

# Episode 50. Kids and Dads

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## SPEAKERS

Scott Thayer, David Dorrian, Future Focused Parenting



Future Focused Parenting 00:04

What happens when two husbands of parent coaches, one a bourbon drinking Brit, the other a cigar smoking American, sit down to talk about parenting? I'm David Dorrian. And I'm Scott Thayer. And this is a very special episode of Raising Adults.



David Dorrian 00:23

Hi, Scott.



Scott Thayer 00:24

Hey, Dave, how's it going?



David Dorrian 00:26

I'm doing well. So welcome listeners to the Raising Adults podcast. This is David and Scott here. We're in Kira's laundry room, but we've taken it over for the afternoon.



Scott Thayer 00:37

Quite a small and warm laundry room.



David Dorrian 00:40

And don't worry, we haven't taken over without the authority of our wives. They both told us we had to be here, I mean, offered us the chance to be here in the laundry room to lead up a podcast to talk about kids and dads, which is a huge subject.



Scott Thayer 00:56

Yeah, I mean, we have kids. And we are dads. And so this is fitting that we're here talking about kids and dads.



David Dorrian 01:03

Yeah, we might do more podcasts in future but Kira and Dina wanted us to start out just by talking about our own experiences and get that perspective of the Father into the the voice of the podcast. So I guess before we start, we do need to tell you what the October attribute of the month is. So it's courage. Now, if you haven't signed up for the attribute of the month, you need to use some of that courage, because you're running out of time, as Deana and Kira are only offering them for free until the end of 2019. You can sign up by going to [futurefocusedparenting.com](https://futurefocusedparenting.com), that's [futurefocusedparenting.com](https://futurefocusedparenting.com) and hover over the shop tab, and you'll see a label called attribute of the month. It's an awesome newsletter that is totally free, where they focus on a different character trait you may want to think about fostering in your children, or your husbands. So the October attribute is courage. Be sure to check that out. So kids, kids and dads is just a huge, a huge topic. And I guess it comes down to for me and for you, Scott what, what sort of Father we want to be, and why we want to be that and, and, and how? So I guess I'll throw that to you. First what's, what's your why today for the, for the podcast? What is it about fatherhood that is driving you to do the things you do?



Scott Thayer 02:26

Yeah, that's a great question. And something I've thought about in depth. And I guess I would boil it down to my why behind my what is twofold. Number one, I want my boys to see what a husband should be like, to see and experience what a father should be like, so that I might leave a legacy behind after I go. And as they start to raise their own family and their own kids, that they can look back and go, hey, my dad did it this way and did it right. And so I want to be like that. So I can move on with that legacy. And then second is I would love for my daughters to look at me and say that that's the kind of man that a) I want to marry, and that b) that I want to help me raise my children. So my why is twofold. One, I want my boys, and I want to demonstrate for my boys what a man and husband

should be like, and then I want to demonstrate to my daughters, what type of partner that they would want moving forward as they go through their life and raise their own kids.



David Dorrian 03:34

Hmm. Yeah, that legacy's huge. I guess I actually don't know this so I'll ask, ask the question. Is that something you feel with your own father? Do you feel that legacy coming, coming down?



Scott Thayer 03:45

Oh, absolutely. Those who know me know the relationship that I had with my father. And he passed a few years back and I miss him daily. But as I'm raising kids, as I'm going through my life, as I'm making decisions in business, there isn't a day that goes by where I don't think about my father and maybe how he would have handled the situation. What he would have done, what he might have done differently. So he definitely left a legacy for me to, to follow.



David Dorrian 04:13

That's great. And my dad is still here, he's still with us. But I still feel the same way. There's, there's definitely that sense of, of living up to the example that, that he gave to me, which I guess makes us actually both very privileged because not everybody has that example from a, from a father. So we should acknowledge that, that it's, we're in a fortunate position where we both had great fathers giving us examples, but it doesn't mean that it's, it's just a lock at that point and that we'll be great dads as well. I think like we, I feel the need to work at it. I don't know if you feel the same way.



Scott Thayer 04:48

Yeah, I definitely feel the need to work on it daily, especially as you know, making the choice to be a stepfather. There's other elements and other difficulties that come in with that relationship. But to your point, that is right. There are some men out there who unfortunately don't have fathers like we do. But maybe that's where you and I can step up and be father figures for even kids that that are fatherless.



