

Joys Speech

I know that when I speak about my dad today it will be from a totally different perspective than what I hear from my older brothers and sister. I hear them tell stories, and I wonder if I came from the same family.

Nevertheless, this is how I see dad from my perspective; this is my story about my dad, as the youngest in the family.

My earliest memory of dad was sitting on his knee, or on his crossed leg getting a horsey ride. I always remember it being a happy place for me. A nice place for a young child to be.

Later, I remember walking by him in the kitchen. He would be lying or sitting on the old lounge there, and as I walked by, a vice like grip grabbed my arm. Nothing I could do would get me free. I would wriggle, I would be tickled, but that vice like grip held onuntil I said "please"and he would let me go. I remember how strong that grip was. He even did this when I was a teenager, but being a typical teenager, I learnt to say "please" but with attitude and he would let go so he even did it when I was a big girl.

I remember that during my childhood, my dad seemed to be content with the simple things in lifesitting quietly on the back porch on a summer nightor a good cup of tea reading the newspaper on a Sunday morningor lying down in the hallway on the floor on a hot summers day to catch a breeze.

He never seemed to want to do any more than what he was doing at the present time. He appears to be content in whatever situation he is in. Even now when I ask him "What's it like at Southern Cross?" He says,. "I have food, I get a cup of tea, and I am warm..) get to see people, What more could I want?"

When I was young, I remember my dad was at one of three places

- In the shed working
- At home or
- Down town running an errand.

He didn't seem to want to, or have too much time for other activities except those do with the kids, such as the Parkes' Town Band. I also remember when I was old he did spend some time at the museum and the Masonic lodge as Brian has said.

One thing I know about my dad is that he is a hard worker. He was never afraid to roll up his sleeves and get into what ever needed to be done. Just this morning, my sister in law Christine, said that **dad and** the boys would go out to her parent's farm, and collect and cut wood. She said he outstripped the boys as workers.

I remember many nights as a young child when dad would work well into the night at his shed to get the work done.

I believe as a child he had to run home from school (to the Gums) and get a load of chores done before dark. He worked well into his aging years, and didn't ever stop doing things. My husband Rob has the claim to owning the last ever crow bar that dad made when he was 89. Even now he keeps busy making rope and sharpening knives. I know that when I tell people that I am coming to Parkes, they often ask me could dad sharpen their scissors.

For me it seemed that dad was happy to keep his hands busy. I can't remember seeing him wear anything much else than his work clothes. A pair of blue bib and brace overalls, a shirt done up at the collar, and at the cuffs, and a floppy hat with grease all over it, and speckled glasses. (from welding damage)

I always knew that dad could fix anything. When I was in Kindergarten, I told my friends that my dad fixed things and he could fix their toys. One day I bought home a plastic truck with crack in it, and asked dad to fix it for my friend. When dad said "I can't fix that, its plastic" I said "but I told them you could please dad" So he had a go at fixing it.

When I was a kid, I know we didn't have anything fancy at home, but I also knew that we didn't lack for anything. Dad was able to provide for his clan of 8 kids, and though humble some of our existence, we had all we needed. Dad played a big part in all of his children being set up in some type of career and for some of us he was able to set them up with help to buy their first homes

(rather cheaply) He managed to give them a good "kick start" in life. I remember when I lived in the house at Peak Hill Road and I was in high school, Phillip, Brian, Rose, Milton or Les also lived in cottages side by side next door to dad's work shed. I remember that they called the area " Symondsville" Dad had set that up to provide for as many of his kids as he could.

Each one was encouraged to gain a career, and for me it was the opportunity to go to University to be an Occupational Therapist. While I lived on student allowances, there was always the odd \$100 thrown at me to give a boost to my struggling finances. I will never forget the day of my graduation, thereon the lawn of Cumberland College Campus, my dad with a pink checked shirt done up at the collar and cuffs, with a blue denim floppy hat, and a proud grin on his face.

They say that the best thing a parent can do for their children is to love their partner. I have recently had the privilege of re typing the letters my dad wrote to my mum during the war but before they were married. The letters start off saying "Dear Grace,.....from Earl" but after 6-8 months they became "My dearest darling Gracefrom your ever loving Earl" Often with lines of crosses across the page, sometimes the crosses wrote the words I LOVE YOU. It became quite clear that my father was absolutely besotted with my mother. As the letters came towards his release, you get the impression that he just couldn't wait to be with her. While I didn't see much of that sort of thing at home as a child, I have had no doubt that my dad loved mum. He was always gentle with her I can't remember him ever putting her down he tried to please herhe cared for her as long as he could.. Even when caring for mum became difficult ... and he felt stressed .. he was always gentle with her and continued to try and please her. It was evident that he was committed to her.

I am not saying my dad was perfect, and that he didn't get frustrated with her but overall there was a general gentle caring attitude.

My dad didn't ever sit me down and let me know what he thought about things and I can't remember that he insisted that he instill any of his opinions on meand yet I know that he was concerned about all of the kids. I can remember late at night or early mornings hearing mum and dad discussing

Brian and Chris, Phil, or Rosey or one of the bigger kids . The talk was of concern for them. Maybe when I left, they talked about me too.

My dad never told me that he loved me, and yet there was no doubt in my mind that he and mum did love me.

My dad was always comfortable to be in a group without saying much and is comfortable enough in himself to allow silences in conversation but by the same token, I know he loves to have a good yarn. Get him aside, where he can hear you, and he will tell you many a story or tale, particularly of the army days.

Many times I have seen him tell a story, a twinkle in his eye he loves a good joke. ... Like the time he tells the story of how my brother in law John leaped over a wood pile to avoid a snakeor many, many tales of tricks played on mates in the war..... My dad is a bit of a larrikin.

It is strange how I can't remember learning values in life, and yet I see that my parents my dad ... had an influence in the values that I have. My dad never spoke much to me, so I didn't get to hear many of his ideas on things .. but as a kid you pick them up in things that they say to others and things that they do. Dad and mum gave me enough to realise what is important. For example.....I always knew that it was good to work hard at what you do ...and not to think too highly of yourselves. In fact I have a story about that... My Husband Rob , when he asked my dad could he marry medad said "yes" ...Dad being a bit shy didn't say anything else... So Rob feeling a little bit awkward says "So what do you think?" Dad says ..."Some better, plenty worse!" Rob and I didn't know what to think of that. We often were a bit puzzled why dad would say such a thing about Rob. Years and years later, even after kids, I asked dad why he said say that about Rob. Dad said" I wasn't talking about Rob, I was talking about you"

I see a common thread in my family. My dad and mum are good people. My brothers and sister are good people. My dad had a gentle and softer approach to his relationship with mum. So do my brothers and sister in their relationships. **My** dad seemed to have a soft spot for me, and I know that each of my brothers and sister have a soft spot for their kids, and grandkids.

So my dad is a man who is:-

- Content with simple things
- A hard worker
- A good loving husband
- A man with simple values
- A larrikin
- A good provider
- A good man

Without ever meaning to ,our dad and our mum have provided us with a great heritage to live our lives by. So dad thanks for all you have done we are better people because of it and we want to thank you for it**and we want to wish you a very, very happy birthday and we hope you have many more.**