



Dads Search for Meaning

by Joe Gandolfo

I enjoy writing articles about “*Being a Dad*”, and I get pumped up when I give a presentation or do a workshop on fatherhood and parenting. I thoroughly love being a Dad to my two sons – Cole and Duncan.

Furthermore, I continually look forward to my encounters with other Dads and the conversations we share about fatherhood. When these conversations happen, I find that Dads really enjoy talking about being a *Dad* – just like moms enjoy talking about being moms.

Recently, I have found myself in a greater number of conversations about fatherhood – both with moms and dads. The conversations with other Dads boil down to the joys and heartbreaks, the challenges and opportunities, and the smiles and frustrations that come with being a Dad in today’s world.

Desperate housewives we are not, the “dead beat dad” label is a misrepresentation and the engaged, yet goofy, tool handling home improvement Dad is limited in scope. Dads, or more accurately, the image we have of Dad’s in today’s society is a liability to all of the Dad’s out in the world trying passionately to make a positive difference in the lives of their children. Not to mention the liability it is to our children and even moms.

Up until the Industrial Revolution (IR), Dads were a primary parent, children being turned over to Dad at an early age to help work the farm or to work in the shop. To have the kids help was needed, but Dads helped guide them as they grew. The IR took Dads off the farms, out of the shops and into the factories. The roles of moms and dads changed radically for the first time in history.

We as parents, a community, and a society must look beyond what is thought of fatherhood today to see more clearly and compassionately what the majority of Dads’ desire in their heart – to be more connected with their children and to have a positive impact on their lives. We as Dads no longer need to sit in silence and

isolation wondering if we alone have these thoughts and feelings about being a more involved and effective dad – there are literally millions of us Dads who share this common desire and who are trying, albeit quietly.

An open dialogue is needed amongst dads, parents and communities that allow Dads to recreate a positive image of Dads in our society today. Dads need to come together to find a common language that allows us to have greater effectiveness. Moms want support and they deserve it. Dads want respect for their value, and they deserve it as well. All of us need to let go of the past to create better models of fatherhood, and support Dads efforts even so they may be different than how moms do it. Moms and dads bring value to the table, let us embrace and make room for both.

Listen to Joe's free daily podcast – ***Teen Success Radio*** – available on iTunes.

His new book ***The Greatest Teenage Myth in the World*** is now available @ www.JosephGandolfo.com or www.TheGreatestTeenageMythInTheWorld.com

Joe Gandolfo is on a mission to ***champion the greatest commodity in today's world – our youth, teenagers, young adults and college students***, and to rally, strengthen and energize the adults – parents, educators, mental health professionals and organizations - who work with and care about our greatest commodity in the world.

Joe works as a ***professional speaker, success coach, seminar leader motivational counselor and author***. He brings 20 years experience working with youth, teen-agers, student-athletes, professional athletes, adults, parents, educators, public and private schools, organizations and associations.

His clients have included: *Georgia Tech Athletic Association, Rockdale County Schools, Cobb County Schools, Cobb Teen Leadership, YMCA, Childcare Resource Network, University of Clemson, University of West Georgia, PGA of America, Milwaukee Brewers, Coca-Cola, SouthCoast Hospitals, Owens-Corning and MPI Georgia Chapter.*

He has been an adjunct professor at Georgia Tech (1996-2000) and Georgia State (2005-06). He was on staff at the Homer Rice Center for Sports Performance (2000-07). He has had a private consulting practice since 1991.

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