

10 Fallacies of Fatherhood



Tim Alba

www.timalba.com

WD!

10 Fallacies of Fatherhood

Fallacy

1. Be who you are
2. Kids need you to be a super hero
3. It's the thought that counts
4. Kids don't know your secrets
5. Friends influence kids more than you do
6. You deserve respect
7. Never let 'em see you sweat
8. Keep work & home separate
9. Peer pressure ends in school
10. Bonding is Mom's job

Reality

Be who your kids need you to be
Kids need you to be a character hero
Well-intended is not well done
Kids already know your character
Kids are like you on steroids
Kids reflect what they expect at home
Let 'em know the real you, warts & all
Work & home are interchangeable
Life gets more intensive & expensive
Bonding with Dad forges godly legacies

See Discussion Guide on page 7

10 Fallacies of Fatherhood

Fallacy #1: Be who you are

As a boy, I sang Sammy Davis, Jr.'s famous lyrics: "I can't be right for somebody else if I'm not right for me. I gotta be free." Being me sounds so good, but it isn't what my kids need. Being me is being the "natural" me – the default person I was without Jesus. And I no longer want to be that person. Jesus saved me to be who He intends me to be, not who I prefer by default.

Reality #1: Be who your kids need you to be

As the biblically-appointed spiritual leader of the home, don't abdicate your role to mom who already has so much on her God-given plate. Yes, kids need dads to be strong, but they also need dads to listen to their hearts, speak their language, and change to meet their needs. In order for your kids to want what they need to be faithful, you must be who your kids need you to be.

Question: Are you the dad you want to be OR the dad your kids need you to be?

Fallacy #2: Kids need you to be a super hero

Kids love superheroes who are smart, strong, and find a way. Superheroes are always there, open imaginations, and inspire kids to dream big. The problem is when superheroes are the only heroes a child has. Thankfully, my dad is my hero. He's smart, strong, and finds a way. By always being there and living his values, my dad opens my imagination and inspires me to become a Christ-follower. Like any great parent, though, his servant-leadership isn't a fantasy; it's real.

Reality #2: Kids need you to be a character hero

More than superheroes, kids need you to be a character hero who instills character in them, speaks character over them, and celebrates the character already within them. Character heroes aren't born. They develop. They learn. They seek and receive counsel. And they help others, especially kids, grow to do the same. Mold a culture that kids can believe in now and want to copy decades later. You aren't winning popularity contests; you're winning their hearts.

Question: Are you trying to be your kids' superhero OR their character hero?

Fallacy #3: It's the thought that counts

On my wife's 24th birthday, I said, "I intended to buy you 24 red roses but it didn't work out." That was the day I learned that Anna didn't care about my intentions. She wanted the roses. So too, kids get tired hearing about good intentions. They tune out that you're too tired or got tied up at work. Kids love your efforts, but loath your excuses. They may even say they're fine, but as is the case with Momma, "fine" isn't fine.

Reality #3: Well-intended is not well done

Godly legacies start with good intentions, but they're defined by kept promises. Kids typically even forgive your lapses, if accompanied by sincere apologies. But you can't talk your way out of consequences you act your way into. Talk without action and a walk that doesn't match your talk – either way, well-intended is not well done. Teaching kids to choose well is one of the greatest gifts a dad can give his kids – a gift that keeps on giving for generations to come.

Question: Are you modeling a pattern of well-intended OR well done?

Fallacy #4: Kids don't know your secrets

Your integrity is like a jigsaw puzzle. Each piece is part of a bigger picture of your character. They may not know ever little secret you're hiding, but they know you. Secrets mold your kids' character, but not how you want. And while kids don't buy a story of deceit that you're selling, thankfully, they'll likely buy a story of integrity worth selling.

Reality #4: Kids already know your character

Integrity is also like an impressionist painting. Up close, each dot of integrity looks random, but stepping back, kids can see how those dots together tell your story. You're too close to see it, but they can. They're students of you, even if you aren't a student of them. But kids can also spot true integrity, even if they don't yet admit it. And when they're older, they'll likely emulate your character, as we'll see in the next fallacy/reality.

