Priceless Video: A Philly Father Forgives

Contributed by the dads @ fathers.com Friday, 18 September 2009

Maybe you saw the funny and engaging replay of the father and daughter at the baseball game in Philadelphia a while back: Steve Monforto made a great catch on a foul ball, a dream he has had since he started attending Phillies games at three years old.

He celebrated with the fans around him, then handed the ball to his 3-year-old daughter Emily. And Emily ... threw the ball over the railing! How did Steve react? Watch the video here.

As the video shows, Steve reacted with shock at first, but very quickly regained his composure, then simply smiled and gave Emily a long hug. "I think she was a little startled by the reaction," he explained. "I just wanted her to know it was OK." According to Marc Newman of mlb.com, this story demonstrates " the real glory of the game right there, a father hugging his little girl to assure her that she did nothing wrong. "

Dad, how would you respond in that situation? How do you respond when your child makes a mistake, does something careless, or even disobeys or defies you? Although the example above wasn't over an earth-shattering issue, we would do well to imitate Steve's response: regain our composure and be quick to forgive our kids. Even when it's appropriate that our children go through tough consequences for their actions, they need to know that we have forgiven them. That's an important part of the fathering fundamental of loving our children.

Forgiveness provides our children with the clean slate they need; it affirms our trust in them to do better the next time. They may even do things that seem "unforgivable," but our love for them should quickly take over and motivate us to give them what they really need, and that usually isn't a lecture or cursing or letting them know how much they have disappointed us, but comfort and instruction.

When we extend our children forgiveness, they are much more likely to do the same for others—including us. Helping our children learn from their mistakes is still important, but it can come after they are assured of our love (and perhaps after we have cooled down a bit).

ACTION POINTS

- Attend an outdoor event— sports or something else— with your child. Just enjoy being together!
- Think of a recent situation where you overreacted with your child. (If you can't think of any, ask your children or their mom.) Go to your child and seek his or her forgiveness.
- If you need to, practice these statements out loud: "I was wrong." "I'm sorry." "Will you forgive me?"
- Share this message and the video with another dad so he can be encouraged and learn from Steve's experience.
- Express your love and commitment to your children. Let them know that you love them and you're proud of them—no matter what.
- Discuss the meaning of "forgiveness" with your children. Does it mean you're approving negative behavior? Does it mean forgetting too?

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