

Lindsey Mayfield  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade

Many things define my father in my mind. The smell of his Aramis cologne. The feel of the starched shirts he wears to work each day. The jingle of his keys on the counter as he comes home from work. None of these features, however, are as inherent to my dad as the stability he has provided in my life, even in my earliest memories. Over the last 18 years, I have transformed from a bossy, Barney-obsessed toddler to an outgoing, constantly on-the-go teenager. My interests have ranged from Wishbone to Britney Spears to t-ball to writing. Practically nothing in my life has stayed the same for long. Except my dad, that is.

When I was five, I would sit at our front door as my dad left for work. Everyday, without fail, my dad would wave goodbye to me through the sunroof of his car. Although he probably doesn't even remember, that small gesture was the highlight of my dad. Even now, 13 years later, it's the little things that my dad does that make me smile. He would never guess that when he's dancing to Bob Seger in the car, using phrases like "How 'bout them apples?" and "rat finks", that it's those type of moments that make me adore him.

The way he treats my mother, the way he hugs me goodbye each morning, the way he respects his parents. Each sneaks up on me from time to time and reminds me that, without him, I wouldn't be the person I am today. I guess, deep down, I'm that 5-year old sitting at the front door, waiting for a wave from her daddy. Even then, I knew that my dad was something to be proud of.

Ricki Butler  
11<sup>th</sup> Grade

A few years ago I can recall clearly my father presenting my worn out bike to our neighbor that had just moved in. I remember the jealousy that engulfed my mind. Why did he spend more time with someone who wasn't even his own blood? Where was my father when I needed him? Why was he handing down my possessions to this boy? I was beyond devastated. What did my father mean to me then? My father meant sadness, envy, and betrayal.

However, when I cleared my mind of the resentment, I could see clearly what my father saw in our neighbor. He saw himself. He saw a single mother struggling to raise her two children. He knew what it was like to be in that boy's shoes. All he wanted to do was provide him with a bike, show him that there was someone out there who understood him. But all I could feel was the desire to be understood by my father. What did my father mean to me then? My father meant guilt and pride.

In retrospect, my thought process was ridiculous. I was upset about an old bike being presented to a thirteen year old boy who never owned one before. I was infuriated even though I had a brand new bike in my garage that I never even used. I was agitated that my father wanted to try and offer this boy the life he never had, while all along, I was living a marvelous life. I had my father to learn from everyday, when this boy never had one. My father now means: respect, thoughtfulness, empathy, and love.

Hunter Sundermeyer  
10<sup>th</sup> Grade

Everything that I am, I am because of my father. Through my 16 years of living on this earth, he has always been there at my side. He helps me, he guides me, he teaches me and most important of all, he mentors me. I look up to my dad more than anyone else in the whole entire world. He is my hero.

My dad's name is Joe Sundermeyer, and he is the best dad you could ever find. He is a web designer / writer at Sprint. He loves to cook, run, listen to music, and read. My dad is also one of the kindest people I know. He never gets mad, and he always wants to help people. There is one memory of his kindness that sticks out more than any other. We were going to the Kansas City Zoo and he noticed a big family behind us in the ticket line. He paid their way into the zoo without any hesitation. Not because anyone was watching, but just because he knew it would be a nice thing to do. As long as I live, I will never forget that day.

Sports are one of my favorite things, baseball in particular. When I was little, my dad taught me how to catch a baseball, how to throw a strike, and how to hit a homerun. Whenever I play baseball, I want to do well so that I can make my dad proud. I know that he'll always be at my games cheering me on.

I do not have the words to describe how amazing my dad is, so I'll try to sum it up in nine. My dad is and always will be my hero. I love you dad.

Morgan Michael David Roth  
9<sup>th</sup> Grade

I honestly believe that my dad is the greatest father in the world for many reasons. He does so much for my family, let alone me. It is amazing to me that my dad is a great father because my dad has, to this day, never even met his own biological father. He left before my dad was even born. My dad had a step father that was good to him, but at times could be difficult and hard to get along with. He passed away.

