

# 10 WAYS TO BE AN ALL PRO DAD

- 1 Love Your Wife** True love is not a feeling. It is a decision. It's an act of the will to be patient, kind, humble, hopeful, giving, faithful and trusting. When you commit to loving your wife this way, your feelings for her, and hers for you, will follow. Actively loving your wife will radically strengthen your marriage and will also be incredibly beneficial to your children. The number one source of security for kids is to know that their dad loves their mother and is steadfastly committed to her well-being.
- 2 Spend Time With Your Kids** How you spend your time reflects what's important to you. If you value your kids, you'll want to be with them. You don't need to wait for the perfect time, when you can take a vacation or an afternoon off from work. Instead, grab those small pockets of time as they present themselves throughout the day. Call your kids on your cell phone between appointments just to say "hi." Send them an e-mail from work. Read to them at bedtime. Carve out a few minutes to help them with their homework. Go to breakfast and drop them off at school. Grab every moment you can get with your children.
- 3 Be a Role Model** It's impossible to underestimate the importance of a father modeling the type of behavior he desires to see in his children. Role models don't just talk the talk; they walk the walk of an honorable man. A great place to start is consistency. Do you keep your word? Do you stand up for what is right, even when it costs you? Are you trustworthy? Are you loyal in your relationships? Be what you want your children to be!
- 4 Understand Your Children** Like you, every child has unique DNA, unique fingerprints, and a unique personality. In order to be the best father you can be, you'll need to understand your children as individuals. How do your kids think? What do they like or dislike? You'll also want to know what your children need from you the most. One may need encouragement. The other responds better with affection. And this crucial understanding can only come if you're committed to really getting to know them.
- 5 Show Affection** Children long for a secure place in this fast-paced world. They find it most often in the warm embrace of a parent. As children grow, so does their need for acceptance and a sense of belonging. Such a need is met when a father offers a hug, or a kind word, and expresses his appreciation and love for his children. But showing affection doesn't stop there. Make sure to say, "I love you" every day.
- 6 Enjoy Your Children** Have you been to a baseball game or ballet recital recently? Some parents at these kinds of events are way too focused on their kids achieving rather than just having fun. Push your kids when they need to be pushed, but savor just being with them. Wrestle on the floor with your children. Build a fort with your son. Have a pretend tea party with your daughter. Enjoy being with them, doing what they like to do. They'll grow up too fast and leave you wishing you had more time with them just to hang out and have fun.
- 7 Eat Together As a Family** Most children today don't know the meaning of a family dinnertime. Yet the communication and unity built during this time is integral to a healthy family life. Sharing a meal together—breakfast, lunch or dinner—provides structure to an often hectic schedule. It also gives kids the opportunity to talk about their lives. This is a time for fathers to listen, as well as give advice and encouragement. Most importantly, however, it is a time to be together on a daily basis.
- 8 Discipline with a Gentle Spirit** True discipline is a function of a father's love for his children, which is why it should never be hard-nosed or harsh. Discipline's role is not to intimidate or tear down, but to mold and to correct. Correcting your kids should be done in private, and you and your wife should be unified in how you discipline. Strive to be consistent.
- 9 Pray and Worship Together** Families that have a healthy prayer life and take worshipping God seriously help their children to understand that there is an ultimate authority in their lives – an authority who provides moral absolutes for them to live by. Every child needs to know that there is a right and wrong, good and evil. Living under the authority of God will give them that knowledge.
- 10 Realize You're a Father Forever** Someday every father must let go of the youthful activities that bond him with his children. But a good father realizes that as he allows his children their freedom to direct their own lives, he doesn't abandon them at a dorm room, a wedding altar, or the door of their first job. He continues to encourage, coach and convey his wisdom to his children forever.

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**One Hour a Month...** to participate in an *All Pro Dad's Day* breakfast. Before school starts, fathers and their children meet with other dads and kids in the school cafeteria or a local restaurant and discuss a range of family topics, spend time together, and create fun memories.

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