Question: When your kids see, do they see secrets OR true integrity?

Fallacy #5: Friends influence kids more than you do

Friends have incredible influence. But instead of trying to pick our kids' friends, Anna and I helped them know how to pick good friends and why it mattered. Kids' friends will either reinforce or repel your influence, but no one – repeat no one – has more influence in your kids' lives than you. Never let society tell you otherwise. Granted, kids often act like they don't care, but when the chips are down, they look to you as their compass that always points north.

Reality #5: Kids are like you on steroids

I thought my sarcastic quips were hilarious until I heard my kids mimic them. I learned that, for good or bad, kids take our habits and attitudes to an extreme. If you ever wonder why your kids act the way they do, start by looking at you. Your injections of integrity will bulk up their character. So too, your compromises and lies will balloon into a legacy of disappointment. Don't allow your kids' friends' influence to usurp yours due to your passivity. Lead your kids to choose well.

Question: Do you let friends shape your kids OR are you bulking up your kids' character?

Fallacy #6: You deserve respect

Many dads talk down to kids, yet wonder why kids are disrespectful. Please don't make kids navigate the choppy waters of youth while reconciling hypocrisy. Might their disrespect be birthed in yours? Yes, the Bible tells kids to obey and respect parents, but how do you respond to a boss or spouse who tells you what to do instead of leading you to do it? Help kids want to respect you. Don't demand it. Inspire them. Guide and position them. And respect them, no matter how they respond.

Reality #6: Kids reflect what they expect at home

A mirror doesn't lie. It just reflects. You may not see what it shows, but it's there for anyone to see. So too, your kids' hearts reflect what they see at home. A home culture of respect is created with daily deposits that draw kids' interest, not from making "demand deposits" that can be withdrawn at any time. Granted, there's a time for a come-to-Jesus meeting, but there's a reason I didn't rebel much against my dad – he built his home on mutual respect.

Question: Do you demand respect OR do your kids reflect a culture of mutual respect?

Fallacy #7: Never let 'em see you sweat

Chances are, you already have a good idea of what dads should be like. Whether it's what you've seen or what you prefer, you're certain. I was certain that dads should be strong and stoic because that's how my dad did it. Basically, I learned to "never let 'em see you sweat." The problem is that my kids don't respond well to stoic. As I learned too late, my kids needed a strong dad, but they also needed vulnerability in order to open their hearts.

Reality #7: Let 'em know the real you, warts & all

Turns out, kids want to know your failures even more than your successes. They know you, but they also want to know how you got there – your mistakes and how you overcame them. Molding your kids' character starts with letting them know your character. I became vulnerable because I love my kids more than I love my privacy. For when you share your warts and all, kids gain confidence that they can overcome their own.

Question: Are you guarded OR do your kids really know you, warts and all?

Fallacy #8: Keep work & home separate

You may try to be a different man at work than at home, but you can't. Why? Because integrity is integral in everything. Character follows you like a shadow. I'll never forget a client who told me a lewd joke and later said he was a church deacon. When he remembered his "joke," a shadow of shame engulfed him. So too, you can't live the integrity version of a double agent. You may fool your family for a season, but eventually your sins at work will find you out (Numbers 32:23).

Reality #8: Work & home are interchangeable

I knew I'd messed up when Anna said, "The kids and I are NOT your employees!" What a wake-up call! I had been a lousy dad and a lousy boss. Home and work are interchangeable. The lessons learned in one apply to the other. Yes, applications differ, but if something won't fly at home, why would it fly at work? Try talking to your employees the way you talk to your kids (or vice versa) and see what happens. Trust me, it won't be good.

Question: Do you see work & home as separate OR as interchangeable pieces of a life puzzle?

Fallacy #9: Peer pressure ends in school

Following the crowd never gets you ahead of it. But it's hard to see past the pressure to fit in and feel validated. You graduate from "poopy head" to real crap in junior high. Then you seek identity with high schoolers who promise happiness if you go along to get along. Same in college and beyond –the Joneses aren't happy either, just older. Turns out, peer pressure doesn't end in school after all.

