

# Father's Day: It's What Happens, Drunk or Sober, After You Inject a Fertile Woman with Semen

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*"Children are basically a pain in the ass."*

- Warren, Herein

*"They are not sorrows, so much as terrible things."*

- Ernest Hemingway, *Islands in the Stream*

It's Father's Day again which gives us an opportunity to feign caring one way or another that our progeny exist, unlike the many who may have, could have, and perhaps do dwell unrecognized on this planet with my or your or anyone's DNA streaming through their cellular material and driving the continued concatenation of who we are, thanks to many previous iterations, farther into the future for as long as we continue as a species to exist.

To be clear, I was not a good father by the formula prescribed by society from the 1970s onward in which it was manifest that fathers are to be involved in the child's day-to-day life: experiences, learning, maintenance, emotional maturation, achievements, recognition. My view of fatherhood was more parallel to that of an ibex. I have always maintained my financial support, albeit begrudgingly so periodically, long after the legal duty to do so ceased, extending to this day as they approach retirement themselves, or perhaps it just seems as though they ought to be...

My view of fatherhood was, as I learned from experience as one being fathered, one of remoteness and periodic chumminess interspersed with severe reprimands for behavior that was found by the supreme council to be less-than-desired (mother). As it was on television back then in the 1950s, so it was in my house, *Wait 'til your father gets home*. Prophetic words, given that he was periodically absent for one or two weeks at a time drinking and whoring: *OK, I can wait...*

One of the few Fiction-Lite writers I've always enjoyed reading is Nelson DeMille. From, *The General's Daughter* came the line, "My father was a drunk, a gambler and a womanizer. I worshipped him." Mine was, and I did, for the better part of my younger life.

Is it any wonder that as an adult my goal was to do what I needed to do to make this very short linear experience fulfilling, notwithstanding what Kurt Gödel had conjectured in his various calculations, best described in the wonderful book by Palle Yourgrau, *A World Without Time*?

It's probably helpful to understand that throughout my life I have done many things, as many of you have too. One of the most rewarding (and yet unsettling aspects to my life for those around me) was several years on-and-off at sea, moving to the level of

Merchant Captain – US Merchant Marine Ship’s Master. It took me away for prolonged periods of time, self-imposed or by need, and it changed my personality from someone who had some potential for being a relatively acceptable father to one whose expectations could not be met by anyone. *So it goes.*

Before and after, my life was filled, as it was for my father, with a variety of experiences and education, added to my academic achievement that left little room for much else, including (and most especially) trying to adapt to being the evolving model of what fatherhood has, for the most part, become today: androgynous. Nowhere else in the Animal Kingdom is there a comparable example to that of the human experience today in the United States. *Society’s expectations of those who father children have become counterintuitive and violate basic premises of evolution.* Yet, it’s the supposition: silly and unrealistic and it violates the very path of time and evolution.

No one to my mind summarized fatherhood better than Hemingway in his ultimately posthumous, *Islands in the Stream*. Here was an example of a man, Thomas Hudson, who could not seem to achieve reconciliation with his children...either. Hudson was busy with life. I understand that. He was *not* enamored with what his children were on the road to becoming...either. Disappointment seemingly abounds on both sides of the fence of fatherhood. I’m sure it was what my father must have felt from time-to-time, just as it was for every father who ever fathered.

If you are or were a father like me, recall the axiom: *One can’t choose to whom one is related. But one can choose with whom one associates.*

Yes, there are terrible things that sometimes happen in life: but they are not sorrows, as Hemingway said. To better understand the ultimate meaning of life, from my perspective, I would add a quote from Shakespeare, *To thine own self be true*. Besides, if Gödel and Einstein were right, we are, each of us, doing all this again, many times over, at this moment (now) in possibly an infinite number of universes. *Well that’s depressing...or, maybe not.*

Read, *Islands in the Stream* by Ernest Hemingway. It is an epic and a legacy lending insight into his life and his relationships to friends and family. Much in the way of drinking and womanizing: a cornucopia of fatherhood role modeling.

Read, *The General’s Daughter* by Nelson Demille. It’s just good trashy fiction, witty and involving for an escape after you read:

*A World Without Time*, by Palle Yourgrau who takes you through the Gödel-Einstein long-time relationship at the Princeton Institute exploring Gödel’s mathematical models of Multiple Universes (infinite episodes of “Now”) and his growing (and ultimately destructive) psychosis. You do not have to be a physicist or logician to enjoy this well-written biography; you only need be inquisitive.

One more thing: *Happy Father’s Day* fellow normative failures (unless you’re one of the

new indeterminate types).