

TLP Five-Minute Read Over Coffee – On being a Dad



My brother-in law took this photo a few days ago. It represents a very good moment for me, being with my family in Germany, sitting with my kids in the garden of my wife's parents house, baking fresh bread on a bonfire - and watching birds!! I like this photo because it reminds me of one of my core values - which is to be a present Dad in looking after my kids. It also reminds me of an essential truth about the values that we strive towards, that informs a lot of the coaching work I do.

Values don't exist in the abstract, but rather live and breath in an imperfect world! My experience of trying to live by my values is that they can be bumped and blown around! Given this, the power and durability of your values lies in the extent to which they align with your own deeper intrinsic motivations rather than 'shoulds'.

Three thoughts come to my own mind when I reflect on being a present Dad.

Being a present Dad has involved giving up some things that I like (at least in the short term). My fitness levels are simply not the same! 😞 I am sure that

there are guys who can do it all - but I have seen the value of being a present Dad both in what I have gained but also in the compromises and little sacrifices around that.

Being a present Dad has made me more aware of a type of perfectionism that has been a real driver in my own life. Seeing it does not mean eliminating it! The last few years have shown me the importance of being more selective in my work projects and striving to keep my life simple around the things that really matter. It has also made me a little more pragmatic in accepting that 90% is good enough for some things I do.

Being a present Dad has also highlighted - on many occasions - just how much noise there is about what you 'should' be doing as parents. It has been about balancing a humility, openness and curiosity to being parents, with a deeper sense that we have to find the path that is right for us. Being a present Dad reflects my own deep and personal values about how I want to raise my kids. It does not involve a judgement about what other Dad's should be doing!!

Bringing this back to my own coaching work, perhaps the single most important factor I have seen in working with clients in the last few years - is in helping them identify their own deeper motivations and values. This is what I believe makes coaching powerful. The ability to hold a space that allows someone to reflect deeply on what matters to them - is in fact precious and often rare - in the noisy world in which we all live!

Contact me, toby@tlp.lu, if you want to find out more about the work I do.
