



Fathers and Sons

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The following story assumes that the reader has read Team Clock and is familiar with the methodology and terminology being used. This story illustrates the applicability of the concepts in Team Clock to personal relationships.

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Having reached middle-age, I was confronted with the generational realities of having an aging father. Reflecting on my position in life, I came to the stark realization that time was short for this important father-son relationship. The foundations of our relationship had long been established but I found myself wondering whether I had done everything in my power to make the most of our connection.

The more I thought about it, the more I concluded there were too many topics that hadn't been discussed with the depth that I thought characterize the ideal father-son connection. Later that night, I wrote my father a letter.

Dad,

I'd like to propose a letter exchange since we only get to see each other a few times each year. The rules are as follows: we take turns sending each other questions about the things we've never taken the time to ask. When you receive the question, your job is to share an open and honest reply and then pose a return question. There are no topics too personal or sensitive to approach but each of us, of course, has complete control over how much we choose to share in response. The goal is to keep the exchange going back and forth for as long as we live as we continue to get to know each other better and better. So, assuming you are agreeable, here is my first question: What is the complete and unabridged story of how you met mom?

Love Steve

About a week later, I received a three page letter from my father with poignant detail about the love-at-first-sight meeting and the challenges of starting a family when his new in-laws didn't approve of the abrupt and unexpected marriage. He finished the letter with a question for me and the exchange has been rotating ever since. I now have a shoebox stuffed with the treasure that has resulted from this choice to reinvest in our relationship.

Relationships change as the participants grow. Nothing that is alive ever fails to change. Many of us make the mistake of taking change for granted as relationships become routine and predictable. Sometimes, a reinvestment or redefinition is needed to infuse the connection with new energy.

Ask yourself these questions as you review your own personal relationships:

- 1) How can I reinvest in a connection that has been neglected?
- 2) If my relationship is not the way it used to be, what can I do to adapt to the things that have changed?
- 3) If circumstances require a different relationship, how would I like to shape its new foundation?