**Grandfathers: An Untapped Resource**

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In 1979, President Jimmy Carter set aside the first Sunday after Labor Day to honor grandparents. The official proclamation made a convincing argument for this holiday:

"Grandparents are our continuing tie to the near-past, to the events and beliefs and experiences that so strongly affect our lives and the world around us. Whether they are our own or surrogate grandparents who fill some of the gaps in our mobile society, our senior generation also provides our society a link to our national heritage and traditions."

According to a 2002 survey by the AARP, most grandparents (56%) see at least one of their grandchildren every week, another 12% see one of their grandchildren every two weeks, and another 24 percent said they see a grandchild once a month to once every few months.

If you're a granddad reading this, *thank you for all you do!* Take it from us: you are an incredibly valuable resource that is far too seldom tapped by our current generation. As you know, your grandchildren need you. And so do the children down the street, in your community and place of worship.

For the rest of us fathers, we need to recognize and capitalize on the benefits that grandfathers can bring to our children's lives. They are important because they symbolize family, they are living links between the present and the past, and they serve as connection points for the extended family.

Our children can also benefit from grandfathers because of the unique perspective granddads have on the world and on the family. They are more objective, so they can provide useful insights on our children as they grow and develop. They are more relaxed, and can be a great source of positive encouragement-without pressure-for our children. They are another model of manhood, often stepping in as a father figure for children who don't have a dad. And they have unique opportunities to answer children's questions and transmit values that a child might resist coming from his parents.

Let's honor grandparents and give our children opportunities to receive these great benefits!

**ACTION POINTS for Dads and GRANDDADS**

* Granddad: Do little things to remind your grandchildren that you're thinking of them.Send cards and letters, newspaper clippings, e-mails, text messages, etc.
* Dad: Encourage your children to "interview" their grandparents about their lives using an audio or video recorder.
* Granddad: Set up a reading reward system for your grandchildren based on a list of books that you will purposefully choose and purchase for them.
* Dad: Tell your children something positive that you learned from your father.
* Dad: Honor your father and mother by committing yourself to meet a need that they have. Involve your children if possible.