

“Thanks for setting the bar so high. Now when we can’t do something, our wives will go, ‘Well, Doyin does it!’”

—Carson Daly, live on *The Today Show*

DOYIN RICHARDS



DADDY DOIN' WORK

“A must-read for all modern fathers.”

—Dean Cain, actor, producer, and dad

“... something every new and expecting dad could benefit from and every new mom will be eternally grateful for!”

—Jill Smokler, New York Times best-selling author of *Confessions of a Scary Mommy* and *Motherhood Comes Naturally (And Other Vicious Lies)*

Empowering mothers to evolve fatherhood.

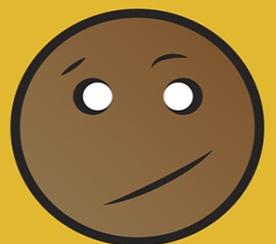


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DADDY DOIN' WORK

Empowering Mothers to Evolve Fatherhood

INTRODUCTION

“WHAT DO YOU WANT TO be when you grow up?”

I remember when I was in fourth grade and my teacher asked the class that very question. With a few exceptions, every girl wanted to be a veterinarian, teacher, nurse, or a mother. The boys in our class were equally as predictable, as many wanted to be professional athletes, police officers, firefighters, or astronauts.

Then there was me.

I wanted to be a rapper. Not only did I think I'd make big bucks with my rhymes, but I also came to class prepared to share my skills with everyone. Mind you, the assignment was only to share the name of the profession and offer a quick synopsis as to why we would want to pursue it. No chance I was following those rules. This was going to be my big break. Because, hey, in my knuckleheaded mind, the not-so-mean streets of suburban Amherst, Massachusetts, were crawling with hip-hop record producers who would line up to sign “MC D-Rich” (yes, that was my stage name. Don't ask).

When it was my turn to present in front of the class, I shared my “Cafeteria” rap with them. Feel free to add your own beat box in the background.

The cafeteria is an awful place.

Food smells good, but has no taste.

Soggy burgers and greasy fries

Made a few tears come to my eyes.

I called my friend to see my plate,

And he said, “Hold on there, you better wait”

Why should I wait? Why should I look?

Because the food on my plate ain't fully cooked.

And then I jumped back—and to my surprise,

The thing on my plate just opened its eyes!

I remember folding my arms like the cool kids did back in the 80s and

waited for a response from the class. After about seven seconds of awkward silence, my teacher forced a smile. “Thank you, Doyin. Please have a seat. Okay, who would like to go next?”

That moment crushed my rap career before it ever got off of the ground, and that’s a damn good thing for everyone involved. However, one thing happened that day that went completely unnoticed until I grew up: some of the girls mentioned they wanted to become moms, but not one of the boys said they wanted to become dads.

Even at young ages, kids are force-fed society’s lines about what they should do for a living. Boys should do “manly” things that will help provide a good life for their wives and children. In other words, find a way to get (and keep) a good job that pays a good salary. I bought into that formula. Pretty much every dude I know bought into it. The irony isn’t lost upon me, because I now know that there’s no better way for a man to provide a good life for his wife and children than being a good, involved dad and a committed parenting partner to his spouse.

The first little boy I come across who says his goal in life is to become a dad when he grows up will be the first. Why? Because many boys and young men don’t equate being a dad to being something that requires work.

Becoming a lawyer requires work. Becoming a professional basketball player requires work. Becoming a doctor requires work. Hell, even becoming a rapper requires work. Not only do those professions require work, they also pay damn good money. What’s the salary for being a good dad these days? Exactly.

Being a good dad requires work, too. A shitload of work. Work that is often tedious, exhausting, and frustrating. Work that will not pay a man a dime for the amount of time he puts into changing diapers, giving baths, helping with homework, being a shoulder to cry on, being an active and willing parenting partner with his spouse, and being the primary male role model in his kids’ lives.

However, it’s easily the most rewarding work a man can do, and nobody can put a price tag on it.

