

A note to my son on the birth of his daughter.

Dear Eric,

You know now, don't you? You found out holding your daughter Olivia in your arms for the first time. Of that overwhelming love that keeps you up at night, that gets you through the night.

Most days, particularly early on, you are aware, in real time as they say, that this time with your daughter is special. Many of these moments are photographed, recorded on video, shared with others. But I'm not here to talk about those days. My message to you is about the other days.

The days to come when you are completely consumed with your day to day responsibilities. The over-demanding boss, the backed-up toilet, the crazy neighbor; so fixated on the problems of the day and your plans for the future that you can't help but take for granted the life you are living at the moment. Yes, days that are even more daunting than now. Days where you will lose your focus, forget your priorities.

However, if you're paying attention, the good news is that these types of days have special moments too. They just won't have photographic documentation. Great moments often catch us unaware.

For me, my most vivid memories were not captured by a camera. Some of my best moments with my children caught me completely off guard as they were happening. Such as a random day around 1990, when having lunch in a Burger King with your sister Sara, she blurted out, while wearing a paper crown on her eight year old head, "I just love hanging out with just my Dad!" It was a day in 2000, while teaching your sister Courtney to drive, that the Allan Jackson song "Drive" came on the car radio. It's a day with your brother Tommy, about 2003 at a baseball practice, when out of nowhere, in front of the whole team, he just puts his arms around me, hugs me tight and tells me he loves me.

And with you, it was a day in the summer of 2005, when I had to miss one of your baseball games. I did not expect you to be upset but you looked at me with tears in your eyes and told me "Dad, it's just not the same when you're not there."

See, we're conditioned to think our lives revolve around special events, but beautiful moments arrive everyday wrapped around things that don't seem to matter at the time.

Pay attention, every day. Because, you see, you don't get to do some things again.

That's all I'm sayin'

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