

# **25 Things My Dad Taught Me That Have Carried Me 25 Years Without Him**

**by Brooke Perry, 2017**

I lost my dad when I was 8 years old and the things he invested in me have kept me connected to him all these years. Here are 25 things that have stayed with me:

**#1 – Get into your daughters world, even if it’s not quite a fit.** My dad used to ride these little airplane rides at a miniature amusement park and he didn’t ride them because he thought it was fun; He did it because it was with me.

**#2 – Keep your head up.** He would walk me to and from school everyday and one time he pulled me back from a car almost hitting me. *Thank you dad!*

**#3 – Sometimes you gotta jump the fence.** He jumped the fence to get to me rather than walking to the gate first. I’ve never forgotten that. Go for what you love deeply, whether it’s a relationship, a job, a dream, etc. But mostly go after God.

**#4 – Daddy-daughter dates are more important than golf.** The fact that this has stuck in my brain over all these years shows me that even at 4 or 5 years old I recognized what a big deal it was for my dad to be present in my life.

**#5 – Never give up.** He came to my classroom to help with a science experiment and would NOT stop until he figured it out.

**#6 – Family is more important than church (but not more important than Jesus).** He would take me with him to tune his guitar before church services and also when he would speak at other churches. I never felt chosen second to church, and he always pointed us back to Jesus. No wonder I followed in his footsteps and now am a pastor.

**#7 – Love your community deeply.** He was always engaged with the college in our town and loved playing basketball with the college students he was building relationships with, as well as being involved in my school and with neighbors.

**#8 – It’s okay to leave a legacy of faith – even when others don’t understand that.** My dad was not afraid to hope beyond hope that God was still going to heal him, but trusted Him to do His will. This is rare thing to find these days and I want to leave a legacy of that same level of faith.

**#9 – Read, read, and read some more!** My parent’s library was all I knew and it was amazing. I know it’s what has caused my love for reading.

**#10 – Every moment can be a teaching moment.** He always took moments out of everyday things to teach me something new.

**#11 – Sometimes you have to just stop and hug it out.** I remember a time where I hugged him for what felt like forever. He didn't let go and didn't push me off even though I'm sure he had things to do.

**#12 – Be proud of your scars.** After his first surgery he had a giant scar that went down his whole chest and around his belly button. The way he spoke about it was so proud and so confident (at least around me) that I wasn't scared of it.

**#13 – John Denver songs are just as necessary as worship ones sometimes.** 😊 I will NEVER forget him singing me "Grandma's Feather Bed" in the front pews of our church while I was coloring in my coloring book.

**#14 – Be careful what you joke about.** He made me believe that I got to change my first name when I turned a certain age and I was so sad that I would have to do that. He let me believe that LONG before he told me he was joking! I remember being so mad at him...but he was always joking and that was good for me.

**#15 – Give your child an identity.** He would let me sit up front in the car with him as his co-pilot on road trips (before the laws were as strict) and I felt like the most important person in the world.

**#16 – It's okay to cry and be mad at God for our circumstances; He can take it.** *It's VERY important for kids to see that it's okay to cry from watching their fathers.* I wish I would have seen that more than I did.

**#17 – For your daughter to know how much you prayed for her is a POWERFUL thing.** My mom told me that before they decided to have me, it was so intentional, so prayer-filled, and so focused on God that it made me feel incredibly special. Even if you weren't that intentional when you had a child, how do you pray for your daughter now? She needs to know that.

**#18 – Take every chance you can to have fun!** Whether it was sledding on the street in front of our house or playing t-ball on summer nights or ice-skating at our local frozen parks, I remember having SO much fun with what we had, where we were. We didn't have much money, but I remember so much life and fun came out of him. *I'm sure there was always something else to be getting done, but without those memories I don't know what I would have remembered about my time with him.*

**#19 – Get all the candy!** My dad didn't go trick-or-treating with me just to do his due diligence. He was actually enjoying this time with me and made it last as long as possible. There's always more candy to get...and more time to spend...take all the candy you can. You never know when it will be your last Halloween.

**#20 – Brag about your kids - at least your love for them!** I still hear things my dad would say about me to his friends, and I don't know what I would do without those stories. Hardly anything has made me feel more loved and valued even 25 years later than when a close friend of my dad's will still be able to recall how my dad gloated over his love for my brother and I.

**#21 - Never doubt your impact.** My mom told me that one of the things my dad truly lamented about was being so sick that he wasn't able to "do his job" as a father. I pray to God that He was able to show my dad in heaven all that he had done because I doubt in the moments he was doing all of this in my life that he knew how much it would actually impact me for the rest of my life. *The little things truly do go the longest ways.*

**#22 – Surround yourself and your daughter with what you love too.** Your dreams can become your child's. We had an entire wall of maps in one of the rooms in our house and we would always look at them together and talk about all of the places in the world. Even though the furthest we ever traveled together was a few hundred miles on a road trip to see family or a Mariners game, he opened my little eyes up to the world. And not only have I had my own wall of maps in my various homes now, but I've also traveled to many of those places in the world as well!

**#23 – Literally stop and smell the roses.** There was a rose garden on campus right by where our church met and some of my earliest memories are when we would just go walk through there as a family and literally smell the roses. He taught me to slow down and to love the things within your grasp. *It didn't matter that we didn't have a lot of money and didn't take a lot of big trips because we knew he loved what our small town had to offer and taught me to love that as well.*

**#24 – Model joy.** What brings you joy? Show that in FULL effect to your kids with no shame! My dad would take me to ride this carousel where you could throw these rings into a clown mouth and he would relentlessly throw those rings. I was always so fascinated with how good he was at it and at how he would get SO into it! I loved it and his joy was so contagious.

**#25 – Always end the day with truth.** My dad would read us the Chronicles of Narnia, the Bible, and he'd pray with us and talk to us about our day. Every night he would make sure to end on a note of truth, dreaming, and connection. Even when he was sick, he'd invest in spending the last moments of the day with my brother and I. **Never let the day end without at least reminding your kids that they are loved.**