David Dorrian 05:16

Yeah, I think that's, that's very interesting for me in terms of my why as well, because I think it's similar. It hasn't linked as much around the specifics of legacy. But I guess what I

really want is a relationship with both my kids that is real and trusting as, and respectful as they get older. So I guess that would eventually turn into legacy but kind of somewhat selfishly, I'm interested in, in the relationships that I'm going to have too, I guess. One of the ways that I've been thinking about it as I prepared for the podcast is, I don't want to be Cat Stevens, you know, the Cat's in the Cradle song. Where he wakes up at the end and you know, my boy was just like me, and it's too late. It's, it's too late for him to do anything about that relationship, because he's trained his son in, in the way that he's been for his son to end up.

**S** Scott Thayer 06:04  
I actually, actually really despise that song.

**D** David Dorrian 06:08  
Why is that?

**S** Scott Thayer 06:08  
Because that song makes me have feelings.

**D** David Dorrian 06:10  
Yeah, any song that makes you have feelings...

**S** Scott Thayer 06:12  
Yeah, it's not a good song. He said jokingly, by the way, feelings aren't bad.

**D** David Dorrian 06:19  
No feeling, feelings are very good. But it is, it's a tough one. It, it does tug at you as a, as a, as a guy, and certainly as somebody who wants to be involved in your children's life, that there is this potential that Cat Stevens put down in a song, that you might not be. So I really want to make sure that that doesn't happen. That's really my, my why. I think the other piece of that is, I feel that you can, you can sense when a complementary energy is missing. And I'm saying that in that way, because I want to be cautious. Especially, I know, not all of our listeners are going to be in male female relationships necessarily, but that there is this sense that dads in a traditional sense of thought of as bringing this complementary energy to a mother, doesn't necessarily have to be a man that's doing

that. But I do think that kids really gravitate to energy that brings a difference on occasion, and I think there's actually, there's research around this, the, the, the dads of great students, or the watchdogs programs that are around schools, and we're lucky to have one in our local school, is really shown that the power, that when dads get involved in their children's education, the, the great value that can come from that in terms of the higher engagement from, from students in those schools. They, they see that the mentor, with a different, just a different energy than the folks that they're used to having around, but somebody who is seeing the importance and value in what they're doing on a daily basis at school, and proving that by, by showing up. So I think there's that essence as well. But I see the need to bring this complementary energy. So those two things come together for me. So one of them's quite selfish, as a why, because I want to have a relationship with my kids as I get older. But the other one is, I want to be able to provide that complementary energy to my, my kids where they need it.

S

Scott Thayer 08:18

So those are great. I'm curious, how do you do that? How do you go about setting yourself up to be the parent today, you know, of your two? And then the parent of you know, 5, 10 years from now, 20 years from now, having that relationship? What steps are you taking? What's your How?

D

David Dorrian 08:40

So I think it's really coming to strong relief for me recently, with, I've had some health problems with my back. So I haven't been able to interact with my kids in the same way as I, as I did before, which is where I talk somewhat about that, that complementary energy, in that I could just, we played lots of games, you know that daddy giant or whatever, and then I pick them up and throw them around. And that was how they knew about interacting with me in that young age. I mean, I'm thinking 3, 4, 5, you know that, that Daddy's the one who's lots of fun, picks me up and throws me around. I couldn't do that, haven't been able to do that for the past two years. And they really miss it, they will bring up the fact that, I feel like daddy's gone sometimes because there's not this guy there who is throwing them around. And the same is true when somebody is able to do that. So we had a friend of mine, came over from the UK in the summer, and they gravitated towards him in the swimming pool because he could pick them up and throw them around. And it's, it's that sense of, it's brought that, that idea to me that it's not just something that is necessarily always easy, when something like that takes away your ability to have that easy, simple connection. Which, you know, throwing, throwing kids around kind of is, it's nice, it's a good thing, I'm not putting down throwing your kids around. But there are, it meant that there were other ways I had to think about engaging with, with my children.

And so a couple of different ways that I think about it is trying to be involved. I think showing up is really primarily the most important thing. And that can mean different things for different people. Again, I'm really lucky, I have a job that gives me some flexibility. So I can turn up to events at school, even kind of, even during the workday, but oftentimes, as well, of an evening immediately after, so I can be involved and they can see me being involved at those moments. I haven't actually done the watchdogs program yet, because of my back, because they're, bending down to talk with children at their desk is not really an option. I can't really play soccer with them yet. So that's unfortunate, but being, being involved in every way that I can at that point. I know that's not possible for everybody. Not everybody has that flexibility in their work life. But I think there are other ways you can show up and be interested in what has happened for, for your children during their day. Another way I think about it is, I have been lucky enough that I've been able to coach Rhys's soccer team on a, on a few occasions and actually some of his other teams in sports that I didn't even play. I coached him in softball one year, where I never played softball. So that was very interesting. I'm not sure the kids learned much. But they had, they had a lot of fun.

