

FATHER'S DAY

Dads know sacrifice, so give back a little with “thanks”

*They put their children's needs first.
Let them know you appreciate it.*

By TIM HOLLENBACH

I became a father for the first time in 1982 and three more times over the next eight years. To be honest, it wasn't that tough. My wife did the heavy lifting while I took the congratulations, smiled a lot and handed out cigars.

Becoming a dad has been much more difficult. Being a dad means showing up at the dance recital, ball game, chorus concert and the Christmas play, even though you've put in a 12-hour day, haven't had a chance to eat or go to the bathroom since breakfast and was stuck in traffic for the past hour.

Being a dad means you never have any money in your wallet. The morning you start out with an extra

\$50 on hand is the morning your child says, “I forgot to tell you that I need \$60 for the field trip to the state capital, and if I don't turn in the money today I can't go on the trip, and everybody's going, and I have to have the money, and mom said to get it from you because she used her money to buy groceries, my new shoes, go tanning and get her nails done.”

Being a dad is very hard on the hair. I've got the pictures to prove it.

When you become a dad, you lose all your personal space and personal possessions, and as your kids get older, it gets worse. You go to put on your favorite T-shirt and discover that your daughter used it to wash her car. The change you hid in your golf bag became your kid's lunch money. Your home office is the place your kids go to do their homework.

Personal hygiene items are compromised. Your dental floss, toothpaste, deodorant and razor blades

end up in various kids' lockers at school. This means that you go to that critical business meeting after brushing your teeth with tropical-fruit-bubble-gum flavor Crest, shaving with a two-week-old Lady Bic fished out of the bathroom trash can and protecting yourself, in a manner of speaking, with your wife's Secret summer-fresh deodorant.

Your personal time shrinks. Before you become a dad, you can sit on the couch and watch sports on television, hit golf balls at the driving range, take in a movie, maybe grab a nap or even (if the moon is right) practice the intricacies of becoming a father. After you graduate to dadhood, personal time is defined as three minutes guzzling a 40-ounce soda and scarfing a hot dog while you fill up the family truckster.

Did I mention that you lose all coolness? You cannot be cool and also be a bald man with a

nicked-up face, no money in your wallet, filling up your truck at the Quick-Trip while slamming down a Coke and a hot dog and smelling faintly of woman's deodorant and bubble-gum Crest.

Not all fathers choose to become dads. Some simply run from it. Some can't take the pressure and leave when the going gets tough and the sacrifice grows too great. Some just aren't cut out for the role.

They call today Father's Day, but I think it's really Dad's Day. It honors those who accept the all-consuming, under-appreciated position of dad, putting their life second to those of their children and doing the best they can.

If you're lucky enough to have a dad, my guess is you honor him all the time, but make a point of doing so today. Make the call; take the trip. Tell him thanks for doing a good job. That's really all that he wants.

Thanks, Dad; you did a good job.