

# HUFFPOST RELIGION

**Noel Irwin Hentschel**

Chairman, CEO and co-founder, AmericanTours International

## Father Knows Best

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Father, June reminds us to never take your faith, hope and love for granted. June 12, 2012 was the 70th anniversary of a daughter who on her 13th birthday in 1942 wrote innermost thoughts in her first diary: "I hope I will be able to confide everything to you, as I have never been able to with anyone, and I hope you will provide much support and comfort." Her Dad was left with these poignant words as the lone surviving member of their family who cruelly died in Nazi concentration camps in Europe during World War II. *The Diary of Anne Frank*, a testimony of faith, hope and love in the midst of hate, became one of the world's most read books after The Bible. Along with her dreams and fears this young woman expresses deep love for her Father and her family's faith.

The loss of a child for a parent is devastating. Otto Frank's faith helped him fulfill his daughter's purpose and their shared legacy. He hoped by sharing her story people would be moved not to hate but to love and respect each other despite the forces of evil which exists amongst humanity. He hoped that the good her life stood for would help future generations work toward good and righteousness. Sadly, for some children and dads there is a struggle to enjoy a close paternal relationship like the one Anne and Otto Frank shared. The Frank Family's Jewish belief structure brought another Father into their home, spiritually and morally, who gave them hope for this world and for the next. Our Father Almighty with lessons for all, not to be forgotten or taken for granted.

Sons and daughters, our Father teaches first and foremost to love. Invoking tough love measures and communicating expectations, sometimes intimidating. Ultimately, Father knows best. Learning early to love, honor and obey, is a lifelong gift. Father deserves respect, he gives life. As one grows, he guides. He asks restraint from swearing, cheating, lying and stealing. Not to harm others or be envious. Reiterating The Golden Rule, "Do to others whatever you would have them do to you." He desires just and charitable conduct. Imparting faith in a higher power is the way he leads recognizing the importance of engendering humility, prudence and fortitude. He confirms faith in his children's judgment by giving free will when we are ready to accept responsibility for our choices. Cautiously warning us not to believe we are the center of the universe but reinforcing the need to believe.

Embracing virtues is the strong foundation for one's life and the future of humanity. Doing good deeds and expending talents. Purpose is fulfilled by working hard while being magnanimous. Willing to sacrifice for others and serve a cause greater than oneself shows courage and commitment. Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher and Thomas Aquinas, a 13th century theologian/saint both called magnanimity "the crowning virtue." Being great of mind, heart and spirit is what our Father hopes for all his children.

To have hope is to look forward to what has not yet happened. Whether it is peace in the world, an end to violence or respect for all creation, hope for fulfillment of good is what the righteous Father desires. There can be far-reaching consequences by choosing to ignore the teachings of the Father who engenders virtues, moral character and a promising life.

Demonstrating temperance in daily life is another healthy lesson by the good Father. To acknowledge that human desires need to be balanced with self-control. While it is good to hope for accomplishing aspirations, life on earth is not meant to be—we get to do whatever we want. Even the Rolling Stones advanced that Fatherly advice when wild rock star Dad Mick Jagger shouted, "You can't always get what you want, but if you try... you just might... get what you need." Persevere with patience and gratitude.

Father teaches not to be afraid, especially of hard work. Come to him for guidance, sharing confidences and reconciliation. Rely not only on one's own intelligence, be humble. Follow his sage advice of doing good while being good, as the practical path to happiness. At least it keeps one out of trouble, fruitful and rewarding in the long run. Confucius, the ancient moral philosopher from China, pronounced in Analects, "Being good as a son and obedient as a young man is, perhaps, the root of a man's character (1:2)." Mahatma Gandhi, Father of India, offers advice for virtuous behavior, "Have clean companions and clean books. Last and not the least, prayer...ask for Divine Grace." In Sacred Scripture, The Proverbs of Solomon, one discovers some Fatherly gems. Renowned for wisdom, Solomon wrote: "A wise son loves correction, but the senseless one heeds no rebuke (13:1)." As a mom, my favorite is, "A wise son makes his father glad, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother (10:1)." As someone who has experienced the loss of a parent, I know it is a part of the maturing process that we desire to pass on to our children the good that was taught to us.

As a daughter, although not a fan of Sigmund Freud, I do like this quote, "I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a Father's protection." It conjures up two vital paternal relationships that affect physical and spiritual well-being. As a child, I recall feeling safe when Daddy was home and when he held onto me during my first bike ride. Yet I remember how good it felt when he let go and I didn't fall. Being taught to venture out on my own and to believe I was protected without him holding onto me came from another valuable paternal lesson.

What lesson was instilled by our Dad to his ten children that emboldened virtues with a sense of security? Like Otto Frank, our Dad prays with our family. He taught us to imitate the perfect role model and Son, Jesus Christ, who said, "This is how you are to pray: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen (Matthew 6:9-13)."

Alleluia, sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, motherly advice: give glory to The Father. "See what love The Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God (1John 3:1)." Father knows best. Celebrate Father's Day every day, by living with faith, hope and love; not taking Him for granted!