

Super Dads, Godfathers, and Sugar Daddies

By Mañanita Ochoa

There is only one mother, but fathers come in many different flavors. First we have the super dads. My father was a super dad. They take care of us since we are born. They teach us lessons in morality and integrity, and they turn our intellectual and room lights on and off when we have dozed off after a lot of studying or a lot of partying. They reprimand us constructively and point us in the right direction with patience and wisdom, even though it might not be the easiest thing to do. There is no doubt, that young leaders like Yon Goicoechea, winner of this year's Milton Friedman Liberty Prize, have a great father who gives them direction from time to time, and to that great father I send my respects and admiration on this day. He must be very proud of his son's bravery and morality in the face of temptations that the world throws at us at every corner. I understand that this father is in jail in Venezuela and it makes me extremely sad that he will not be able to be at home with his family to celebrate this special day. He should be freed generously and humanely. No one with a son that good can be so bad as to deserve to be incarcerated, especially in a country where so much crime goes unpunished. Super dads like this one deserve all types of tributes, because they turn their sons into universal leaders and models of conduct. It is not easy to be a super dad. It takes a great amount of sacrifice. They have to say no and restrain the children they love, because the moral highroad is not always the easiest or the most flattering.

Then we have the godfathers. There are a lot more godfathers than there are super dads. It must be because the label does not carry as much responsibility, or because there are plenty of men who are not chosen as godfathers and others who have more than one godson (super dads choose themselves with joy and a vocation, like saints in search of fulfillment and indulgence). Godfathers serve a very important function in the lives of children. They buy us bicycles when our parents can't afford them. Mine gave me a sparkling black Raleigh, which opened the door to a neighborhood full of defiant and liberating adventures. They give us their blessing every time we see them, making us feel safe from malevolent curses and hexes. When we are all grown up, godfathers emerge, sometimes miraculously for no special reason, most times when they want us to owe them a favor for which they charge interest. We must be careful of those godfathers. They charge usury rates for the favors you owe them. Unselfish godfathers take care of us because they look after those that deserve it. Those godfathers are good people. They are mentors who fertilize life with their kindness and love for others, and water their plants and those of their neighbors. We wish them a happy Father's day.

Finally, we have sugar daddies. Those generous and loving men with the ability to seduce damsels as though they were flute-touting fakirs. They give away jewels and perfumes in exchange for young and not-so-young women's siren songs. The bad thing about sugar daddies is that they are usually married to someone else and they are immoral and treacherous players. They stop being sweet when the chanting ends and their imagination goes to sleep. They ask for praises that lead to slavery and they develop confusing bad moods considering how tender they are when they are pursuing their slippery objectives. They should not get presents on Father's Day, because they are scoundrels in search of loyalties they do not deserve. If they haven't read this column they are capable of remaining lost in thought in the presence of some flirty little gift from the ladies that take advantage of their

existential weaknesses. There is a lot to learn from sugar daddies and little to emulate or celebrate on this day. I wouldn't even give them breakfast in bed.

This Sunday is a beautiful day in which we celebrate the procreation of the species and the fundamental role that men play in focusing responsibility and solidarity towards lifting the loads that come with having a family. There is only one mother, but we can use as many father figures as we can get in an effort to improve the safety net of our troubled communities. For all of those that deserve it, on earth and in heaven, and even some of those that don't deserve it but try: Happy Father's Day!