



‘I hope I am laying the foundation for that special relationship that can exist between father and (four) sons!’

STEPHEN VAN DER LINDE (46) AND HIS FOUR SONS JACK (9), MATT (7), NICK (5) AND WILLIAM (3)

Having four children was not really on our agenda – it just happened that way. But I am so glad it did. I absolutely love it.

We always wanted two, transitioned easily to three – but the decision to have the fourth was a big debate.

I was content with three but Jen really wanted another baby. While on holiday, we presented our pros and cons. We finally decided that when we returned to Jo’burg, I would go for a vasectomy, but if Jen fell pregnant before that, then we both promised to be comfortable with whatever transpired. By the time we got home three weeks later, Jen was pregnant. William was just meant to be part of our big family.

Having four sons is practical: they can wear the same clothes, have the same toys and will probably all go to the same school. But their unique personalities and talents make life interesting and enjoyable. On any weekend morning, which is my special time with the boys, I juggle a trip to the Investment Cars showroom for Nick (5), playing mini rugby with Matt (7), walking in the wild with Jack (9), and giving lots of cuddles to William (3). For an outing with all four of them, hiking in the Melville Koppies works.

The biggest challenge is probably lack of time. Jen and I are lucky that we have access to incredible support structures. We are learning how to give each other space and rest so we are able to be better parents.

As our children grow older, I would love them to consider me a good friend and wise counsel. I hope I am laying the foundation for that special relationship that can exist between father and (four) sons!

‘What **FATHER** *means* to **HOOD**, me ...’

In celebration of Father’s Day, we asked some dads to share their stories.



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His presence has taught me to take my foot off the work accelerator. Our favourite

times of day are the evening and early morning. I give Lisa some space and Ryan and I go walking on the golf course. It's our bonding time. Sometimes when we rest, he just lies on my chest and we watch the sunset. There is no business deal, no sporting event, or anything else I can remember, that can beat that feeling. He makes me see life through his (gorgeous) eyes, and even the tiniest things in his life are amazing.

Of course, we will try to have a second child, but if we don't, Ryan is completely enough.

Since Ryan, I have stopped searching. I have completed many sporting adventures (Epic Cycle Race, Duzi Canoe Marathons, Kilimanjaro summit, to name a few), but now I look forward to doing some of those things with my boy. I want him to see me as a pal, and a soulmate. I will be quite 'aged' as he grows up, but I have never felt my age, so that suits me perfectly.

I love my life far more than I have ever before. Lisa and Ryan have finally given me the greatest purpose of all: to be a father.

DAVE WIBBERLEY (47) AND HIS FIRST CHILD RYAN

The day Ryan was born was one of the happiest days of my life. I know most fathers say that, but for me, at the age of 47, he was truly a gift.

I never thought I'd have kids. I had reconciled myself to the idea that being a father was not going to be part of my life. I had been through a first marriage and a second long-term relationship and somehow having children just seemed to escape me. In any event, I got my 'child fix' from friends and family.

When I fell in love with Lisa (28), things changed. Lisa had always wanted children, and had, in fact, planned her life and her career choice around having kids. She told me she was pregnant on my birthday – and I was delighted with my gift!

Being older and having more time has allowed me to participate in every aspect of having a child – except actually giving birth. I immersed myself in Lisa's pregnancy, and now I'm immersed in caring for Ryan.

NELSON JEZI (28), WHOSE FATHER DIED RECENTLY

My mother died when I was young, so the bond between my dad and I was extra strong.

In our (Xhosa) culture, our ancestors are very important in our daily lives, and my dad took my sister and me to her grave on important dates, to honour her.

Now that he has died, and especially with Father's Day coming up, I am sad. It will be a time of remembering all the amazing things about him – how gentle he was, how quiet yet strong, and most of all, how much he loved us, his family. We were the world to him.

