

Father's Day honours the role dads play in shaping young lives

How children act behind the wheel has a lot to do with what they've seen you do since they were toddlers

Father's Day, contrary to popular belief, is not just another one of those oddball holidays invented and lovingly endorsed by greeting card companies. Now, granted, there seem to be several holidays that are specifically targeted at the wallets of the nation, but this one—at least in its original form—isn't one of them.

So, since millions of dads will be sitting themselves down to a “kid cooked” breakfast this Sunday (cold scrambled eggs, burnt toast and a big glass of orange juice) I thought I'd offer up an explanation of why this particular culinary delight is being served up in the first place.

The leading story seems to be that Mrs. John B. Dodd proposed the original idea in 1909. She wanted to publicly thank her father for the strength and selflessness he had shown raising her and her five siblings as a single parent. It wasn't until she reached adulthood herself that she realized how important the time he spent, the lessons he taught



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and the examples he set really were.

Celebrated around the world

It is said that thanks to her efforts, the first Father's Day was observed on June 19, 1910 in Spokane, Washington. Now, of course, it is celebrated annually all across America and in many other countries on the third Sunday of June.

Here's what I found interesting. The original intent of this day wasn't cute, or schmaltzy, or (heaven forbid) commercial. It was specifically intended to honour fathers, or father figures like grandfathers or brothers or what have you for the lessons they passed on that affected the lives of those that depended on them, and looked to them for guidance, support and love.

Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to squish all the lightheartedness and family fun that should be a part of every Father's Day. I'm all for a day where hardworking, ever loving, always patient and incredibly supportive guys like me (ahem) have access to a decent excuse to sleep in. I love the card from the dog, and I'll eat every bit of my cold eggs, I swear. All I'm trying to do, however, is ask you to think about what the day was originally meant to honour.

So, all you fathers and father figure types out there, before you take a big swig of orange juice this weekend, think to yourself: what lessons am I teaching? What example am I setting?

And, since this is a road safety column, and I'm the Road Safety Guy, you know where I'm going with this, now don't you?

Your kids, or any kids you spend time with, look to you as their role model. We all know that, and I think that most of us fathers or father-types do our best not to act like completely unethical and

ill-mannered baboons around them. But, behind the wheel, things seem to get a bit hazy sometimes.

What will they remember?

So, dear fathers, ask yourself the following next time you are behind the wheel, especially if there is a little co-pilot or two in the car with you: what kind of driving lessons are you imprinting on your kids? What will they remember? How are you treating other drivers? Are you demonstrating respect and courtesy, or are you modeling aggression and inconsideration?

How about the tough lessons, the ones that might cause an argument or two? Do your children always wear their safety belts, or are they learning that Daddy's rules, even ones that can save their lives, are bendable on occasion? Worse, did you not teach this lesson at all?

Do your children know that they can't get on their bicycles without a helmet? Even if every other kid in a 400-mile

radius (don't think they won't check) doesn't have to? Are you, of course, reinforcing that message by wearing a helmet yourself?

I'm certainly not saying that your approach to road safety is the only thing your kids will reflect on when they get older. But it is one thing, and research proves that how kids act behind the wheel has a great deal to do with what they've seen since they were riding shotgun in the car seat.

Please think about the lessons you're teaching and the example you're setting when you're munching on that burnt toast.

That's it for this week. Until next week, be **RoadWise**.

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