It starts with the toothless infant smiles when his baby looks at him, and it continues until he receives the “TYT” and beyond. By the way, the TYT is the

“Thank You Talk.” It’s that point in a dad’s life when his kids are old enough to say, “You know when you were a hard ass to me growing up, and I kept telling you that I hated you? Well, now I know why you did those things. Thank you for being such a great dad.”

My dad received the TYT from my two brothers and me, and to this day he lists those conversations as some of the proudest moments since he became a father. He put in work at his day job prior to retiring. He puts in work as a devoted husband to my mom as they celebrate forty-four years of marriage and counting. When we were younger, he put in work as an amazing parenting partner that helped my mom survive dealing with three crazy little boys during her time as a stay-at-home mom. He puts in work by always showing my two brothers and me that no matter what he had going on in his life being a dad to us was (and still is) his main priority. Whenever we talk, he always tells me that his hard work paid off.

The key word in there is *work*. My dad is always doin’ work for our family, and that earns him the title of a Daddy Doin’ Work. Yes, that phrase rolls off the tongue easier than the drool from the mouth of my teething baby girl, but it’s intended to be more than something catchy and cute. It’s intended to be the gold standard that all dads should strive to become if they aren’t there already.

Are we there yet?

Are you kidding me? Turn on your televisions and you’ll see modern dads depicted as bumbling buffoons who don’t know their asses from their elbows when it comes to childcare. On a personal level, not a day goes by when I don’t receive emails from exasperated moms fed up with the lack of support at home from their men. With the same frequency, I also receive emails from amazing dads who are frustrated by the women in their lives trying to micromanage how they raise their kids. At least once a week I see moms losing their minds in excitement over dads completing simple parenting tasks they can do in their sleep.

So, no. We’re not there yet.

Can we get there someday?

Absolutely, we can. But we need to approach the problem from a different angle, and that angle is to empower women to evolve fatherhood. Confused?

Don't sweat it. It will all make perfect sense once you dive into the book. I'm not a parenting expert—and let's face it, neither are you. There's no such thing as a parenting expert; however, I know my shit when it comes to dads (whether they are crappy, mediocre, or excellent). Just think of me as your tour guide as we take the scenic route to understanding what evolving fatherhood is all about.

You already paid for your tour ticket by owning this book. So buckle your seatbelt, get comfortable, and make sure you use the potty before we drive down this extremely important road. Nothing is more annoying than asking your passengers if they need to pee before you leave the house, and then ten minutes later little Susie is complaining about an urgent need to tinkle. Don't be Susie.

I digress.

Ready? Let's go.

CHAPTER 1

WHEN I BROKE THE INTERNET

SINCE WE'RE GOING TO BECOME acquainted on this long journey, I probably should let you in on a personal secret before we hit the road:

I broke the Internet.

Yes, you read that correctly. Not too long ago I personally demolished everything that Al Gore worked so tirelessly to build. The result wasn't due to creating a super virus that wreaked havoc upon the worlds' computers. It was simply due to a photo and a blog post. A photo and a blog post that clearly illustrate why we need to evolve fatherhood in the first place.

THE BACKSTORY

Let's rewind back to when my youngest daughter, Reiko (Ray-Coe), was three months old and my oldest daughter, Emiko (Emmy-Coe), was almost three years old. During that time, I had the pleasure of taking four weeks of paid leave from my corporate job for some daddy-daughter bonding with Reiko while my wife, Mari, went back to work, and while Emiko went to school. During one of the first few mornings I was on leave, Mari was especially flustered prior to heading into work. She had to pump breast milk for Reiko's bottles; she was getting dressed and ready for a day at the office, and she was trying to wrangle Emiko to get the girl's hair done for school. While I was getting dressed, I could tell Mari was getting extremely frustrated by how the morning was going, and she knew she would be late for her first appointment.

That's when I stepped in and said, "Just go to work, I'll take care of Emiko's hair."

Mari chuckled and quipped, "C'mon, you know Reiko doesn't like to be put down alone in the morning. She's going to raise hell while you're getting Emiko's hair done. I'll do it."

