**A Nod to Dads**

*By: Dr. Roger Landry, MD, MPH*

There are events in our lives that change everything. Events that, although they may occur to millions of others, are nonetheless very personal, gut wrenching, and result in a change in the orbit of a life. Fathering a child is one such event.

Actually, the biologic act of fathering a child is not so remarkable, but the becoming and then being a father … that’s what does it. That is what rocks the world of Y chromosome types and constitutes a fork in the road of life’s journey. If my own life were laid out like the cross section of a redwood with its rings representing years, there would be one ring that would stand out as wider, more colorful, wavy, and unique. The lines are much different than the ones before that special ring.

There is no question. Motherhood is indeed a miracle. There is perhaps nothing as sacred in the experience of humans. It is a process; a transformation that occurs over time. Fatherhood, on the other hand, erupts on us like a volcano of feelings, change, fear, and uncertainty. Donning the cloak of fatherhood wipes clean the slate of any current plans and writes a welcome new story.  That story is about responsibility, protection, providing, commitment and a love that is both unexpected and the lifeblood of our entire future.

Of course, the role of father changes over time. Most of that change is in response to the grass roots change within the child. Their capabilities, expectations, and values evolve dramatically and so it is with a father’s role. And, over time, we ourselves experience our own transformation. We learn we are not in control. We learn our child is very much a separate human finding their own way in the world. We learn that we are in the bleachers of their unfolding lives, and we cheer, feel joy, sorrow, pride, and sometimes helplessness.

And, just when we feel nearly obsolete … for those of us that are lucky … we get to be part of the fatherhood saga again. But this time, we bask in the brilliance of it all as a sojourner on the circular path of our mystical human experience: watching your child as parent, even as a father. As a grandfather we can now celebrate new life with a perspective gained as a father … a perspective that knows what is important and what is a distraction. A perspective that can relish the real story … the miracle of life.

So, to all you fathers out there, especially those who during these Corona times cannot be physically with your children, grandchildren or great grandchildren, know that whatever successes, accolades, or accomplishments you may have achieved in your life’s time, from the standpoint of our collective humanity, being a father eclipses all. Happy Father’s Day.

***-Roger Landry (aka “Papa”)***