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Photo by Mark A. Philbrick

Self-taught fathers: Absent a role model, these dads just try not to fail

BYU NEWS: Joe Hadfield
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This Father's Day, a Brigham Young University sociologist is focusing on dads that don't fit the traditional script - dads in the mold of the character played by Will Smith in the film *The Pursuit of Happyness* (before he earned millions as a stockbroker).

These dads are poor. They're unmarried. Their own fathers commonly were a lesson in what not to do.

Defining fatherhood as they go, these dads shared the meaning they find as self-taught fathers in a study Professor Renata

Forste published in a recent issue of the journal *Fathering*.

"Those who didn't have a role-model type father, they know what they don't want to do, but they don't know what to replace it with," Forste said.

A clear theme emerged from in-depth interviews with 36 such single dads: Their relationship with their own father determined whether they aimed to succeed, or aimed not to fail.

The men who felt close to their fathers tried to "pass the baton" and be a nurturing parent that balances work and family time. One 23-year-old dad in this group had this

succinct answer:

To make as much money as you can while spending the most time with your kids.

The men who felt distant from their fathers also mentioned the breadwinner role, yet they rarely mentioned dads as nurturing parents. Instead they spoke about not wanting to be a "bad dad." One such father put it this way:

I am scared of me; I am scared of the cycles. A son will treat his children the way he was treated.

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Political blogs more accurate than newspapers, say those who read both

BYU NEWS: Joe Hadfield
May 13, 2009

According to research by a Brigham Young University political scientist, people who closely follow both political blogs and traditional news media tend to believe the content on blogs is more accurate.



Professor Richard Davis reports this and other blog-related insights in

[Typing Politics](#), a new book published by Oxford University Press.

"Blog readers still get most of their news from regular news sources, but they are concerned that they are not getting the whole side of the story there," Davis said. "They suspect habitual bias in the traditional news content."

Davis studied daily blog readers from a [nationally representative sample](#) and found that just 3 percent got most of

their news from blogs. Most readers still got their information from traditional news organizations, despite some bloggers' predictions that they would entirely replace traditional media. Instead blogs have become an echo chamber that extends the shelf life of news stories, Davis said.

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