

Mark Guthrie

82 years ago today the greatest man I have ever met was born.

The first male role model in a boy's life is an important position. All of you guys out there, you have to be careful to be a good one. Little boys pick up on all kinds of nuances that are missed by the casual observer. The first one of mine was always very kind to animals. He was always respectful and courteous to others, until he needed to not be. I've seen him stand up to people bigger and scarier than him to protect those around him. He opens doors for others, and not just women. He helps when and where he is able to without expecting a single thing in return, not because it looks good to do so, but because he can. He says yes ma'am and yes sir to everyone from those who are his elders all the way to the little girls who ask if they can have some of his attention. I saw him cry at my mother's funeral even though they hadn't been together for many years. I held him when he cried at my step-mother's funeral. I have seen this man on his very best days and some of his hardest. I have seen grown men call him and ask him for help and advice about every aspect of life you could possibly imagine, and him freely give it as if they were his own children. You don't have to be related to this man to be treated like family, but you sure do get to see the coolest things when you are.

Most little boys want to be like their father at some point in their lives. I grew up an airline brat and witnessed the greatest aircraft mechanic that has ever lived in action. How could I not want to be a mechanic when I grew up too? At first I wanted to be a pilot, but between mediocre eyesight and a lack of college funding, that was not happening. There was, however, a way to do just what my father did. I worked very hard and become an aircraft mechanic. It wasn't quite the same way he did but there were so many parallels that once you look back on it you get a bit startled. We even went to school in the same town, Wichita Falls, Texas. While his was named Acme, no I'm not joking, mine was called the U.S. Air Force. After a few years on the job, I discovered I had done what so many little boys out there have done, I grew up to be like my father. I had people coming to me to ask my opinion on an issue, or to fix something they couldn't. At first I thought that was just because I had been there longer, but discovered later in life the reason why people come to you. When you give without expecting anything in return, they'll lean on you when they need to and generally not take advantage of you. There are those out there who don't follow this rule, but for every one of those, there are a hundred who do. Those people are the ones who make life worth it. Thirty years after my first "hey, Guthrie can you help me figure this out" I still try to be "that guy". I do that because of "this guy".

I was very fortunate to follow in my father's footsteps.

After you become a Father & Son combination of any type, you begin to notice how many there are out there. From Harley Davidson motorcycles, to automotive manufacturers Ford, Porsche, Bugatti, and Ferarri. Racecar drivers named Villanueve, Brabham, Allison, Andretti, Jarret, Petty and of course Earnhardt. Not only do you see those that are famous, you see them locally, cabinet shops, candy manufacturers, TV repairmen, upholsterers, electricians, carpenters, they are literally everywhere.

While I was becoming a man like my father, little boys everywhere have been doing so absolutely forever. While I may not be an aircraft mechanic in my day job it is still in my soul and I forever will try to be that guy you go to because of this great man who turns 82 years young today.

I love you Dad, Happy Birthday.

-FLacebook post
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