

Father Leaders

In the last 50 years women have changed the world. After centuries of struggle—struggles that are not over—I agree with Tom Peters who assessed women as leaders in this way, “Women roar. Women rule.” Women ascended to public and business power by employing many tools: debate, dialogue, demonstrations, mentoring, strategizing, and risk-taking. They—with the help of many male allies—liberated themselves from the confines of the house and the confines of strangling gender roles. In an odd asymmetry their forceful revolution quietly liberated men. Our liberation—to lead at home and be freed from our gender chains—came without our employing the tools, strategies, and the constant rich dialogue that characterized the women’s movement.

I write this as Father’s Day approaches, and I am celebrating the chance to be an everyday leader at home. I am eager for the dialogue, debate and mentoring that will help us to shine as much in the home-world as our wives and daughters, nieces and neighbors are doing in the public sphere. I am profoundly grateful that women fought for their space and created ours. Jennifer’s aspirations and career choice opened up an incredible opportunity for me; often a difficult and confusing one, but always a rich opportunity. As men bear the weight of many of the economic cutbacks—especially in manufacturing and construction—I hope that some will walk eagerly back into their homes to be everyday leaders and create a great workplace culture there with their kids. Whether we are the lead parent at home or not, our success and happiness will grow as we (learn to) talk more and better with each other.

In order to spur dialogue you might consider giving a book or CD that will help dad (or a reflective grandpa) to see his nontraditional gifts and develop them fully.

- ☒ My friend Kevin O’Shea has written an insightful book called *The Fatherstyle Advantage: Surefire Techniques Every Parent Can Use to Raise Confident and Caring Kids*.
- ☒ Many newspapers now feature blogs for dads—“dadtalk” seems to be a way to find a bunch. One of the great things about blogs is that you can engage with others there! And since one of the challenges for the primary parent is that it’s somewhat isolating, a blog’s a nice way to find a virtual community.
- ☒ You can find a solid list of parent books at Amazon. One of the best in that bunch is, *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys*; it’s a thoughtful guide to raising emotionally healthy boys. Also on the list, is *Reviving Ophelia*:

Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls, a rather frightening but helpful look at what adolescent girls go through.

- ☒ I have ventured into this area by taking leadership principles and transposing them into the world of parenting; you can find my CD with ten lessons to "Be The Parent Your Children WANT To Follow" at www.danmulhern.com.