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"A Day for Dad"

How to Make This Father’s Day One to Remember

By Kimberly Blaker

It doesn't matter who my father was; it matters who I remember he was.

-- Anne Sexton

Fathers play a significant part in children’s lives. They influence children’s self-esteem and school performance, are important role models, and among other meaningful roles, make fun-loving playmates.

Father’s Day is just around the corner; so don’t be caught scrambling for the perfect way to show you care. Try some of these ideas, and make it a special day just for Dad that both of you will enjoy.

Video Surprise – Make a “World’s Best Dad” video that he’ll treasure for years to come. Put on your brainstorming cap for your own ideas, or try some of these. On videotape, share special memories of your dad, sing to him, read him a poem, or do skits. Get the whole family involved and conduct interviews with each other with Dad as the main topic. Don’t forget your props such as a banner or

collection of his prized possessions including sports trophies or equipment that tell who he is. Finally, be sure to let him know just how much he means to you.

King for the Day – It isn’t everyday that dad is waited on hand and foot. Offer to be his loyal servant for the day, and bring him coffee and toast in bed; fetch his newspaper; lie out his clothes, bath towel, and mat; be host or hostess and serve his beverages and snacks; clean up after him and anything else to give him the royal treatment.

Memories of Dad – Purchase a scrapbook, and create a record of memories about your father and you. Include photos of special outings, events, and holidays you’ve had together and other memorabilia from family vacations and activities such as concert or sporting event ticket stubs, postcards, and brochures. Next to each photo or item, describe your memories of those times together with your father.

A Man to Remember – Get your creative juices flowing, and write a poem for your dad. You need not be a poet to come up with a few thoughtful words to say how much he means. Describe the impact he’s had on your life, how he’s helped you to become the person you are today, and what he is to you. Then print it on stationary, matte and frame it.

Musical Moment– Take your father to see his favorite band or performing artist, enjoy a jazz or blues festival, or pack up some lawn chairs, and enjoy a local concert-in-the-park.

Togetherness Takes Two – Has your dad been putting off the dreaded task of cleaning out his attic, basement, or garage? Give him a gift of shelving materials

and brackets, wall racks and ceiling hooks, and storage crates. Then spend the day helping him to get it organized while catching up on old times.

World’s Greatest – Let dad know that he’s the greatest 365 days a year! Give him a “World’s Greatest Dad” coffee mug, t-shirt, book cover, book marker, wallet card, or other trinket that he’ll see or use regularly.

Sports Buff’s Surprise – Take your dad for a sporting good time. Play a game of golf, tennis, or basketball, go fishing at the river’s edge, or enjoy a paddle around a lake. If being a spectator is his thing, purchase tickets to his favorite sporting event such as a baseball or soccer game, boxing match, or auto race.

Weekend Getaway – Get in touch with nature and each other on a camping trip for two. Either rough it in a tent or rent a mini cabin at a state park, and spend your weekend enjoying nature hikes, sight seeing, fishing, boating, playing cards, and taking it easy together.

Father’s Day Feast- As the old adage goes; the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach. So, treat dad to a mouth-watering meal on the bar-be-que. Fix him his favorite: steak, ribs, chicken, burgers, or chops for starters, and don’t forget the grilled potatoes or squash, garlic bread or rolls, fresh green beans or asparagus, sweet corn, potato salad, and last but not least, his favorite dessert.

Treat Him Like a King – What better way to show your appreciation for all his hard work than to indulge him? Give your father a gift certificate for a professional massage, which will be sure to please.

Just the Two of Us – Put together a photo collage of you and your father. There are many ways to do this. Find instructions at your nearby craft store and create a

Decoupage photo collage, keep it simple with a multi-photo frame, or purchase a unique 3D Photo Collage frame from AP Frame Company, Inc. by calling (800) 229-7707 or visiting <http://www.apframe.com/>

Take a Stroll – Enjoy a peaceful walk together in the park or the country. Better yet, gather your bikes or roller blades, hit a scenic bike path, and enjoy the summer breeze.

Certificates of Appreciation – Show Dad you appreciate his hard work by returning the favor. Make coupons that say: “In appreciation for all that you do, Dad, please redeem this certificate for a hassle-free car wash by me!” Other favors include sweeping out the garage, mowing the lawn, or any other task for which he normally takes responsibility.

Catch a Flick.....or two – Treat your dad to a movie fest. Rent a couple newly released videos or some of his long time favorites, or head to the cinemas for a double feature. Whether you take the movies in at home or the theatre, don’t forget the hot, buttered popcorn, candy, and soft drinks.

Get in Touch with His Soft Side – Give your dad a book of poetry specially written for fathers. Try one of these:

Fathers: A Collection of Poems by David Ray and Judy Ray

To My Father With Love: A New Collection of Poems by Susan Polis Schultz

Thoughts to Share With a Wonderful Father: A Collection of Poems by Blue Mountain Arts Collections

A Gift of Giving – Does your dad have a favorite cause or charity such as the Humane Society, the Nature Conservancy, or American Cancer Society? If so,

why not give him a membership or make a donation in his name? Remember that small donations add up and are always appreciated.

PULL QUOTE: You need not be a poet to come up with a few thoughtful words to say how much he means.

PULL QUOTE: Get in touch with nature and each other on a camping trip for two.

SIDEBAR IDEAS OR WAYS TO LOCALIZE: List special events taking place in your area for Father’s Day. Include quotes from area women and men about what makes fathers special, or quotes from area fathers about fatherhood.

Kimberly Blaker of Michigan writes for parenting and women's magazines.

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