After some back and forth, I finally convinced her that I'd take care of it, and she left me with one final parting shot prior to closing the front door: "I'll believe it when I see it."

At that point, I put Reiko in the Ergobaby carrier, placed Emiko on a stool

in our bathroom, and I started the process of putting her hair in a ponytail. Easy as pie.

Then I realized my wife was probably at work thinking I would buckle under the pressure and send Emiko to school looking like a female version of Andy Samberg. I needed proof that I had everything under control. Within minutes, I found my camera, placed it on a ten-second timer, and took a quick photo of the scene. Shortly thereafter, Emiko's hair looked great, Reiko was calm, and I sent the photo to Mari with a caption that simply read, "BOOM." We both enjoyed a great laugh from it all, and I figured that would be the end of it.

After dropping Emiko off at school, I put Reiko down for her morning nap and thought my followers would get a kick out of the photo, so I posted it on the Daddy Doin' Work social media pages.

Little did I know what would happen next.

GOING VIRAL—PART I

After making breakfast, I came back to my computer and noticed that the photo was receiving an insane amount of attention, and based on my unscientific analysis, the reactions usually fell into one of three categories: approximately fifteen percent were racists who offered their enlightened opinions on what they thought of black fathers and people who marry outside of their race, or individuals who commented on unrelated items, such as the crappy baby brush I was using or the shower curtain in the background. Twenty five percent were pissed off parents who thought I was trying to get attention for doing things that every good dad should be doing; and about sixty percent were people who thought I was a hero for setting an example for what a good dad should be like.

To nobody's surprise, other social media groups used the photo without crediting me in an attempt to gain more followers for their own brand, which ultimately resulted in me removing the photo from my social media pages after a week or so (not that removing the photo made a bit of difference in that regard).

I would be lying to you if I said the initial reactions didn't affect me. In my time as a blogger, I've posted hundreds of photos of me with my kids, many of which I believe to be much cuter than the one I posted that day; but

none of them even received a fraction of the attention this one did. I simply couldn't wrap my head around all of the craziness.

In a quiet moment a few nights later, I wrote a blog post entitled, "I Have A Dream" that outlined what I hoped for the future. The post was a measured counterpunch directed at the racists, insecure dads, and other clowns who took swings at me. But most importantly, it laid out my dream of hoping that a photo of a man taking care of his children wouldn't be viewed as such a monumental occasion. The essay was well received; everyone finally seemed to be on the same page, and at that point I figured that would be the end of it.

I was wrong.

GOING VIRAL—PART II

Two months later, I had enjoyed a small vacation with the family, and the last thing I felt like doing was composing another blog post to run that week. I was burnt out, completely exhausted, and I was busy writing the book you're reading right now. So I figured, "Why not do a 'Best of Daddy Doin' Work' series where I post my best stuff of the year?" That would allow me to spend time with my family and share my most popular work with people who might have missed it. What a brilliant idea! That was when I reposted the photo with the accompanying "I Have A Dream" blog post as the most memorable Daddy Doin' Work moment of the year. Since I included the blog post with the photo that time around, everyone knew the backstory, and it only took a day or two for everyone to offer their opinions and move on to the next shiny object on their newsfeeds.

This would finally be the end of it for sure, right?

Wrong again.

Less than a week after the reposting, an extremely popular website called The Good Men Project ran my photo and blog post, and that was when the Internet broke. In other words, it made what I had experienced a few months prior seem like a bedtime story by comparison. *The Today Show* wanted to interview me, *Good Morning America* wanted to interview me, Katie Couric wanted to interview me, Yahoo! wanted to interview me, *CNN Headline News* wanted to interview me, *The Huffington Post* wanted to interview me, *Sunrise Australia* wanted to interview me, *Mail Online* in the UK wanted to interview me—pretty much every major news outlet wanted a piece of me. While this

was going on, my website averaged over 125,000 unique visitors a day, I received thousands of emails (many of which I still haven't read), A-list celebrities re-tweeted my photo, and there was a short period of time when my story became one of the top news stories in the entire world. I couldn't turn on the television or go online without seeing my picture and blog post being talked about somewhere. It was just sheer and utter insanity.