Reality #9: Life gets more intensive & expensive

What happens with age? Life just gets more intensive and expensive. Consequences magnify and antes get upped. I'll never forget a couple fighting at a financial Bible study. She was working two jobs to pay for his new golf club. It wasn't about his new club; it was about him not supporting his family because he was keeping up with his friends. Acknowledging the bondage of peer pressure is the first step to breaking it and becoming free to truly bond with your family.

Question: Are peers still pressuring you OR are you breaking free from its bondage?

Fallacy #10: Bonding is Mom's job

There's nothing like a mother's love. Maternal instincts and unending devotion combine to shape an unbreakable bond. But moms are not dads. Moms can't fill the masculine needs of boys and girls. My kids needed Anna's compassion, but Anna couldn't roughhouse play or toss them in the air (and catch them) like me. And she couldn't model manhood. Only I can be her defender and love her like Christ loves His church. Bonding may be easier for moms, but it's not only her job.

Reality #10: Bonding with Dad forges godly legacies

My book *Well Done Mom & Dad!* references Vern Bengtson's research that kids who bond with parents, especially with dad, are more likely to continue a godly legacy than leave it. Both parents are crucial, but a daughter's bond with Dad shapes her future marriage. And a son's bond with Dad shapes his manhood. Never stop pursuing your kids. Win their hearts and you'll likely win their heavenly home. But do it like a real man with both strength and compassion.

Question: Do your kids connect mainly with Mom OR are you forging legacy-molding bonds?

10 Fallacies of Fatherhood

Discussion Guide

1. Are you the dad you want to be OR the dad your kids need you to be?
2. Are you trying to be your kids' superhero OR their character hero?
3. Are you modeling a pattern of well-intended OR well done?
4. When your kids see you, do they see secrets OR true integrity?
5. Do you let friends shape your kids OR are you bulking up your kids' character?
6. Do you demand respect OR do your kids reflect a culture of mutual respect?
7. Are you guarded OR do your kids really know you, warts and all?
8. Do you see work & home as separate OR as interchangeable pieces of a life puzzle?
9. Are peers still pressuring you OR are you breaking free from its bondage?
10. Do your kids connect mainly with Mom OR are you forging legacy-molding bonds?

About Tim



I'm a simple man with a simple focus: faith and family. My story is one of simple obedience.

I was living my dreams as CFO/part-owner of an award-winning national restaurant chain until I sensed a restlessness I couldn't explain. As a 49-year-old, God called me to serve Him as my church's Executive/Admin Pastor. Out of board rooms; into prayer rooms.

Eight years later, God led me to exchange my pastoral role for a volunteer strategist role at my church and share success principles learned at home and work. Again, God turned simple obedience into a new world of blessings. Also, I serve as CFO of Rental One, a company that exists to serve others with excellence. Back into board rooms (without leaving prayer rooms).

My purpose and passion didn't change; just the outlet. I'm still driven to help my family and others want what they need to be faithful. I'm not pushing my purpose on you; I want to help you lead *your family* to faithfully fulfill your own.

My family leadership was featured in *Stories of True Financial Freedom: God's Impact in Real Lives* by Crown Financial Ministries (Bridge-Logos, 2006). And my work leadership was featured in *Your Signature Work: Creating Excellence and Influencing Others* by Dianna Booher (Tyndale House, 2004). My legacy, though, is helping people hear, "Well done!" from God and family.

Next Steps

Learn more by subscribing to my free blog at www.timalba.com. You'll receive ongoing inspirational content to put your family on the path to faithfulness. Topics include parenting, home/career leadership, character, faith, and family. You'll also find other free resources such as *10 Myths of Motherhood* and *7 Key Questions Your Kids Wish You Had Answered Sooner*.

Also, at www.WellDoneMomAndDad.com, you can order the book upon which these 10 fallacies are based – *Well Done, Mom & Dad!: A Practical Guide to Turn Good Intentions into Godly Legacies* (release date: August 17, 2021) – as well as download a **free companion Workbook** to apply this book's legacy-making lessons.

