture through the use of proven parenting skills. That's what we mean by being a Master Nurturer.

There are four ways every dad should interact with his child. If you do these four things, you'll be the dad who shows his thoughts, feelings, and actions on a daily basis in a way that's respectful.

1. The Master Nurturer Encourages His Child.

It sounds simple. We bet you're saying to yourself sarcastically, "Oh, NFI is telling us to encourage our kids, great. Thanks for the tip, NFI. Great, helpful stuff!" Please take a moment to stop and understand why we mention it. Do you realize that kids often send themselves negative messages? Who doesn't?!

As your child grows, they may learn to think and say things like "they're no good," "they're not smart," "they're too short," or "they're too tall." They hear these messages from friends, parents, TV, and through social media.

By encouraging your child with positive messages, you're also teaching your child to send good messages to themselves, such as "I'm smart," "I'm going to do well on this test," "I can become anything I want to become." This is a skill that will last a lifetime. Odds are good that if you are doing this for yourself—it will come out in your words to your child. Choose some things you can say to encourage your child, and try to say a few each day.

2. The Master Nurturer Listens to His Child.

Kids are by nature the most impatient human beings alive! They want things or want to do things the exact moment it enters their minds. They will ask for a cup of milk and wonder why the cup of milk doesn't appear in their hands as they are making the request. Kids don't like to wait. Depending on the age of your child, you can try telling them you hear what they want, and that you

know it's important to them. Saying, "I hear ya, you want milk. Awesome. I'll get you that delicious milk shortly. But right this second; I can't get the milk because I'm working. But we'll work together to get you milk as soon as I'm finished with work."

Our point is this: Telling your child you hear their request honors your child. It shows them that you're actively listening. This doesn't mean you give in to your child's every wish—only that you hear them. Check in to make sure you know what they want and then respond. This approach doesn't mean the answer to their request is always "yes." Ensuring they know that you heard what they want will "soften the blow" in case you need to tell them they can't have it, can't do the thing they want, or that they'll have to wait longer for what they want.

3. The Master Nurturer Avoids Negative Labels.

This point is a tough one. It takes looking inside yourself. Don't give your child a bad label based on what they want, say, or do. Dads can sometimes label what their children want, say, or do as bad, lazy, or silly. Worse, you may unknowingly label your child as bad, lazy, or silly to describe your child as an entire person. Bad labels only create more of what you don't want to see.

When your child wants, says, or does something you don't agree with, don't put a label on it. Here's an example of what not to say: "That's silly to want a bike right now." Instead say, "I understand you want a bike right now. Bikes are fun, and I love bikes too. We can try to get you a bike eventually, but there are some things a rider of bikes must do in order to be ready to get a bike." Do you hear the difference?

4. The Master Nurturer Focuses on Teaching His Child.

You can tear down your child after your child does something wrong; or, you can point out what your child did wrong again and again without saying what our children did correctly. This approach doesn't help your child learn from mistakes. If you don't point out the good your child does, your child will most likely only hear the bad labels instead of seeing the lessons. When your child does something wrong, ask, "What did you learn?" or "What should you do differently the next time?"

If your child doesn't see the lesson, point it out. But only point it out after you give ample time for your child to express what they learned. This approach honors your child and makes it more likely your child will listen to you. Besides, you might be surprised at how much your child will learn from a mistake. Use this tip not only when your child does something wrong, use it when they do something right.



The 24:7 Dad asks himself: How well do I “Parent?”



Question 5 > How well do I relate?

The 24:7 Dad builds and maintains healthy relationships with his children, wife/mother of his children, other family members, friends, and community. He knows and values how relationships shape his children and their lives. The 24:7 Dad knows how the relationship with his wife/mother of his children affects his children and does his best to create a good relationship with her for the sake of his children. He always looks to improve the skills he uses to communicate with others.

The 24:7 Dad asks himself: How well do I relate?

Three Rules to Follow When Talking with Your Child

We know you want to talk about relationships all day long. Ha! Just kidding. Seriously, though, when we talk about relationships, we could talk about many different things, but one of the most important topics is communication.

What makes the 24:7 Dad different from other dads is that he understands problems with communication start with him and no one else.

Here are three rules to follow for communicating with your child...

