**Workaholism - a Slippery Slope**

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What shapes your identity? In today's world, a man's identity is largely locked up in what he does and what he produces-not who he is as a husband and father.

It isn't hard to explain. For most men, that's what they learned about manhood from their male role models.

Men spend years preparing for careers at college or in some kind of apprenticeship, but never get training to hold babies or play with toddlers. So, once they have families, it's easier to stay on the job-where it's safe and comfortable.

But children need more. They deserve and often demand to be a top priority. If these dads don't realize this early on, they'll get more frustrated and less satisfied as fathers. They'll begin to think of their kids as "bothersome" or "in the way." They totally miss the idea that a relationship with a child is worth pursuing, worthy of their best energy.

And what happens to the kids? They quickly learn that Dad is always "too busy." Sure, these dads realize they don't have close relationships with their children, but they've settled into a workaholic lifestyle, and ten or fifteen years of habits don't go away easily.

When things get difficult at home, these dads retreat even further into their work, where they still feel satisfaction and accomplishment. They become providers only, physically present but emotionally and often spiritually absent, and their kids grow more confused and bitter.

Sometimes it's helpful to see where we might be headed if we don't make some changes. Navigating work and family is one of the great challenges for the coming generation of dads-because schedules and workloads are only getting more frantic and burdensome.

Try applying some of your work habits to your home life. Set goals for your family life; make your children part of your business plan. Add your kids' events to your planner-and ask your family to scrutinize your schedule every once in a while.

Once you have a "family plan," use that to guide any changes you may need to make in your work goals. Have the courage to admit it when you're out of balance. Workaholism can be a dangerous, slippery slope.