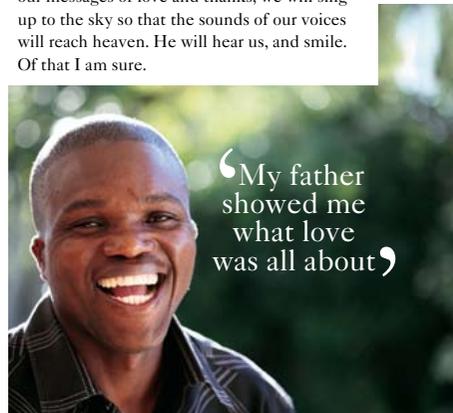
I will remember how, each Sunday, we all made our way to church, to sing our hearts out. I will remember how much he adored my mother; with his gentle manner, he showed us what love was all about. I will be reminded of his sense of respect for all things, and how he took his time for those small things in life that often make a big difference.

He showed me how to celebrate life, how to laugh and be joyful. He used to tell us that a big laugh can smooth away the troubles of life, and that we should keep a smile in our cheeks.

I am what I am today because of my father.

My wife and I are blessed with a little daughter and I often tell her about my mother and father. It's important for her to know where she came from and how it will shape her future.

So, on Father's Day, we will, as a proud family, make our way to his grave and honour him with gentle silence. When the wind has taken our messages of love and thanks, we will sing up to the sky so that the sounds of our voices will reach heaven. He will hear us, and smile. Of that I am sure.



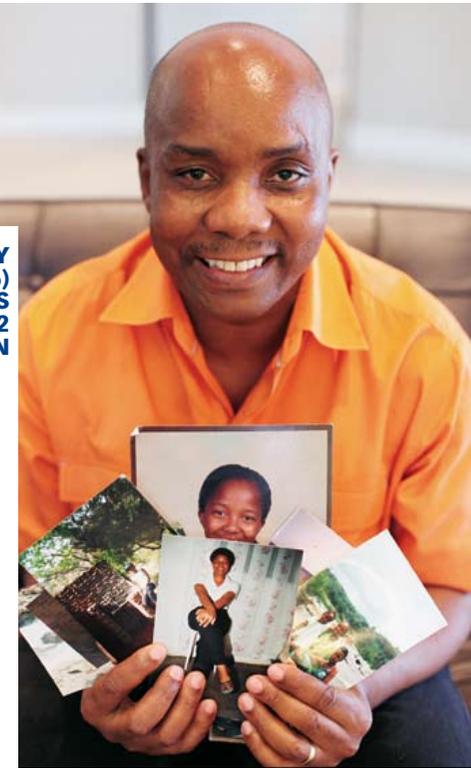
JIMMY MORAKILE (46) WITH PHOTOS OF HIS 12 CHILDREN

My parents passed on when I was 12 years old – and as a result, it was a huge challenge for my sisters and I to carry on, especially to complete our primary and high school studies.

Thank God, one of my relatives ‘adopted’ us and helped me complete high school. This aunt’s generosity made me feel obliged to help others in need. I was also lucky enough to marry a woman of similar socio-economic background, so she wholeheartedly supported the family projects that I initiated.

After matric I had to look for a job, as going to varsity was not an option. Thankfully I found a job in the government service, which helped me raise my siblings. But I still dreamed of getting a degree. As God would have it, I then found a job at the university, which enabled me to enrol for a part-time Bachelor’s degree – free of charge. I was finally able to realise my dream of becoming a graduate. Today I have an incredible job with a great company.

My wife and I have ‘adopted’ 10 children since I started working and could afford it. The most recent child



is my brother-in-law’s grandson. His mother is HIV positive. I am so blessed to have this big family!

We have two of our own biological children and they’ve welcomed our choices; they don’t feel threatened at all. Our family under-

“I lost my parents when I was very young, so now I father many children who need a father”

stands our quest to help other children, and I would encourage them to do the same. I am working, so there is enough money to go around. I think it is imperative, especially in SA, to help others. There are so many orphans walking the street, with no hope or help.

My life experience has taught me that doing little things can make a huge difference in my own life, and most importantly, other people’s lives. I love being the father of so many! ❖

PHOTOGRAPHS: ?????