Odds are good you didn't wake up this morning and think, "You know, I should better communicate with my kid." While you know the importance of communication, you probably need a reminder that how you communicate daily is important.

Comparisons are sometimes helpful for tough topics. Let's try one. Instead of calling this tough topic "communication," let's call it "racing." Reframe your idea about what communication is and change the word "communication" to "racing." With racing, there are three rules professional drivers follow that apply to talking with your child.

Rule #1 — Know Your Racetrack

How you race depends on the track. Drivers know there are four types of racetracks, and they treat each track differently—mainly because each track requires a different strategy.

Likewise, the age or “track” your child is on should change how you communicate. Consider applying the four different racetracks to the stage of your child as follows:

Short tracks > These tracks are shorter than one mile and take a more physical strategy. In short-track racing, there’s more bumping of cars. If you’re the dad of a new baby, one of your main strategies should be physical touch. Hold your baby as much as possible. Communicating during this stage in your child’s life is as much about cuddling than it is about talking.

Intermediate tracks > These tracks are usually between one and two miles. They’re challenging, but somewhat “routine” in that all of these tracks are made up of four left turns. The dad of a school-aged child understands the importance of establishing daily routines when it comes to connecting with his child. During this time, you’re busy and so is your child. So every moment must count.

Superspeedways > These tracks are usually two miles or more. They’re the fastest of all the tracks in professional racing. The dad of a teenager understands just how fast time passes at this stage of his child’s life. Communication during this stage must take on great quality; because often, the fast pace of life as the dad of a teen may seem to reach speeds of over 200 miles per hour.

Road Courses > Only the most experienced drivers do well on road courses. As a dad of a college-age child or beyond, you will have more “turns” than the other three dads. At this stage, it will be how well you maneuver through the turns that will give you a successful outcome.

Become an expert on the track you are racing for each stage in your child’s life. While you can prepare somewhat for what will happen, you must complete many laps around the track to gain the experience you need for effective communication with your child.



Rule #2—Practice, Practice, Practice. And then Practice More.

When drivers aren't "on the track," they practice. Their work is about more than the race event. All of their time leading up to the race is spent on practice.

When is the right time to practice? Early and often. Just like the best drivers raced cars when they were young, you must spend time and talk with your child early and often. It's never too early to talk and listen to your child. Spend time with your child and have a purpose in what you do during your time together. Think quantity and quality. Seize every moment to get practice "on the track."

Rule #3—Make Adjustments

Drivers know success isn't simply about practice and performing well on the track. The best drivers know the importance of making adjustments.

Adjustments are crucial in racing. A driver that can't lead his team to make mid-race adjustments won't win. Likewise, you'll learn to be a dad by experience. You'll make mistakes. Things will go wrong. Great drivers know the importance of making adjustments, from research and development off track to communicating the necessary adjustments to his team during the race.

Research and development is the science behind the racing. If you toured a NASCAR research facility, for example, you typically won't see the driver and the car together. Likewise, you'll need to study fatherhood, even if you don't live with your child. Become a student of fatherhood. Learn from books, articles, magazines, and more experienced dads.

As a racecar driver, how you race depends on your knowledge and skill of the track, the amount of time you practice, and the amount of effort in making adjustments. With the right skills, experience, and practice, you can be successful with any track...err...with any child!

The 24:7 Dad asks himself: How well do I relate?

How Much Difference Can a 24:7 Dad Make?

How a Man Named Emil Helps Dads in Torrington, Connecticut

It's been a while, but our staff at NFI can still sense the silent, awkward pause on the other end of the phone. When we talked with Emil, he spoke excitedly about his work with dads in Torrington, CT that he takes through NFI's evidence-based [24:7 Dad® program](#). When we asked him "the why" behind his work with dads, his voice took on a tone of conviction. In 40 minutes of conversation, we learned what's happening with dads in Torrington, while being reminded of the conviction it takes to lead a group of dads.

How does Emil find dads to help?

"Every father thinks he knows what he's doing," says Emil. "There's so many programs for mom, but dad has nothing." He continues, "We ended up going into the county court system, into the child-support court system. They had no place to send dad but prison, or to anger management." The county magistrates had nothing but prison for dads who didn't pay child support before Emil came along offering something different. "If the dad doesn't pay child support, you warn him...you warn him...you warn him...then you lock him up," Emil explained.