**S** Scott Thayer 11:23  
Do you know how to play softball?

**D** David Dorrian 11:26  
Um...somewhat now. I'm sure the baseball pitching coaches all talk about bunny ears. I'm sure that that's how they do it.

**S** Scott Thayer 11:34  
Yeah, sure.

**D** David Dorrian 11:36  
So I know a bit more now. But I think being involved in that, in that way as a, showing up as a coach. So it, it's, it's a very different position, you take on that position of authority for a number of children, but your child sees you in that position. And being able to do so especially around sport. I think this is very important in, in America right now. But I know the same is true in England, I'm sure elsewhere in the world, the activity of parents at sporting events for even really young children is kind of unbelievably unacceptable, and the abuse that's thrown at the referees or the umpires or other parents, just people putting their own hopes and dreams on their kids in a very inappropriate way. I think for

me, it comes down to, I think if, if anything, were going to be a roadblock to the relationship that I want to build with my children, that would probably be, be it. So I think it's important to have hopes and dreams for your, for your children. But I think if you're trying to force it more at that point for yourself than you are for helping them to achieve it, that can become twisted and becomes not a useful complementary energy but becomes something that is actually negative. And it reinforces some really unhelpful stereotypes, if that makes sense.

S

Scott Thayer 13:03

No, that makes total sense. I follow that. And some of my hows you know, when wanting to leave a legacy and then wanting to demonstrate an example, for my, for my daughters is I, I had to tell myself to be extremely intentional in, in how I went on about my day. A question that I continue to ask myself now a father of, you know, a 20, 19, 17, 17 and 15 year olds is, what would my 55 year old self say about the decisions I'm making today at 45 in my fatherhood? So 10 years from now, I'm going to have, our youngest will be 25, and all will be out of the house and gone. Am I gonna have a bunch of regrets with some of the decisions I'm making today? Or am I gonna have pleasure from those decisions and sit back and be prideful? So I have to be very intentional about my decision making, one of which is work life balance as, as a traveling sales guy. I'm on the road every week and sometimes gone three nights a week. And so I have to be intentional about the time that I spend at home, that I'm investing into my children, asking them questions about their day, actually listening to their answers and then following up maybe a week later with a question about one of the answers that they gave me. So I've got to be intentionally listening in that regard. As far as being a husband I have to be intentional about the time that I spend with Deana. That it's not just you know, me coming home, unpacking, lightin' up a cigar on the porch and relaxing. Rather it's me coming home, unpacking, chatting with my wife, asking her how her day was, how can I help you tonight, maybe cooking dinner and, and being that husband. Just the small things, sitting on a couch watching Tiny House Nation together, whatever it might be. So I've got to be extremely intentional and demonstrating to my daughters and then to my sons what that husband should be like and what that father should be like when it comes to raising adults.

D

David Dorrian 15:14

Yeah, I think that's, that's fantastic. And really keys into what Kira and Deana talk about a lot. So they'll be very pleased with us. That's brownie points, which is good. Yes. Because it, what you're talking about there is really future focused, like you're thinking down the lines and thinking about in 10 years, how do I want to feel? How do I want my kids to feel about me? So then I'm going to be intentional in the moment about what I'm doing so that I can

get to that.

S

Scott Thayer 15:39

Yeah. And it also makes a harder decision that you have to make right now. You know, and you know, what's better for the child. And you know, that in 10 years, they're going to look back and say, thank you. Deana shared a little bit about some of the trials and tribulations that we've gone through in the last two or three years with our children. And some of the decisions that we made weren't popular at the time with our children. And we're now you know, two, three years removed from those decisions that caused a lot of hurt, a lot of pain, a lot of stress, a lot of trouble. And we can look back on them and go, you know, those were fantastic decisions. And even the children themselves go, hey, thank you for pushing me or thank you for coming down on me in that regard. So yes, you got to be thinking about 10 years from now, as a parent, am I going to be happy or disappointed with the decisions I'm making today?

D

David Dorrian 16:35

And I'm really interested around that as well. I'll be honest, I don't always agree with the parenting choices that Kira is making. But I will always try to support them. But it's definitely a journey for me to get to understanding how to support them. Like, I didn't come out fully formed as the husband of a parent coach. It's, it takes a while. How, I mean, have you had situations where you've disagreed with parenting choices that Deana has made? And how do you handle that in a way that is connected to this legacy that you want, you want to leave and being intentional with your, your kids?

