



Happy Father's Day! Recently, we came across a sweet story on social media that really put the holiday on our minds. In honor of all fathers, we'd like to share it with you.

Earlier this spring, the staff at the World Bird Sanctuary in Missouri witnessed an unusual sight when an old, male bald eagle named Murphy sat down on a rock.¹

Day after day, Murphy refused to leave the spot, squawking at anyone and anything who came near. Murphy had lived at the sanctuary for almost thirty years and had never behaved this way before. Many visitors who saw the eagle worried there was something wrong with it.

But the eagle wasn't sick. He wasn't hurt. And he wasn't sad.

For the first time in his life, he was ready to be a dad.

At first, the handlers at the sanctuary were confused. Normally, bald eagles mate for life, with both parents taking turns incubating their eggs. But because Murphy's wing was permanently damaged, he couldn't be released into the wild. As a result, he had never fathered eaglets before. In fact, he had never even mated before. Already 31-years-old, he seemed destined for a life of bachelorhood. But something changed in him that first day. Suddenly, he was ready to be a protector and provider...even if the thing he was protecting and providing for was a rock.

Touched by his parental instincts, the sanctuary staff decided not to interfere, other than moving him – and his rock – to a private enclosure. Eventually, spring would end. The rock would never hatch, Murphy would lose interest, and that would be that.

But then one day a new visitor arrived at the sanctuary. An orphaned eaglet, barely a week old, that had been swept out of its tree during a storm. Far too young to survive on its own...but still young enough to imprint on a new parent. Even if that parent was a grumpy old loner.

Lacking other options, the staff decided to pair the little chick with Murphy. After all, the eagle was clearly in dad mode. Yet there was a major risk involved. Again, Murphy had never built a nest before, never cared for eaglets before...and might even see the little newcomer as a threat to his "baby rock."

But they also knew that every child needs a parent.

So, the next day, they swapped Murphy's rock with the orphaned chick, held their breaths, and waited. (Of course, they also took precautions, leaving the eaglet in a heated cage in Murphy's pen. That way, the new dad could get to know his new charge without any risk of hurting it.)

After a few days, the staff felt the coast was clear. They opened the chick's cage so the two could be properly introduced. And to their delight, Murphy successfully swapped being a rock dad to being a *real* dad. The two conversed back and forth, chirping and peeping at each other. Soon, the old eagle even started protecting and feeding it. Later on, Murphy showed the chick how to drink and eat on its own. How to stretch its wings. How to clean its beak and feet after a meal. (And yes, even how to behave whenever the young eaglet started acting naughty.)

Of course, there were some things that Murphy *couldn't* do. He couldn't teach the chick to fly. And when a tornado struck nearby, he forgot to keep the chick warm and dry, forcing the staff to do it. (Hey, even the best dads aren't perfect.) But the two bonded beautifully, and in the ensuing weeks, the chick has grown and grown. Now, the sanctuary team believe they can even release it back into the wild. In fact, as of this writing, they have already selected a date to do so.

Father's Day.

When we heard this story, «Salutation», it really got us thinking about fatherhood. About the role fathers play in our lives. About how important a good father really is.

Fathers come in all shapes and sizes. Birth fathers and stepfathers; grandfathers and father-figures. Some dads are gregarious and playful; some strong and silent. (Some are all of the above!) Some are good in the garage, some are good in the yard, and some are good in the kitchen. Some dads are married or in partnerships; others, like Murphy, do it solo.

But the good ones all have something in common: Nothing is more important to them than their kids.

As Murphy no doubt discovered, fatherhood is never easy. But dads are persistent and tenacious, learning as they go. Learning what to do and when to do it. When to push their kids and when to leave them be. When to be a coach and when to be a friend. But *always* being a protector and a provider, in whatever way their family needs. All dads make mistakes, of course, but the good ones never stop trying to be better...because they always put their kids first.

Thanks to Murphy, that little chick is growing up strong and healthy. It knows how to take care of itself. It knows how to be an eagle. And that's really what fatherhood is all about, isn't it? They're teachers and role models. Cheerleaders and caretakers. Protectors and providers. Fathers teach us how to grow up. They teach us how to take care of ourselves. They teach us how to be the best people we can be.

We're so grateful for our dads. And we're grateful for *all* the good dads in the world. The ones who put their kids first. The ones who teach them how to stretch their wings...so that, one day, they too will take to the air and fly.

On behalf of everyone here at Hudock Capital Group, we wish you a happy Father's Day!

Sincerely,



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¹ "An Eagle Who Adopted a Rock Becomes a Dad," *The NY Times*

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