

MANY OF US HAVE AN IDEALIZED

version of the perfect parent. Often this image is cobbled together from various depictions in popular media of what it means to be a mom or dad in the modern age. Sometimes it's based on our own personal recollections of being parented, whether this was a positive or negative experience. For many parents, it is a sincere wish for how we ourselves want to be remembered, by our living legacy, our children.

Current research from Pew Research Center shows that men enjoy being fathers and are just as likely to say that their parenting role is central to their identity as mothers are. Modern dads are involved, active participants in the parenting process and find joy and purpose in the role.

The outdated and stereotypical one-dimensional view of paternity can be limiting. In fact, if we only based our assumptions of fatherhood on the caricatures portrayed in the media, we could be forgiven for thinking that all dads are barely making it through the mess of parenthood until their children are old enough for them to take on an authoritative position.

Thankfully, most of us can appreciate the varied nuances of parenting for both men and women. There are days when moms and dads need help and advice, and there are days when they are the ones supporting and advising others.

The role of the father has certainly evolved over the years, especially as women's role in society has changed. Men are often now playing a larger daily role in their children's lives and are often responsible for more practical childcare duties than their own fathers were.

Business Insider compiled the leading research on childrearing and found that good parents have a set of skills and expectations in common, including:

- Teaching social skills
- Setting high expectations for behavior and achievement
- Being university graduates who value education
- Encouraging hard work and commitment to responsibilities.

These four fathers and Sigma Nu alumni, exhibit these and other essential effective parenting strategies and illustrate all that a father can and should be.

FATHERS IN THE FRAME

Shape Someone's Life

David Mainella (Bradley)

David grew up in Barrington, Rhode Island, a small town with no fast food restaurants or movie theaters but plenty to do in the great outdoors. His parents divorced when he was six, and he lived with his mom and sister, while his dad lived across town with his new wife and David's step sisters.

David's first career aspirations were to become a news anchor, an ambition fueled by a reporter who rented a room in his family home during high school and developed through his student council involvement and work on the school newspaper. He always had a strong work ethic and remembers having a part-time job or interest in running a business even from a very young age. He would wash cars and cut grass, and during his sophomore year in high school, he even had a business that sold gifts and canvas belts.

Although David's own father, also a fraternity initiate of Chi Psi at Rhode Island University, was a loving and supportive figure, David only saw him on weekends. He knew he wanted to be a father and hoped for a different relationship with his own children.

David had the first inklings that fatherhood might be just around the corner on a trip to Las Vegas, when his wife, Felicia, started to feel unwell. Once home, they confirmed they were indeed about to expand their family. David was excited at the prospect of being able to "shape someone's life in a meaningful way."

He found the whole process of pregnancy and birth to be amazing and awe inspiring. He is an involved parent and loves nothing more than reading bedtime stories to his daughters, taking the opportunity to connect and spend some special time together. He loves the discussions that are sparked from the tales they share and describes these as "golden moments."



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HIVERS

TERNITY

BY FIONA TAPP

Providing Opportunity for Excellence

Pat Hatfield (Eastern Kentucky)

Pat, an anesthetist, is a father to two teenage boys. He credits his time in Sigma Nu as helping to develop key elements in his character that have improved or informed his parenting skills, including generosity, patience, service to the community and dedication.

Pat has a strong commitment to volunteering. He has lent his time and expertise to coaching soccer and baseball and has participated in Boy Scout activities. Pat has always been heavily involved in his sons' education, providing opportunities for them to excel; arranging learning supports and tutors; and hiring high-quality trained nannies to ensure his boys can reach their full potential.

He encourages his children to not only study hard but also play hard; he arranges archery, tennis, football and baseball classes and believes in the

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bonding and character development that organized team sports can provide.

When asked if he would encourage his boys to also join a fraternity, when the time comes, Pat enthusiastically states:

"Absolutely. Sigma Nu was a big part of my college experience. It taught me how to manage time and provided a well-rounded college experience."

Although a lot has changed since graduation, he relishes returning to EKV to catch football games, and along with his wife, Susan, he enjoys spending weekends in the company of their collegiate and alumni brothers and sisters.



The

DAD?

Famous TV dads exhibit certain behaviors that fit a number of fatherly personas, which have formed much of what we expect from the stereotype of a dad, including:

THE GRUMPY DAD

"The Wonder Years" Dad, Jack Arnold, or Murray Goldberg from "The Goldbergs" perfectly embody the grumpy dad exterior, yelling at their kids to finish their chores or do their homework; however, this crabbiness usually hides a softer side.

THE FUN DAD

This dad often behaves like just another child, while the long-suffering mother of the family ends up cleaning up his messes along with the children's. A perfect example is Homer from "The Simpsons."

THE WISE DAD

This father is the gentle bearer of sage advice, like the original understanding dad Danny Tanner from "Full House." His lessons are often accompanied by soft instrumental music.

THE SENSITIVE DAD

A new breed of fathers is stepping out of the traditional stoic role of 'dad' as breadwinner and authoritarian. They aren't afraid to show that they love their children. As far as fictional patriarchs go, Phil Dunphy from "Modern Family" leads the way with this modern dad persona.

Fostering Truth

Rob McCarry (Hartford)

Rob, a patent examiner, is the proud father of two children, a 5-year-old boy and a 3-year-old girl.

Rob grew up in a busy, loving and multigenerational home shared with his siblings, parents and maternal grandparents in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He learned the traits of a present and engaged parent from his interactions with his own father who, despite working long 12-hour days as a truck driver, always made time to help with homework and guide Rob and his brother. In fact, Rob credits his own father with instilling essential traits that were later developed in the Sigma Nu family.

"My lessons in Honor and Truth started with him and were reinforced and expanded by my Fraternity."

Rob has always had a generous nature and a willingness to help and serve others, which led him to volunteer positions as a firefighter and emergency medical technician. On September 11, 2001, Rob was a volunteer with the American Red Cross and was part of the emergency response team sent to the Pentagon. After this fateful day, Rob continued to volunteer, and through his work with this organization, he met his future wife.

A full decade later, he was wondering how to commemorate the event when his wife beat him to the punch, announcing her pregnancy and the next chapter in their lives together. Since both of these memorable events took place on the same day, separated by 10 years, Rob can't forget either one.

He describes the ecstatic initial moments of becoming

a father and meeting his son for the first time:

"I sat in a chair, holding him, and didn't move. That's how nervous I was."

When his daughter was born a few years later, he took it a little more in his stride.

Rob went on to work for the U.S. Government and now enjoys a rewarding 18-plus year career as a

develop Sigma Nu's values of Love, Honor and Truth in every area of his parenting practice.

His unconditional love for his children goes hand-in-hand with the values he and his wife are trying to impart to them through their parenting. This includes teaching respect for themselves, their friends and all adults. He esteems



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patent examiner. He works from home and relishes the opportunity he gets to see his children when they wake up in the morning and to check in on them at different points throughout the day. Rob's favorite parts of being a father are hearing his children laugh and watching them sleep peacefully. He takes quiet pride in knowing that he is providing "a fun and safe" space for his children to grow.

Rob works hard to

the ideal of truth by making sure he has an open relationship with his children where they can tell him anything, he explains:

"I don't want them to ever be afraid to tell me the truth."

Rob describes his parenting style as "hands-on." He is a supportive father who encourages his children to try new things but always respects their individual preferences and opinions.