My dad does so much for my family and me. He sacrifices so much for us that I truly believe that he would give his own life for us. He has done hours of work and gave tons of blood, sweat, and tears to support his family. Along with these thoughts and sacrifices he has maintained patience and has showed care, concern, and most importantly, love to his family.

I have a lot of memories of my father and hope to make many more with him. For example, I remember several years of coaching me in baseball (my sister in softball to this day), him tying a rope around his waist and that rope to a tarp in which my sister and I sat on as he ran around and pulled as a sled out in the freezing cold. A person can also ask many people, and they would say that my dad even used to carry me when I was a young baby as he mowed the lawn. One wouldn't see him anywhere unless he was carrying me in his arms. As difficult as that would be today, he still shows his love and care in many, many other ways. I remember many years of fishing, and recently, a couple years of hunting with my father. There is not enough paper in the world for me to share all of the fun and enjoyable moments and memories that I have of my father.

I cannot put into words how much I love my father. There is no way that a person could love something else as much or more than my father loves my family and me. He has also taught me many lessons in the game of life and continues to almost everyday. At those times, when he teaches me those things in driving, sports, school, religion, Christianity, love, or anything at all, it may seem as though he is being strict, mean, or unloving. I have to remember

*that the only reason why he is showing me these things is because he loves me and has experienced these things himself and just doesn't want to see me fail. At times that can be hard to keep in mind. But, no matter what, I will always remember that he has never let me or my family down and shows how much he loves us all.*

*There is much more that I would like to include in this paper, but this is what my father means to me and why I believe he is the greatest dad in the world!!!*

Devin Denney  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade

To me my father is someone I can trust no matter what. I feel that I can go to him for anything and tell him anything. No matter what he's doing, if I need to talk to him at any time, he will drop what he's doing and listen. I feel that I can tell him anything and he won't tell a soul. My dad never lets me down or fails in his word. He stands up for me and I can go to him for advice. He takes the time to teach me things, explain things to me and help me if I don't understand. If I need help with something, all I have to do is ask him and he's there for me.

My father almost always is at my sports games supporting me, and when he's not, he's working to support his family. He works hard to provide enough money for me to go to a private school. And has taught me to work hard and be diligent.

My father has been a good example for me and my two sisters. He has taught us to respect elders and those in authority over us. He has also taught us to never give up or back down from a challenge. He has taught us to love God and others. This is what my father means to me.

John Williams  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade

What my father means to me is a person who is there to talk to me...a person who cares and wants to take care of me...a person who wants the best for me. What my father means to me is a father who disciplines to help further along...a father who would do anything to stay with his family...a father that treats me and my mother right...a man who is not afraid to say no...a father who can understand or try to understand me...a father that is in my life...a father that wants to come to a track meet or a band concert...someone who is there to hold up the family. Most of all "What my father means to me" is a Godly father one who will teach me the Bible and different things...a father that knows how to be a father. That is "What my Father means to me".

Shily Ann Peck  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade

Think about what a composer's best symphony means to them. Imagine them listening to each piece over and over. Imagine them re-living each symphony again and again in their head. Try to feel the burning happiness in their gut when they hear their best work. Now imagine a girl who finally has a genuine father in her life. That's pretty much what it's like with me and my step-dad, Kenny. He is like my greatest symphony.

I'm not trying to be dramatic or anything. I do have a real dad in my life. It's just different with Kenny. Kenny and I like to talk, and like to watch TV. Our favorite show to watch together is "Madhouse". It's about racing. It's hard for me to do these things with my real dad because he works out of state (Alaska). But Ken will be there for me.

I am supposed to give examples of things that demonstrate Kenny's character. Kenny is caring, fun, protective, nice and laughs at all my jokes. He is well-rounded so sometimes serious and hard-working. Some examples of this are he does things for his friends, like plow their driveway or trim their trees or pull them out of the snow, and if I lose or run out of something, I tell Kenny. I have no frustrations with Kenny. He thinks everything I say is funny and everything we talk about is important and I like that. He is just an awesome person and we have an awesome relationship. I love him to the moon and back and want him around forever. And he will be.

