

The Importance of My Daughter in My Life

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The most fulfilling and influential experience I have had in my life is the one of being a father. My daughter, Jadrielle, is the center of my universe and the love of my life, whose very existence constantly teaches me to be a better person. Raising a child is a 24-hour job with its own ups and downs, but it is the most rewarding occupation one can ever wish for.

The birth of my daughter was a life-changing event for me that completely reorganized my priorities and unprecedentedly sharpened my feeling of responsibility. When I saw her and held her for the first time, I really felt that I was witnessing a miracle, one I was a part of. My daughter, little Jadrielle, who just came into this world, smelled like milk and vanilla. Her skin was unbelievably soft, but very wrinkled, as if she were a tiny old lady or the cutest little hippo. The warmth of her body made me think I was holding my personal gentle sun that would illuminate my life. I knew her eyes couldn't focus yet, but when Jadrielle opened her eyes, I could swear she looked right at me. I was overwhelmed with love and tenderness towards this tiny beautiful human being, but also felt how fragile and vulnerable she was, which induced the urge to protect her and the realization I was responsible for her life now.

Although it brought me unbelievable happiness, taking care of my first newborn baby was a challenge. I was filled with insecurity and often worried I might do something wrong and unconsciously harm my daughter. When I held her, I was afraid I wasn't supporting her head in the right pose or that my rough strong big hands were just not suited to touch her tender skin or fragile body. Whenever Jadrielle cried, I felt like I was to blame. At the same time, the task was physically exhausting. My wife and I desperately lacked sleep as our beautiful baby had her own schedule and frequently woke us up every night. I remember how assertively her cry pierced the silence and darkness of our apartment at 3 A.M. During



this period, my ability to stay efficient at work and my spouse's ability to take care of our household were at risk, but we somehow managed, ignited by love and responsibility we felt towards our child. Seeing our daughter develop filled us with so much happiness and strength we felt we were capable of anything. I will never forget the first time Jandrielle smiled. One Sunday, my wife and I took our daughter to a park in a baby carriage. It was a nice sunny day, so we felt it would be a waste to spend it indoors. As we walked, a big beautiful butterfly with wings intrinsically colored in orange and black set on our baby's left hand. I don't know whether it tickled so much or our daughter was just astonished by the sight, but that was when she smiled. A cute toothless half moon slowly appeared on her face and her eyes became shinier than usual. Experiences such as this one always made me realize with special clarity that any hardships were worth it.

As my daughter grew and developed, raising her became more demanding. She was a very curious and bright little girl, particularly interested in animals and colors. Jadrielle used to ask me hundreds of questions a day about this intriguing and confusing world: "Why is the sky blue?", "Why are watermelons green on the outside, but red inside?", "Why do elephants have big ears?", "Why are cats afraid of water?" Some of these questions were not that easy to answer, so I had to do my research. This way I constantly learned something new along with her. My daughter has also enjoyed drawing since a very young age and, as it turned out, she was a strong proponent of creative freedom. At first she drew only in the albums we bought for her. But one day my wife and I discovered the results of her talent in a relatively unexpected place. The wallpaper in her room, which had originally depicted unicorns among flowers in pastel shades of pink, blue, and yellow on the white background, was enriched with her expressive drawings of green cats, pink elephants, orange bears, and other less recognizable animals. For her masterpiece, Jadrielle had used the new set of felt pens we had bought for her a day before. This situation made us face an interesting dilemma:

on the one hand, my wife and I didn't want to repress our daughter's creativity; on the other hand, we were slightly worried about the fate of the other wallpapers in our house. In the end, we changed the wallpaper in Jadrielle's room to the one specifically designed to draw on and instructed her to restrict her artistic expressions only to that room. Another thing that was a source of pride and concern for me was the fact that I noticed Jadrielle was mimicking the way I speak and behave. I have a habit of scratching the back of my head when I am thinking hard about something. So I was really surprised when my four-year-old daughter started doing the same thing when she was asked some difficult questions (for example, "How many cars are parked near that house?"). This way of her mimicking me was mostly pleasant for me, but another situation made me really worried. Sometimes I used to exclaim, "Damn it," in distressing and unexpected circumstances. Once I heard Jadrielle saying the same phrase when she dropped her peanut butter and jelly sandwich on the floor. Being a four-year-old girl then, she said it in her cute child voice. So I should admit it was somewhat adorable, but at the same time really alarming. This situation opened my eyes to the fact that I had to set a good example for her all the time. That is why I became more conscious of my every action and word.

Raising a daughter made me realize that being a parent may be physically and psychologically challenging, but at the same time it sets you on the path of self-improvement. And in the end, there is nothing more rewarding and fulfilling than being really close with your child and seeing your child happy.



References

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