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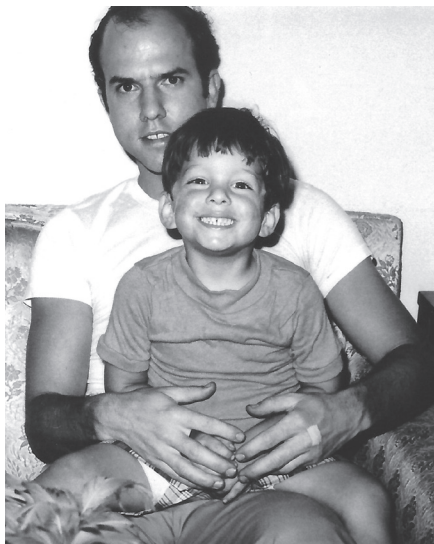
IMPRESARIO
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BANKING
ON FAMILY

ON THE
ROAD

Talking to his dad..

Father-to-be Jaq Greenspon asks his father for some advice.



A young Jaq Greenspon sitting on his dad's lap.

I've never done things the normal way. I had a career as a writer long before I ever went to school to learn what I was doing. At 40, I bought a backpack and spent three months traveling around Europe. Now, at almost 49, I'm about to have my first child. I've been a day care teacher and an uncle, but this one is a new one for me. So I did what any first-time father would do: I asked my own dad for advice.

Jaq: What's your first bit of advice?

You must get a lot of rest now. If you and your wife get a lot of sleep now, come July ... Let's see: Baby is due July of 2016, so you probably won't sleep until July of 2022 or 23. That's the first thing I learned. You give up all hope of a full night's sleep until they're about 7.

DAD: We know we're having a girl, so ... ?

Hold your breath till she's 14. Up until 13 or 14 it'll be real easy. Not too many problems. Your daughter will be loving and kind. And then one day — it only takes *one* day — she starts realizing that you're wrapped around her little finger and whatever she says, you do. You don't ask questions. And that's the way it is. You have to be very tolerant and very careful, and it depends on her mood. At any given moment it changes. They're the sweetest thing at 10 o'clock in the morning and at 10:05 she's a bitch. It goes that quick. I couldn't tell you what advice was given to me. I can only tell you what I learned over the years. You have to try and be tolerant. ...

Jaq: How do you 'be tolerant'?

DAD: Good question. I'm not the most tolerant person around. I understand that.

You show them, and explain to them. And show them, and explain to them. And explain to them, and show them. Forever. You want them to know that they can make decisions, and you try to teach them to make the right decision. And you try to guide them. Now, most parents quit guiding their kids around 18 or 19. This dad has got an almost 50-year-old and he still tries to guide him. It never ends. It really never ends.

Mothers are a little different. Mothers want to become *friends* with their daughters. There comes a point when a mother-and-daughter relationship changes. The mother wants to be the daughter's friend. The father is still a father.

Jaq: So what's my job as a parent?

DAD: You're their guide; you're their

counselor; you're their protector. You make sure nothing happens to them. You make sure if they hurt themselves, you take care of it. But you're not their friend.

If you see a kid fall on the playground, they'll look to see if anyone is watching them, if anyone *sees* them. If no one is, they'll keep playing. But if the parent sees them, they'll start crying and run to the parent. The parent's job at that point is to hold the child, kiss the booboo away (that takes about 13-14 seconds) and they're out playing again. If something bad happens, even at the age of 15 or 16 or 17, you have to hold them and cuddle them because they're still your child.

Jaq: How do you keep them from getting spoiled?

DAD: You're not their friend. The word 'no' is very helpful. However, a better word is the word 'disappointed.' When a child does something wrong, you don't have to say 'no' to them. You look at them and say, 'I'm very disappointed. I'm very disappointed in what you did. I'm very disappointed in your decision.' That will make a child sit up and take notice.

Jaq: So replace 'no' with 'disappointed'?

DAD: Another thing, when a child does something right, and I never did this and I was wrong, but I've learned with grandchildren, is that you have to say 'yes.' When they do something good, and they draw their name on a piece of paper or draw a funny face and say 'oh, this is you' you say thank you, you say 'yes.' Because every time a child does something wrong you say 'no' but nobody ever says 'very good' or 'yes' or be positive. We work on the negative. That's where the word disappointment comes from, not the word no.

Jaq: Knowing your granddaughter is a couple months away, what do you want to say to her?

DAD: I don't know. She'll be far away. (He pauses for a second, his voice cracking) I don't know what to say. In the future I might know what to say. Wish her luck? Treat her parents with respect? I don't know, I really don't.

Enjoy your children, enjoy your grandchildren. Children grow so fast. You gotta be careful. 'Cause one day they're 6 months old and the next day they're 50, and it doesn't take that long (At this, he gets choked up and I change the subject).

— Jaq Greenspon