THE INTERNAL CONFLICT

It was a pretty epic experience to fly across the country, meet celebrities, and be interviewed by some of the most respected personalities in the media; however, something just didn't sit well with me about all of this. Why did the photo create a worldwide stir in the first place? Was it because I'm a black guy displaying my skills as a dad? Was it because of the racist and hateful comments I received? Was it because some women thought it looked hot to see an athletic dude in cut-off camouflage shorts and a tank top caring for two little girls? Was it because people were outraged that a random blogger became a worldwide media darling for doing what he's supposed to do as a dad?

Hell, if I know. Probably all of the above, I guess. It was unsettling to see the story become something other than an avenue to open up a dialogue about evolving fatherhood. Most of my close friends and longtime followers know I'll talk about evolving fatherhood until I'm blue in the face, because it's what I'm passionate about. And no, it's not easy for me to turn blue in the face.

Instead, people wanted to talk about how I'm "Super Dad," "The World's Greatest Dad," or "Cliff Huxtable version 2.0." Other men wanted to get in the action by posting photos of themselves wearing babies or brushing their kids' hair as if to say, "Hey, look at me, everybody! I'm a great dad, too!" (As if a cute photo with kids makes anyone a great parent) Some women were pissed because they do these things every day, and nobody even gives them a passing glance. It was just a complete mess ... a mess that I feel somewhat responsible for creating. Fortunately, I brought my proverbial mop and broom to clean it up once and for all.

If I learned anything from that crazy media tour, it's that the world's perception of what modern fatherhood is all about is completely distorted. Yes, we have made significant strides from thirty or forty years ago in that regard, but by no means is our work done. Many dads (regardless of their

racial or ethnic background) are sensitive, nurturing, loving, and affectionate toward their children. Every day more dads are giving up their careers to stay at home with their young children while their spouses work. Dads all over America are brushing and styling their daughters' hair or strapping their babies to their chests proudly. So, why is it that when the aforementioned happens the world goes nuts? Shouldn't these behaviors be expected of modern dads and embraced by everyone else?

If a woman named Betsy Sue Burroughs in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, were to share a similar photo that I posted, do you think it would've broken the Internet? No way. What message does it send to the great dads of the world when a guy can post a photo, and he's looked at as if he's a king? What message does it send to men who think they can take ten seconds out of their lives to take a photo with their kids in hopes of becoming the next viral sensation?

THE ROAD AHEAD

All is not lost. We can fix this.

The first step in dealing with any problem is realizing that we have one. It's essential that men and women understand what is expected of a modern dad, discard any antiquated gender roles, and focus on making the world a better place for our children. If anything, my experience showed me that there's a need for this more than ever, and there's no time like the present to get the ball rolling.



CHAPTER 2

THE GPS TO EVOLVING FATHERHOOD

WHO DO WE ASK FOR help when we don't know which way to go?

The Map! Right. Let's check my backpack, and ...

Sorry about that. I've watched way too many *Dora The Explorer* episodes lately. By the way, who uses maps anymore? Memo to Dora's parents: if you're going to let your kid roam the countryside unsupervised with a motley crew of talking animals, you should at least invest in a GPS to give her a decent chance of getting home safely. Check that—I wouldn't let my kids run around the countryside unsupervised with a bunch of talking animals in the first place. But hey, I'm not here to judge.

To introduce myself, I'm Doyin (doe-ween) and I'm your faithful tour guide on this trip. As you know, a good tour guide needs a map—err ... GPS—to show the way. In doing so, let's answer some simple questions, namely, what, who, and how.

THE FINISH LINE (THE WHAT)

My end goal is an extremely ambitious one: to evolve fatherhood across the globe.

So, what exactly does that even mean?

