

## Father's Day on the Bright Side of the Sun - Phoenix Suns are a bond that links generations

Written by

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My Dad and I don't always think the same way or appreciate the same things in life. We don't share the same political persuasions, and we're not the touchy-feely types who delve into each other's psyche or try to solve each other's problems.

Occasionally, our adult conversations get a little stilted. We want to talk to each other, but we often run out of common ground to share.

Luckily, sports bridge the gap. Somewhat.

I am into pro basketball, pro football and some college sports - mostly ASU. He's into golf, baseball and some college sports - mostly U of A. Where we can somewhat bridge the gap between us is the [Phoenix Suns](#) .

He was excited for me when I told him I got media passes to Suns games this past season. He called me when the Suns hired Jeff Hornacek, and when he heard Dan Majerle got a head coaching job somewhere. When all else fails, we can talk Suns.

My Dad was once an avid Phoenix Suns fan but burned out/swore off the team in late 90s. He began buying season tickets in the late 80s, after the rug scandal and after my sister and I were both off to college. Games were still at the Madhouse on McDowell - Veterans Memorial Coliseum. My Dad would go to every Suns home game and then often re-watch the game on his VCR late that night. He worked his schedule around Suns games. He went to the season ticket-holder events.

He lived and breathed the KJ/Chambers/Majerle/Hornacek teams. He lauded the acquisition of Charles Barkley, and proudly took his seat at the brand, spanking new America West Arena in 1992. Like the rest of the valley, he went nuts during the 1992-93 playoff run with the Chuckster

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and the two heartbreaking losses to Houston the seasons after that.

When the Suns went through a lull in the late 90s, my dad was done. He kept his tickets in his name, but sold them off each season to others. In decade+ since then, he's barely attended a game.

Other the other hand, I've stayed a loyal Suns fan the entire time. I knew every player on the team every season since the 80s. The best part of Christmas in 1996 was hearing the Suns had acquired [Jason Kidd](#) . My lord, Jason Kidd! The Suns would be reborn! Then Rex Chapman joined Kidd to light up the scoreboard with sweet jumpers. Then the [Anto nio McDyess](#) scandal 1998. McDyess, acquired as the PF of the future from Denver, blew up the Suns grand plan when he returned to the [Nuggets](#) as a free agent once the 1999 lockout was over. I vividly remember accounts of the Suns sitting in a car outside Denver's arena, locked out, calling McDyess and his agent asking for a face-to-face before he signed with the Nugs. No dice.

Then the Suns hit that lull. Backcourt 2000 was a flame out. Kidd got into domestic trouble and was unceremoniously shipped to the [Nets](#) for [Stephon Marbury](#) . Marbury was good, but did not fit the team's mold. The Suns were just another basketball team, and fans started losing interest.

The Suns were reborn again in 2004, with Suns fever sweeping the valley. But even during the Nash run, my Dad didn't take his tickets back. Late in 2005, I hooked up with his friend (and buyer) and worked a deal to get 10 games a season. Until 2012, I went to 10-12 games a year. I watched the game-tying [Raja Bell](#) "3" from the corner to stay alive vs the Nuggets in 2006. I watched the Suns lose Game 5 without Amare and Diaw in 2007 against the [Spurs](#)

My Dad is an all-or-nothing kind of guy. He dove in head-first for about ten years, starting with the Suns rebirth under KJ and Chambers and Hornacek and Majerle. The Suns were surprise team in the West, a scrappy underdog that found a way to win with the three-guard lineup that loved to shoot from deep. People love underdogs.

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When I completely dove into the fray was in 2006, when the Suns were once again the scrappy underdog team who found a way to win with a great PG passing to shooters from all angles.

It was during this period that I took advantage of the Suns to develop a closer relationship with my wife's step Dad. He and my wife were in danger of drifting apart after the passing of her mom, his wife, to cancer in 2003. It happens. Human beings move on, and sometimes drift apart when your link to each other brings such painful memories.

Mutual love for the Suns helped me bridge that gap. We have shared that partial season of tickets for the past seven years, giving us a connection beyond family. His new wife is wonderful, and we still hang out together nearly every week.

My Dad flamed out after a decade of hard-core fandom, after the team was no longer that scrappy, lovable underdog. Maybe I'll end up the same, but so far my Suns fandom hasn't wavered. Even during the super-lull of the last couple of seasons, I've only become more hardened as a follower rather than backing away.

Yet I'm not quite ten years into my deep, deep head-first dive, so we'll see how the next few years go.

My kids are all girls, so I'm not sure I can pass off my Suns fandom to a new generation like my Dad did but we can all hope. There are female Suns diehards out there.

It would be nice to have that common ground on which to stand as we get older and draw apart. My kids are getting to that age when friends and jobs are more important than time with Dad. I am losing them the same way my parents lost me. I can't resent it, can't fight it. It's just the way of the world.

As I watch my kids fade away from me, as I realize the strength it takes to let them go, I have more appreciation than ever for my own parents. It's haaaaaaard to watch your kids develop their own lives, their own loves, their own allegiances. It's haaaaaaard to remind oneself that they love you all the same. They need to spread their wings, and it's okay to do so without Mom and

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Dad helping with every decision.

At times, I find myself missing my kids even when they're right in front of me. Texting, tweeting, snapchatting, facebooking, instagramming. They are somewhere else even when they're not. Yet so am I. I carry my phone around just as much as they do. I'm following twitter, checking Bright Side and a dozen other sites, filling those gaps in conversations with my own favorite things. And I love my kids just the same, so I have to remember they do too.

I wonder how the rest of our lives will go, when or if any of the kids will turn out to be close to me or if they will all go their separate ways. I went my own separate way from my parents. Moved away to college, stayed away afterward, visited only a handful of times a year even in my twenties. It was only when I divorced a decade ago that I circled back to parents.

And now as I watch my kids fade as they reach and experience the college years, I have that much more appreciation for Dad and Mom. I call them more than ever (though still not enough). We keep in touch in many ways. I love my Dad and Mom. I have always loved them, whether I always showed it or not. They have made me the person I am, which I'm told is a pretty good one.

Maybe one of my kids will take up that Suns baton when my flame burns out. It would give us something to talk about when all other conversations fail. The further apart we get, the harder the conversation.

Maybe I'll just hold onto this baton for a while longer. Possibly a long while longer.

***Tell me, Suns fans, how does sports link you to your Dad or your kids?***