

IDAHO DADS

MATTER!

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The Ever-Improving Dad

...He Self-Evaluates His Parenting Frequently

ST. ANTHONY—Dane Burton likes to exercise most afternoons before heading home to his real workout when twin boys Bodi and Kobi, 4 pounce on him and six-year-old Lilly commands his attention.

The boys are “just balls of energy” who “like to fight me” says their dad. “I’ll chase one of them, grab them, and toss them on the couch. The other one glares at me baring his teeth like he’s a ninja or something, and I just go back and forth fighting them off,” he said.

“They always want to poke the bear and always like being the one chased by dad. They’re very much a team, so whenever I’m squeezing one of them in a bear hold, he’ll yell out for help and the other one will come and try to be the rescuer and pull his brother to safety,” he explained.

“Lilly likes to jump in her dad’s car and go someplace. Having food with me, and ice cream after that is her favorite thing to do with me,” Dane said. I think living in St. Anthony makes it easier to be a dad than other places, because I don’t have to worry about them being kidnapped when they go outside to ride their bikes or get hit by cars in busy streets,” he said.

Asked to share his fatherhood philosophy, Dane Burton said this: “Number one is just being there. Some fathers just aren’t there. Then there’s being engaged, meaning put the phone down (and) look at them. I think kids are frequently calling out for attention, saying, ‘Daddy watch this,’ ‘Daddy, watch me!’ They jump off the arm of the couch or something.”

“They just want your eyes on them... you don’t really have to engage and play with them all the time; just watch them without directing your attention to anything else like a TV. It’s kind of like a good, better, or best system: If you’re not there, you’re not being a good dad; if you’re there, great, that’s the first level. The *better* dad pays attention to his children—he puts his eyes on them and shows interest. The third level—the *best* dads—are involved and actively engaged in what their kids are doing,” Dane said. “Every dad should self-evaluate and score themselves. Everyone knows what kind of dad they can—or should—be, and if we’re (dads) striving to be that type of dad, we’re on the right track.”

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