To ensure that all fathers are actively and willingly involved in their kids' lives, emotionally and spiritually, while also being fully engaged parenting partners with their spouses. (That last part isn't applicable to single dads, obviously.)

It means that dads will spend more time reading books to their children at night than ignoring them while surfing the Internet or watching television.

It means dads who work full-time outside of the home will realize that being a dad means more than just bringing home a paycheck and playing the occasional game of catch in the backyard with their kids.

It means dads will always be fifty-fifty parenting partners with their spouses no matter what they have going on in life (unless their spouses are crazy, lazy, or deadbeats, then all bets are off).

It means dads will view the role as the primary male role model in their kids' lives as their most important role.

So yes, it's an extremely ambitious goal, but one that can absolutely be reached.

THE TARGETS (THE WHO)

We've established that we're trying to evolve fatherhood across the globe, so it's pretty obvious that dads are the main targets for this book, right? Well, not exactly.

The last thing most men are interested in is hearing advice from another man on ... well, anything. Especially if the advice is centered around how well (or not well) they are raising their kids. I'm fine with that. So, here we are in the second chapter of the book, and you're probably wondering, "What does he mean by empowering women to evolve fatherhood?" Great question.

I believe there is a way to evolve fatherhood indirectly, and that's by enlisting women to help. Ladies, nobody knows your men better than you. Hell, in some cases, you know them better than they know themselves. What you'll find in the pages to follow is a backstage pass into the life of dads, and when you're done, you'll know exactly what makes dads tick—and you'll learn ways to make them tick in a way that will lead to happier, healthier relationships with you and your kids. Additionally, you'll take an honest look at yourself to determine if you're part of the solution or part of the problem when it comes to achieving our goals.

Hey fellas, don't roll your eyes at me. Just because this book is geared toward women, it doesn't mean that you won't find it interesting. As a matter of fact, if you're a great dad, you'll love what you're about to read, because it validates everything about how you approach your role as a father.

WHEN BEING SELFISH IS NOT SELFISH (THE WHY)

You could be a longtime follower of my Daddy Doin' Work blog.

You could be a woman stuck with a lazy man who takes zero interest in being a dad, and you want some pointers on how to deal with him.

You could be a woman who has a husband who thinks that all you do as a stay-at-home mom is watch crappy television while he has a "real job," and

you're looking for a way to prove to him that you do more work than he could ever imagine.

You could be a woman married to an amazing dad, and you want to ensure he stays that way.

You could be an amazing dad who wants to join the army to evolve fatherhood.

Only you know what motivates you to be here, and since I'm not a mind reader, I'm just going to assume your reason is a good one.

That said, I think it's only fair to let you in on why I wrote this book.

Anyone who knows me knows that I'm a straight shooter, and I promise not to feed you any bullshit as we embark on this journey. So, I'll be honest by saying my goals in writing this book are completely self-serving. No, it has nothing to do with becoming rich or famous; but it has everything to do with my two daughters. Let me explain.

My little girls closed escrow on the center of my universe the moment I laid eyes on them. My oldest daughter, Emiko, is three and a half years old, and she's a Spider-Man impersonating, Nick Jr. obsessed, dimpled chatterbox. My youngest daughter, Reiko, is one year old, and she's a happy, chubby, breastfed baby. Sure, I don't have to worry about either of them getting married or having children anytime soon, but the thought of it scares the hell out of me.

In my time blogging, I often read horror stories from my female readers about deadbeat dads, emotionally-unavailable dads, lazy dads, abusive dads, and the like. As much as I tried, the sheer volume of these stories made it impossible to write them off as isolated incidents. There was a pattern. There was a problem.

The women in these relationships aren't morons. Very few ladies are dumb enough to know ahead of time that a dude isn't suitable to marry or have kids with, still does so anyway, and scratches her head wondering why things in her life are so shitty. The bottom line is, they got *duped*. Everyone in life has been duped before, including you. Hopefully, the ramifications of said duping didn't lead you to raising children with a chump instead of a champ, but if it did, you're not alone.