

Dads Are Not Second Class Parents

by Joey Donovan Guido

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Life is good. I'm lucky enough to have a job as a writer for a major catalog company. I'm happy to have a job, although it is usually quite unsatisfying. But like most dads, my family needs me to work, so I work. Overall, I feel unhappy a whole lot — but that seems to be the case with most people. My family loves me. I have two wonderful boys, a beautiful wife and a fuzzy cat.

So why am I unhappy?

Because every day, when I go to work my heart breaks.

It's not that I don't want to work — I am far from lazy. I just don't want to miss my kids growing up. The first step, the first word, the close relationship where I am more than a paycheck and a weekend play buddy. I used to have my own freelance copywriting business, working from a home office. My first son, Max, had me around every day. I was part of the inner workings of his day AND I paid the bills. My second son, Joss, does not have that luxury. I can't take a break from work and play for a few minutes, or take him to the pizzeria for lunch. And quite simply, I feel he's being cheated. And so am I.

Missing my kids is not a phenomenon that is relegated to me, or to the male population for that matter. It's the 21st century, and many women are working just as many hours as men (when did the 8-hour work day turn into the 9-hour work day? Not to mention the countless parents that must work far more than this new standard of the 45-hour workweek).

The difference is that moms are allowed to talk about it. They're allowed to miss their kids. Open up *Parenting magazine*, and it's full of pages to help MOM. Meanwhile, dad is relegated to a one or two page article in the back of the magazine — quite often on a totally detached topic (see the Dec/Jan 08 issue for an article on the perils taking the kids on vacation, "On the road again," — WHO CARES?). The title of the magazine says it all **Parenting: what matters to moms**. So I guess our job is limited to depositing the sperm and the weekly paycheck. Why is it socially unacceptable to talk about what we're going through? Like somehow we were never meant to REALLY raise our kids. I have been told by family members that it's my wife's job to raise my boys, not mine.

What's that about?

There are two kinds of dads. One is unfazed by what I'm talking about here. He doesn't mind being away from home. Maybe he's even glad to get away from his family for various reasons. The second kind of dad is what I call a **Real Dad**. Real Dads change diapers. Real dads get on the floor and play with their kids, and they feed them babas and yucky looking strained foods. And we miss our little pals — day after day, week after week.

My blog relates what I have been experiencing for the past 4 1/2 years since my first son was born. If it helps dads in any way, I'm glad. I'm just sick and tired of feeling like I'm some freak because I miss my boys.

This was one of the first articles I wrote for my Daddy Brain blog. Since then, the blog has flourished in ways I never imagined. Not only has it become a forum for dads to be heard, it has also evolved into a site that advocates equal rights for dads and kids. Topics include the adverse effects yelling at children; why hitting is not a good form of discipline; and the benefits allowing our children to be heard (along with respecting them as human beings).

Feel free to visit the site or contact me anytime.

And remember, you are not alone...

Links:

- www.daddybrain.wordpress.com
- <http://daddybrain.wordpress.com/2008/05/20/stop-yelling-daddy/>
- <http://daddybrain.wordpress.com/2008/05/03/equal-rights-for-kids-part-1-let-your-kids-decide/>
- <http://daddybrain.wordpress.com/2008/05/23/equal-rights-for-kids-part-2-dont-hit/>