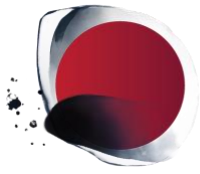




Five Things



I wish someone had talked about to me.



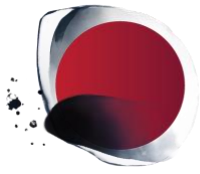
**5 things I wish someone had told me
about being a father
while building and running my own business**

I was running my own business when we decided to have a child. “I don’t want to live a life and someday regret that we did not try to have a family,” my wife declared. Quite simply, I agreed, and our son was born a year later. However, the idea of a child is quite different than the actuality.

The day you find out that you are going to be a father will be either one of your most exciting or most fearful. Most likely, it will involve both contrasting feelings. With a child on the way, you will soon be responsible for another person's entire life. The responsibility inherent in parenting can be daunting for obvious reasons. It will also be equally wonderful. Here are a few things I wish someone had talked about to me:

1. When I first held my baby, I was confronted with a sense of aloneness and fear. I realized that I really did not know what it would mean to be a parent. I had no idea what to expect. Doubt, fear, confusion, and a host of conflicting feelings arose right along with pride and joy. And these conflicting feelings are okay to feel.

2. Having a child in your life will be one of the greatest challenges you will face. It will also be an extraordinary opportunity to embrace the blessings that their presence brings. Bringing a life into the world is one of our most creative acts, and few actions have such



far-reaching ramifications. Whatever feelings arise, welcome them all. Find within yourself the understanding that your children are precious gifts. Find the courage to accept them just as they are. You are their father.

3. When I became a father, I plunged headlong into the unknown. As beautiful and enriching as the experience was, a deep and unexpected pain arose. Feelings of love were shadowed by the terror of loss. With the new life, a fear of death arose. Suppressed memories of my own infancy pressed inward. Parenting kindled the smoldering embers of a childhood lived long ago. Memories of myself as a child with my own parents burned through many interactions with my son. For better or worse, my parents live inside me, figures that remain deep within my heart. Life with our children, for all of its richness, is ultimately very complex. When we interact with our child, we are not only dealing with their behavior and what is in front of us, we are reminded of how we were treated as a child by our parents, siblings and just about everyone who participated in our development. We are confronted with the influence of friends, cultural dictates and expectations as well as the influences of our partner and the complexity of their family history. Everything having to do with being a parent is steeped in a stew of past, present and future parental influences.

4. Before you walk through the door, join in a conversation, or sit down in the playroom, consider this: your presence will always change what was there before you arrived. It may or may not be for the better, depending on who is making the



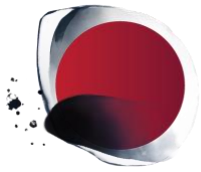
accommodations to bring your world into accord with your child's world. Always ask yourself, "Am I ready for the change that is about to come?"

5. There is no place to hide from our children. Where would we go so that they could not see us, feel us, and experience every nuance of who we are?

*We must be aware of what is really taking place in a moment
and then be willing to manage that moment
so that it is congruent with our child's experience.*

This alignment between our internal world and the communication we use to express or disguise it is fully available to our children. As they experience our attempt to communicate in an authentic way, they learn to do the same. Our children will teach us everything we need to know about ourselves, if we are willing to trust the situation, trust our children just the way they are and resolve to include all of who we are as a father, just the way we are, in this and every moment. If we can find a way to stay with the full challenge of parenting as life continues to unfold, we can then grow together.

What does this have to do with running my business? I learned that one can do both. How? Run a business and at the same time participate fully with my family in such a way that one doesn't defeat the other. Know this: Being a father presents the opportunity to start fresh each day. We literally can choose in any moment to be who our child needs us to be. The best part is that we don't have to work too hard to figure this out. If we listen, our children will tell us! What could be simpler?



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