Jalen Nicholas Bolton  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade

My dad is in my life but he isn't. I say this because I feel like he's there physically but not emotionally. I mean he buys me clothes and he provides for me, but I just don't think that's enough. I need him to show me that he loves, me, and just not by buying me stuff because love is a lot richer than money. I think all boys should have a father in their life to prepare them for the world...what and what not to do. Half of African American boys grew up without a father. That's really sad.

I remember when I played baseball all the other player's dads were in the bleachers, but when I looked out I was sad because my father wasn't. He was in prison. He usually was always in prison or running the streets. I use to go home and cry and asked myself is it my fault? Am I the cause? Why is my father always in prison? Why couldn't he just stay out of trouble?

I love my dad. I mean I know he has made some bad choices in life and has been in and out of prison all my life. But I forgive him. Even though he hasn't been that good of a father I know he's trying to. I hope when he gets out of prison he will change his ways and step up and make a change, and fix our relationship like its suppose to be. It's never too late. Never!

Gabe Combs  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade

"My Father Means My Life". My dad means my life to me because he loves me and puts food on my table. He loves watching me play sports. What's awesome about him is that he don't care if I win or if I lose as long as I had a good game and had fun. He loves watching me play baseball the most because he likes baseball the most. My father is the hardest working man I've every known. He only missed four days in 20 years.

My dad loves me so much he would risk his life for me and my family he is a very brave man. My dad is very nice because the takes us out to eat every Saturday and Sunday. When I make a mistake my dad encourages me and doesn't get mad or yell at me. He just says I'll get it next time. He always spends time with me when he has free time. We talk about sports and upcoming things.

My dad and I sometimes wrestle in my living room. I try to stop him but he is an unstoppable beast that can not be taken down. Sometimes I'm jogging with my dad in the morning. He jogs so long without stopping he is a incredible athlete. When me and my dad go to the pool sometimes he leaps out of the pool acting like an enormous, ferocious, dangerous shark. I'm lucky to have my dad because we go on vacations every year to awesome, wonderful, luxurious places.

Every time someone writes about his dad they always say he's the best but deep down inside I know my dad "out Father's them all. He is the nicest, loving man ever. I wouldn't trade him for anything. He is truly the BEST!

Kellis Boatright  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

### THE BEST DAD EVER!!!!

I think my dad is the father of the year because he is always there for me and he always encourages me to do my best. My dad also has never missed a cheer competition of mine and when I cheer I can hear him say "Come on Kellis, you can do it" so I keep on trying and I got 2<sup>nd</sup> place and he was so proud of me. He is also there to help me when I have trouble. He also means so much to me because when I am nervous he helps me out by asking me what's the matter and telling me that it is ok and when I am mad he makes me some hot chocolate and we sit on the couch and talk about it. Also, when I am sad he tries to make me laugh by telling me funny jokes and he calls me Kellis-Smellis. He also does not just take care of me and my sister but he also takes care of my two cousins that do not have a dad and he became their dad and they love him very much like I do and that is why I think my dad should be the father of the year but I also know that he will still be proud of me!!!!

Kyla Warman  
2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

What my father means to me. I love my father a lot. He protects me if I'm scared. He says it's ok and he looks everywhere in the house. He says don't worry if there was anything to happen to you, he would be there right beside me. My dad means incredibly everything to me. He goes to work every day so that our family can survive. He buys us food and he tries as hard as he can to make sure that my family has a roof over our head. He always put our family first. When I was three years old, I cracked my head open at Wal-Mart and he rushed me to the hospital.

This is why I love my dad so much.

Harlín Moreno-Rodríguez  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade

My Uncle Ricardo is so special. He always plays with me. Sometimes he plays outside with me and we play football. Sometimes I read books to him because he says it is important to learn. Sometimes he lets me sit outside with him. It makes me feel happy to spend time with my uncle.

My uncle helps my mama. He went to my school and helped translate so my mom could talk to my teacher. Sometimes he goes to my brother's class and he takes my mama to help her. He picks me up from tutoring after school because my mom works cooking food and she comes home late.

When I was a baby, my uncle helped teach me how to walk. He taught me how to play football, and I like football. He taught my brother and me how to baseball.

My uncle makes me feel happy. I'm glad to see him when he comes to my house. I would like to play more with my uncle.