

Dads and Daughters



Olivia telling Eric she loves him for first time. (press picture to play video)

***“Hey Lord, take a look all around
And I'd a-find where my baby's gonna be
Hey Lord, would ya look out for her tonight
'Cause she is far across the sea
Hey Lord, would ya look out for her tonight
And make sure that she's gonna be all right
And things are gonna be all right with me***

***Hey Lord, would ya look out for her tonight
And make sure that all her dreams are sweet
Said now, would ya guide her on the roads
And make them softer for her feet
Hey Lord, would ya look out for her tonight
And make sure that she's gonna be all right
Until she's home and here with me.”***

- Billy Joel's 'Travelin' Prayer'
Verse 1 & 2

Last week, as my son Eric was putting his 18 month-old daughter Olivia to bed, Olivia, for the first time in words, told Eric, "I love you!"

Of course she does.

Eric looks out for Olivia at night, makes sure she's gonna be all right and that all her dreams are sweet. He makes sure the roads are soft for her feet, and that where she sleeps is always warm and dry. He keeps her away from pain and misses her when he's away. Eric cannot imagine a world without Olivia in it.

Olivia depends on Eric for everything. She lights up when she sees him, cries when he goes away. She knows she will be all right, safe and sound, because her Dad makes it so. For Olivia, she has not known a world without her Dad.

As dads and daughters know, Eric and Olivia are at a special moment in time, a magical place where they are at the center of each other's lives.

But little girls grow up and dads grow old.

A time will come, way too soon, when Eric will no longer be the center of Olivia's life. Eric will properly and begrudgingly let his daughter go. Olivia will properly, and perhaps impatiently, become independent, live her own life, and no longer need her dad for her existence.

But Eric, will always be her Dad, her protector. And Olivia will always be his little girl.

***"Hey, Lord would ya look out for her tonight
If she is sleepin' under the sky
Said now, make sure the ground she's sleepin' on
Is always warm and dry
Ummm, don'tcha give her too much rain
Try to keep her away from pain
Because my baby hates to cry***

***Hey Lord, would ya look out for her tonight
'Cause it gets rough along the way
Said now, this song seems strange is just because
I don't know how to pray
Umm, won'tcha give her peace of mind
And if you ever find the time
Won'tcha tell her I miss her everyday"***

- Billy Joel's 'Travelin' Prayer'
Verse 3 & 4

Time marches on. A lot of things change, a lot of things stay the same.

Last Sunday, Father's Day, my all-grown-up daughters called and told me "I love you" yet again.

Of course they do.

They and I remembered that, not-so-long ago, we lived in that moment in time, that magical place where Eric and Olivia currently reside. When we were the center of each other's lives.

Time has changed us, and now that magical place exists only in our memories and on grainy video tape. But I still try to give my daughters peace of mind. Still try to keep them away from pain. I still miss them every day. As they do I.

I am still their Dad. They are still my little girls. This remains the same. Always.

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Eric told me "it crushed him" (in a good way) when Olivia told him she loved him for the first time.

The love between a dad and his daughter, that's what crushed him.

Last Sunday, Father's Day, when my daughters told me that they loved me, it crushed me too. Always does.

That love between a dad and his daughters.

***"Hey Lord, would ya look out for her tonight
And make sure that she's gonna be all right
Until she's home and here with me"***

Billy Joel's 'Travelin' Prayer'
Verse 5

That's all I'm sayin'

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My oldest daughter Sara dancing to Billy Joel's "Travelin' Prayer" in 1984