He recruits dads into his group through referrals from many sources that include family courts, hospitals, employment agencies, Head Starts, and other community-based organizations. "I've worked with over a thousand dads," says Emil. The biggest issue? "Many men feel their job is to put a roof over [their children's] head and feed them—and that's where it ends. Nothing more," says Emil.

What happens in the fatherhood program?

Most dads think they're the only ones to ever make a mistake. But something magical happens when a dad gets with other dads in a group. He starts to realize, "Yeah, I screwed up, but so did he." Maybe for the first time ever, this dad learns that we all make mistakes. Emil explains, "You can make a 30-minute mistake. **But you can't make a 30-minute mistake daily.**" **At some point, we have to find a reason to live better stories.** For some, the child is that reason.

Emil tells the dads he leads:

"There is nothing more valuable than your child. Nothing. Not the size of your house, how much money you make, what kind of car you drive, or what kind of vacation you take. Every decision you make has to place your child first."

Dads who attend Emil's group learn everything related to fatherhood, from relationships to communication to discipline. Unfortunately, many dads know very little about effective fathering and parenting. Emil points out that when all a dad knows is to yell as a form of discipline they must learn that they have other options. For a topic as seemingly simple as discipline, it can be difficult to know how to discipline when you were disciplined poorly by your parents.

Sadly, most dads Emil sees don't want to be like their own dad. But, as he explains, "They are 50 percent their dad and 50 percent their mom." You're the sum of your experiences and education. How you were parented is often how you parent. This is all fine and good unless you had less-than-perfect parenting models. Emil explains, "Alcoholism is a big issue. Drug abuse is an issue. Economy and jobs is an issue." He often asks to meet the dads' kids. He explains, "I can't help everyone, but when the father starts seeing how much he can help his kid, he can change."

When Emil meets the children of the dads he works with, he says, "I ask them, 'What do you think of this guy?' When they say, 'He's my daddy. I love my daddy. He's my world.'" These fathers break down. They haven't heard that before. A light bulb goes off." It's a 13-week fatherhood course. Emil says, "I don't throw guys out of the class after 13 weeks. They are all welcome to keep coming. They come back occasionally. I have gentlemen that have come back at least monthly for the last six years."



The Why Behind the What

When we spoke with Emil, he had been helping dads in Torrington for 10 years. At the time, he had a 12-year-old daughter and an infant son. Emil had a strong relationship with his dad, recalling how his dad used to tell him, “I love you so much it hurts.” Emil recalls that his dad was the first person he called upon after having his son. He simply said to his dad, “Now I understand what you mean.”

Emil's son, Emil Jr., was born with an intestinal problem. At three days old, he was transferred to a special teaching hospital in Connecticut. Ten days later, Emil's son was diagnosed with Down syndrome. A few years later, Emil lost his son to leukemia. “As a dad, there is nothing worse than being helpless,” Emil explained. We listened as, voice shaking, he recalled how helpless he felt as his son battled and eventually succumbed to the disease. Many of the dads he had served rallied around Emil. More than 200 attended his son's wake.

Emil told us, with conviction, why he cares so much about dads. “I still use my son in teaching the group. When a dad says, ‘I stay away because she [the mother] won't let me see my child,’ I reply, ‘I'd love to trade with you. You might be able one day to see your child. I can't choose. You can get on a phone and call at least. You can make your visits. I never will.’”

A Closing Message from Emil

As we closed the conversation, Emil had a message he wanted all dads to understand about having children:

“They need you all their life...be there. You need to be the man you want to see your daughter with. You don't want to see your son brutalize girls. So you don't need to brutalize the child's mom. Be there for your child. Nothing is more important.”

What Now?

Being a dad is awesome when you are equipped with the skills to feel prepared and provide as a dad. Remember, being a dad takes practice. It's critical that you know what to do as well as what options you have. Maybe you don't lead several dads like Emil does. But you most certainly understand the importance of leading your child and helping dads around you be better dads. Remember, any dad can be a great dad by being involved, responsible, and committed to his child. But it requires answering the tough questions and taking action to keep working on being the best dad you can be.

So again, we thank you. Thank you for desiring to be a 24:7 Dad. By taking this step, you're more than likely to become the dad your child needs!

