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# Father's Day reflections

This month, I thought I would stray a bit from the world of nurseries and talk a little about my number one job: being a dad.

This job is more important, more complex, more challenging, and more rewarding than anything I do around the farm. But to truly fulfill my duties as a father, I must strive for success in the nursery arena. The two are complementary, and that keeps life interesting.

Now to cover my bases, motherhood is equally important, if not more so, and also quite challenging. I am talking only as a father, because I have no experience in that other realm, except as an observer.

The importance of family was best summed up by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, the former Chief Rabbi for the United Kingdom. "For any society," he wrote, "the family is the crucible of its future, and for the sake of our children's future, we must be its defender."

The responsibilities of parenthood are enormous. But for me, they are worth it.

I have been blessed with good examples of fatherhood, which have helped guide me along the way. My two grandfathers were dedicated family men who provided for their children both materially and spiritually and helped develop them into loving and productive adults.

My father has done the same and taught me lessons about perseverance and loyalty. This may be a nice way of saying he is stubborn, but I have appreciated and applied what he has taught me about being a dad.

I have three wonderful children who are a testament to the efficacy of the applied knowledge of my father and my two grandfathers.

Now, I realize I am not the

perfect dad. I have missed my share of baseball games, tennis matches and horse shows. Often, work takes precedence over these events, especially during planting and harvesting. However, the work makes these things possible. I believe my kids understand this, even if they may be disappointed by my absence.

Being a father often involves self-sacrifice, which is where much of the reward comes from. Think of when you take your young children fly-fishing, and you leave your own gear in the bag because your duty that day

is untangling line. The payoff is when your kids catch that first fish and you see the joy and excitement in their eyes.

Or think of when you spend most of a day at a horse show in which your daughter will only ride for a few minutes. If you turn and get a sandwich, you could miss it (any horse dads know what I am talking about). I know

I could be working on some project at the nursery instead, but then I would miss her perfect round and the smile on her face as she holds up her ribbons.

These moments are priceless. The nursery project will still be there when I get back to work.

I have one shot at getting this dad thing right. There are no do-overs. I am fortunate to have the best partner in this endeavor in Gail, my wife. The jury is still out on my own performance, but there is no doubt that I am giving it my all.

I wish all fathers a Happy Father's Day, and I commend you for being a DAD. ☺



By Mike Coleman  
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