S

Scott Thayer 17:12

Great question. And you do know that this is recorded?

D

David Dorrian 17:15

Yes, I do.

S

Scott Thayer 17:17

You just outed yourself. By not agreeing with Kara.



David Dorrian 17:20

I, it wasn't the smartest move. As I said, it's been a journey. This could be the end of the journey. Wish me luck.



Scott Thayer 17:29

This will be the last time you hear Dave's voice. That no, that is a great question. And, yes, there are definitely times where Deana and I don't see eye to eye, not because she's shorter than I am. But because we're oftentimes not on the same wavelength as, as parents. And we have that little nuance in our relationship where we're a blended family. So there are things that I did with my children, my bio kids, that she completely disagreed with, and vice versa. There are things that she did that I disagreed with. So from a blended family perspective, what we decided to do very early on was make some of the parenting decisions down biological lines. So were when it came to discipline, and consequences being laid out, the other one could have input and have insight. However, when the final decision was made, it was made by the bio parent. So the only time that it was different was the, if there's a shared rule in the home, say for example, no food upstairs. That was a rule that both parents can enforce, and, and parent on. So things that, that we agreed upon in our home, we were able to enforce together but when it came time to do some discipline for our children, we disciplined down biological lines. Does that answer your question?



David Dorrian 19:04

I think it does. And a connected question, maybe a tougher question. So you know, I'll let you decide how you want to answer it, or if you do. Does, does legacy change, or your intentions for legacy change between your biological children and your stepchildren?



Scott Thayer 19:22

I think in a perfect world, no. I think in a perfect world, and a perfect step dad would want to be equal across the board and have the same desire for their stepchildren that they do their bio children. Candidly, it's at times difficult to, to want to do everything for your stepkids that you've done for your bio kids, or wanting to do more for your step kids than your bio kids. I know that there were times as a stepfather I would feel guilty for, for pouring into Marc and Cienna, because that means I wasn't pouring into Zach, Blake or Shea. However, Zach, Blake and Shea weren't with me at that moment, right? They were with their mom, it's their mom's weekend or whatever it might be. And now I'm pouring into Marc and Cienna. So there's that little sense of, of guilt. But at the end of the day, in a

perfect world, yes, my desire is that Cienna would look at me the same way that Shealyn does, and say, that's the kind of husband, that's the kind of father that I want for my children, the husband I want for myself. And for Marc, and for Zach and Blake, I would love for them to look at me the same way and say, that's the kind of man I want to be. That's the kind of husband I need to be. And that's the kind of father I need to be.

D

David Dorrian 20:47

That's fantastic. What a, what a great gift to give to your stepchildren, I think because there's, there's definitely a sense in culture, that that's not always the case. So I think it's fantastic that you can model that and give that to them. I mean, it's, it's similar with any kids, right? Even with two biological kids, I relate to my children in different ways. And I will have, obviously, different goals for them, not because of gender biases or anything, but just because I know that they want different things. So it's going to morph and it's going to change. Some of those are going to be naturally more resonant with the things that I gravitate towards, and others won't. So it's always, I think it comes back to that intentionality that you're, you're talking about. I think you have to realize where you're naturally gravitating towards something, versus where you have to put in a bit more effort. But the child needs that effort from you like that. They are, they're going to notice if you're pulling back and not giving of yourself, because they'll naturally know already that you don't naturally resonate with it, but they want to see you engage. I think, I think that's a key thing with a child, even if they give off an impression, I mean, I'm not there yet. But I imagine teenagers often give the sense that they really don't want you engaging with them or knowing anything about them at all. But I have the sense that actually really deep down they, they do.

S

Scott Thayer 22:12

Yeah, I have, yes, that is definitely true. And there, there are times in our, in our family where I intentionally tell a stupid corny joke. Typical, you know, dad joke like, what did the mama vacuum say to the baby vacuum? And I can't even get the punch line out without hearing groans. For those who are wondering, they said, the mama vacuum said to the baby vacuum, you're a cute little sucker. See, everyone thinks that's funny. And the kids, they groan at it as teenagers. But I know that at my funeral, they're going to talk about those, those corny jokes. So that's fun. I have a question for you is, do you find it, as a father of twins, do you find relating to your two difficult in the equal amount of time and equal way? Or what is that like trying to find their, how to relate to the two separately?

