

# Life without dad: a guide for men who have lost their dad

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# Introduction

This guide is for you if you have lost your dad and are now going through life, very very present to their absence.

In my work as a coach, I hold deep conversations with those who have experienced a significant change or loss in their life, supporting them to build a life full of meaning, calm, clarity and joy.

The following pages cover questions, concerns, challenges and insights from men whose fathers have died, those who are seeking to fully embrace their own tender hearts and lead their families, organisations and communities with calm, clarity and even some joyful mischief.

It is not intended as a comprehensive resource, but more to act as a prompt for you to connect with what you are feeling, for you to know that you are not alone with what you might be experiencing and that there are ways to be supported with it.

Before you get into the main part of this guide, take a few moments to ponder on these questions:

If you lost your dad recently (i.e. in the past two years):

- How are you today?
- What thoughts are coming to your mind about the future, now that your dad is no longer around?
- In the days since losing your father, what do you need the most that you're not getting?
- What could you do with having less of?

If you lost your dad some time back (i.e. more than two years ago):

- What's been the greatest challenge without your dad being around?
- What's surprised you the most in the time since your dad passed away?
- What would you advise another man who has recently lost their dad?
- What would you advise another man whose dad died some time ago?

Regardless of when your dad passed:

- What are the biggest challenges you're facing since your loss?
- What are the questions you're struggling to get answered?
- What would you want to ask your dad if he were still here?

## Greatest challenges of life without dad

It can often be helpful to hear about the challenges and worries that other men who have lost their dad also face. To know that you are not alone.

However, there could be some things you're feeling that are perhaps unique to you and your situation – and that's OK too.

- I wasn't really close to dad but now have regrets of not having had time with him / not making time for him.
- I've become a father myself and have no idea what I'm doing.
- I'm having trouble in my marriage – what does it mean to be a husband?
- I miss you at key moments/celebrations: birthdays, etc.
- I miss dad at significant dates: dad's birthday / date of passing.
- I'm now tasked with running the family business.
- I'm now expected to step up as "head of the family".

Which of these can you relate to? What's missing from here?

## If you miss your dad...

How are you coping with the loss of your father?

Chances are that you're thinking of your dad. Perhaps you miss him.

- It may be the date of his birthday or some other important date.
- It may be that you're attending a family occasion where he's not present.
- It may be that he's not around to celebrate a major accomplishment with you.
- It may be Father's Day where many other sons and daughters are connecting with their fathers.
- You may be facing a difficult situation and could do with your father's guidance and support.

Whatever the reason, you miss your dad, and that's understandable.

Fathers are incredible people. They have worked hard their whole lives. They have done whatever they think is best to give us, their children a good upbringing. They have taught us how to stand on our own two feet.

Your father was a source of immense strength. He had been through so much and yet continued to tap into a deep reservoir of love.

He may not have said much, but was quietly waiting... waiting to give support, to always be on hand when you needed him the most. And you knew it.

For this reason, and this reason alone, you will always miss him.

## Father's values

Although your dad may no longer be around, there is something that will stay on forever: the values with which he lived his life by.

These very same values are growing stronger in you.

When you look deep within yourself and think about the values you aspire to live your life by, you'll discover that many of them are the very same ones you've absorbed from your father over the years.

Everyone's principles and values are different. Here are some I've gained from my dad:

- Have a positive attitude to handle any situation.
- Face the world's challenges with a smile.
- Think hard about what's important to you and make time for it.
- Cut out all distractions that take you away from what is most important.
- Family duty comes first — care for your wife, care for your children, care for those who depend on you.
- Nothing is more important than your peace of mind.
- When in a conversation, listen — listen properly — then respond as appropriate.
- Talk to people of all ages and with all sorts of backgrounds — there is always something to learn.
- Great service is more important than a quick buck.
- Don't forget to make money too — you need to support yourself.
- Be fearless in life — no-one and nothing has the power to make you feel scared.

Take a moment to pause and reflect... What have you gained from your dad?

## Live with the loss of your dad

On special occasion days or the times when life is sending difficulties your way, use these three steps to help the memory of your dad shape a better moment for yourself:

1. **Remember your dad:** Remember your father with all your heart. Recall your greatest moments with him, what he would say, and what he stood for.
2. **Recognise these values emerging in you:** These same qualities are within you. Look deep within, remember times when you too have gotten through situations using those values.
3. **Apply these values to your current situation:** Whatever you are currently going through, take those values you hold so dear and apply them to your present situation. Think about what your father would have done and how he would have done it. Magnify it. Immerse yourself into it.

By remembering your dad, recognising these values in you and then applying them to your present situation, you will see yourself glide through the current situation with ease.

## Additional resources

### Let go of control to feel great

A friend whose father was very ill had found a way to let go and face the reality of his father's imminent death. Learn about how certain phrases from our heritage have been instrumental in helping us let go of control: [livewithloss.com/let-go](https://www.livewithloss.com/let-go)

### Getting grief and bereavement support

Upon losing someone, do you feel there's no-one you can talk to? Even with loads of people around who try hard to make sure you're not left on your own, it's still so easy to feel alone. But there is a way through it:

[livewithloss.com/bereavement-support](https://www.livewithloss.com/bereavement-support)

## Closing

My hope is that the questions, concerns, challenges and insights you read from other men have been helpful to you for wherever you are at with your loss right now.

This guide will expand and improve over time, so to be notified about future releases, sign up at [livewithloss.com/guides/withoutdad](https://livewithloss.com/guides/withoutdad)

If you would like to connect with me about anything that resonates with you from this guide, please feel free to drop me a line to [hello@surajshah.com](mailto:hello@surajshah.com) – I'd love to hear from you.

For wherever you are with your loss and however exposed your tender heart is right now, I wish you a purpose-led life filled with calm, focus and joyful mischief.

Warmest,  
Suraj