



## FATHERHOOD: Lessons My father Taught Me

Since our practice is entirely home base we at the Osiris Group have the opportunity to see exactly why millions of Black and Latino families headed by mostly Black and Latino mothers are fighting a losing battle to the city streets, especially in America's ghettos. In most single family homes, it's a fact that most of the fathers of these children's are missing. I want to share some of my observation from the trenches, let me make it very clear; my issue is not with Black and Latino female's heads of households, who are waging a gallant battle trying to prevent their children from becoming the latest urban statistic. My issue is these males and female's children need their fathers in their lives everyday to prepare them for life's journey.

**The Difference a Father Involvement Can Make:** Everyday clinicians like the ones employed by the Osiris Group all across America are working with black and Latino children to help them process issues ranging from anger, self-esteem, abandonment, rejection, self-image, identity crisis, violence, drugs, gangs, poorly educated, sexually exploited, parental / sibling conflict, community violence, home violence, fear, unemployment, poor housing stock and not mention the prison complex.

The message I as the Founder of the Osiris Group would just like to remind our female and male parents it is during these formative years of a child ( from birth to age 12) early life cycle when they are more amenable to be taught and instructed. This is a period when a father's must be involved in the development and valuing-shaping period of his children. As I reflect over the many challenges our families are confronted with daily the most daunting one is fathers are missing. I would like to share with you the impact my father the Late Reverend Mark Higginbottom had on my life. It was my father who taught me the importance of personal hygiene, my father also taught me to removed my hat from my head once I entered a building, I never quite understood why but since he and other Black men were doing it I figure it could not be all bad. It was my father who taught me under no circumstance was I to refer to Black women as whores or bitches, and I was never, never allowed to fight or hit Black women. My father taught me these lessons, my dad also introduce me and six brothers to doing chores around the house, the message being you live here, so you have to pitch in to keep the house clean. It was father who taught me how to handle failure without perceiving myself as a failure. It was my dad who introduce me to the world of competition through the world of sports, I remember my dad taking me to see the Birmingham Barons of the old Negro baseball league. It was my dad who taught me my first lessons on race; I can still hear him telling me as a young kid, just because white people call us niggers do not mean we are suppose to prove them right. It was my dad who taught me about sex and responsibility, my dad would always say to me that I should not make him a Grandparent until I could afford it, I guess dad knew from supporting eight kids that you needed more than just love, you also needed maturity and income. I was thirty-eight when I had my only child. It was my dad who taught me the importance of being an independent thinker, and that lesson kept me out of jail and I believe prison when so many of my friend did not the courage to say when presented with ideas which was illegal. By being raised and taught to be an independent thinker my self-worth or self-esteem was not depended on what my so-call friends thought of me. And finally, it was my dad who taught me the importance of being an entrepreneurial, my dad would always say to me, Larry, ant fool can get a job if he follows these five simple minded rules. 1. Do not scare white folks when you go in for the interview, white folks are already afraid of you so don't add to their fear. 2. Be well dress, white shirt, press slack, shoes shine. 3. Speak your best version of Standard English. 4. Make sure your hair is well groomed. 5. Be on time. These five simple rules have served me well since 1967, when I went for my first summer job as a counselor. By the way, some of you might recall these simple-minded rules today are called soft skills and we are force to spend billons of dollars trying to teach today something youths something our fathers taught us before we went into the world own our own. It is clear to me and should be to most of you that fathers are sorely missed.