D

David Dorrian 23:14

I think that is, that is tough. I think Kira's talked about that quite a bit on the podcast as well, how it's really hard as a parent of twins to do it, to do it right. I, where we have boy girl twins, there is a natural distinction. I think it would potentially be much harder if they were the same gender, and interacting with them in different ways, just because of things that I've seen, you know, twins of the same gender tend to oftentimes be lumped together more. So we're lucky in that sense that ours naturally just, just aren't. However, they still have the same problem of often feeling like a single entity. So how can, how can I help with that? And I think generally, the one thing that is really key for us, and again, we're lucky because not everybody is in a dual parent family. But with us, Kira and I have different energies that we bring to the table. And I think it's really important that the children get a balance of that as much as they can. Because of that natural resonance. I mean, Kira will resonate with different aspects even, not even just a child, but different aspects of one child. But it means that those are brought to the fore when she is with them, versus I will resonate and bring different things out of the children when I'm with them. So I think it, it's about the combination of the parents and the time that were able to bring and allowing for that complementary nature to come out. I think, you know, Kira naturally more easily resonates with the kind of approach that that Rhys takes to things. But I think it's actually really important that instead of trying to step in with Rhiannon because we naturally resonate more easily, actually, I give chances for Kira to still lead that and have specific time with her so that they get to grow and not feel that sense that oh, I'm just not right for this person. Because everybody can grow and blossom with different relationships, it's, there's not just one way of, of engaging with folks. And I think it's really important to have that, that complementary sense. And I think it has to be complementary and not corrective. There, there has been this, this sense back in, you know, in the 50s, or whatever, but in certain cultures, still, the, the father will come in and be the final voice and be corrective to whatever's happened. And I don't think that's anything that's positive, I think that could be really damaging in terms of that modeling for children, the, the importance of the role of, of a mother. But I do think it's also important for fathers not just to acquiesce, because there are specific things that a father can bring to the table, specific energies that, or a balance to, the approach that a mother brings, or, you know, in areas where it's not a male and a female couple, that there's still that sense of complimentary energies that I think it's, it's really important. And that only comes through again, if you show up. So you have to be intentional about showing up and be aware of where you are balancing your partner out and where your kids need that but without necessarily taking away from the work that your, your partner is doing with, with those children. I mean, it's, it's tough, right? Parenting is tough, though, what we're talking about is, is lots of different minefields, potentially for relationships. But as long as you're on the same page about, about the goals, I think you're on a, you're on a firm footing. It's, as you were saying, Scott, if you're looking 10 years down the line, 20 years down the line, where do you want to be in your relationship with your, your partner, and also your

relationship with your children? And how can you be intentional about that? And actually, there's a really nice quote that dovetails into that to finish this off from Reed Markham. He says, the quality of a father can be seen in the goals, dreams and aspirations he sets not only for himself, but for his family. So that's been our episode of Raising Adults. I hope you enjoyed it, we did. Before we finish up, we have been instructed to remind you to give Raising Adults a five star review on iTunes, or whatever platform you listen to. Now, you could give a five star review to this episode because I think it's deserving of it.

**S** Scott Thayer 27:34  
Is there a way to give a seven star review?

**D** David Dorrian 27:36  
I don't know if you can give a seven star review. But if you find one, please, please let us know.

**S** Scott Thayer 27:40  
But maybe give us a five star even if you don't think it's worth a five star, that way our wives can think we actually did a good job.

**D** David Dorrian 27:47  
Yeah. And lots of nice comments as well. Reviews and ratings.

**S** Scott Thayer 27:49  
Say that Scott, you've got a face for radio, you know, and that be good.

**D** David Dorrian 27:54  
And all sorts of puns. We love puns, as you can tell, you know, the vacuum jokes and things. So that was, keep 'em coming, keep them coming. And it really does help Kira and Deana bring you more of these episodes and potentially bring you more of us back again. Also, make sure to follow them on Facebook and Instagram @futurefocusedparenting. And check out their YouTube channel for video show notes. Future Focused Parenting. It's been a pleasure talking to you.



Scott Thayer 28:20

Yeah, likewise, let's do it again.



David Dorrian 28:21

Sounds good. Should we go get some bourbon and some cigars now?



Scott Thayer 28:24

I think that's a definitive. Excellent.



David Dorrian 28:26

So before we go, we should tell you that Raising Adults is produced by Kira Dorrian and Deana Thayer and today by us, David Dorrian and Scott Thayer and recorded in Dave and Kira's laundry room. Music by Seattle band Hannalee. Thanks for listening.



Scott Thayer 28:39

Cheers.



Future Focused Parenting 28:39

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