



SOCIETY FOR
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division

The Role of a Father in the Life of his Child.

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A father plays a major role in the life of a child from birth to death. A strong father who is physically and emotionally present in the life of his child, inculcates positive qualities, and can be a predictor of what type of adult that child will become.

A father can be influential in instilling values of self-esteem, confidence, inner discipline, motivation, care and compassion, respect, emotional self-regulation, and a determination to succeed educationally and economically.

Sadly, many fathers who are living, play little or no role in the lives of their children. They may be physically present in their lives, but emotionally absent. Some fathers abandon their children, or visit occasionally with no contact in between. There are also fathers who show no compassion and subject their children to abuse. In the extreme, there are those who father several children from different mothers, and just cannot or don't care to keep in touch. These children grow up feeling abandoned, rejected, unloved, and economically enslaved to poverty.

There are many psychological consequences in children caused by physically and/or emotionally absent fathers. Consequences include self-esteem issues, lack of confidence, fear of abandonment or rejection, rebelliousness, and difficulty managing emotions. These children may grow up as adults to either behave like their parents, or to over-compensate by "spoiling" their children. Both results will be harmful.

Children born of these errant fathers or parents, may experience issues as adults in their relationships or marriages.

Research from the Attachment Theory and The Absent Father Wound, postulates that an emotionally absent father affects his children even in marriage.

The following may affect his daughter:

- Low self-esteem-not good enough
- Craving love not received from father
- Accepting unhealthy behaviours from partners

- Struggling to trust men
- Seeking intense closeness or avoiding intimacy
- Self-worth dependent on male validation.

The following effects may be experienced by the son:

- Feeling inadequate, needing approval from authority figures
- Craving male father figure
- Internalised anger towards father and self
- Controlling behaviours to compensate for past powerlessness
- High standards and perfectionism
- Fears of power imbalance in relationships.

While the above situation may prevail in many families, there is also the case where fathers want to be present and emotionally involved in the life of his child. They may be denied full access due to divorce, or mother withholding that privilege to punish father, or where mothers take the child to live overseas. The effect of being denied access to your child can be devastating. It can lead to a feeling of rejection, abandonment and can result in chronic depression.

It is therefore important for parents who are living, to love, care, protect and nurture their children as emotionally absent fathers can affect them for the rest of their lives, even as adults.