



FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH

“Dear Old Dad (Emphasis on the ‘Old’)”

By: Ron Brounes

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Welcome to the initial entry of *Dear Old Dad: the Blog*. Most people who start “blogging” (is that even the proper terminology?) believe they have something meaningful to say and desire a platform to share their voices with the world. Perhaps they have a keen understanding of relationships and want to inspire readers to become better spouses, parents, children, in-laws, bosses, employees (Dear Abby was ahead of her time). Perhaps they know the entertainment world and can shed insight into pop culture gossip before the latest *People* hits the mail (poor Suri). Perhaps they have knowledge and experiences to share about sports or cooking or travel (with visions of hosting the next hit reality TV show). My blog will be different in that I KNOW I have nothing meaningful to say. In fact, I have been writing about non-meaningful topics since 1997 when the first *For What It's Worth* newsletter hit the snail mail. (We're now on issue 98 and counting.) Still, I am excited to venture into the blogosphere where even more people can access my mindless gibberish and sarcastic rants (though I am still not sure what a blog is?).

THE EARLY DAYS

In 1997, Brounes & Associates was a mere start-up in an age when start-ups made owners incredibly wealthy through public offerings (way to go Globe.com and Pets.com). Though I'm sure I could have pursued such a payday, my moral compass prevented me from selling out to Corporate America and now, 15 years later, Facebook has soured me on the IPO game. *For What It's Worth* was initially a marketing rag for my company and had a very small, but loyal following in the early days (thanks Mom). Issues typically consisted of anecdotal observations on life with a nonsensical segue into a business application. (I had a bad blind date...you should network; the Longhorns seem primed for a nice year...think outside the box; I went on a fun vacation...you should network by thinking outside the box.) As time passed, the readership steadily increased (thanks Sis), but much of the feedback implied that folks enjoyed my “keen” observations far more than my biz advice (you can only tell people how to network so often).

Though I was single with no kids (none that I know of...quit laughing), rarely traveled, and wasn't particularly well-read, readers found my periodic scribings to be satisfying “junk mail” (real quote), a brief escape from the realities of everyday life (for those who actually had a real life). I often suspected that reading about my mundane experiences made their lives seem less trivial. They were able to catch up on my “wild” exploits of dating in my 30s (and unfortunately, my early 40s), my athletic endeavors and accomplishments (and related aches and pains), my fight against Father Time (isn't 50 the new 30?). I occasionally expressed views on the events of the day (Y2K, 9-11, politics, financial crisis) and finally introduced readers to the love of my life (well worth the wait). Lately, I have been sharing the joy of parenthood, a role I thought may never happen. In reality, *For What It's Worth* has become a way to stay in touch with family and friends (long before Mark Zuckerberg had the idea for Facebook...perhaps I should sue?)

A BLOG BEFORE BLOGS

While *For What It's Worth* will continue under its own label (can't quit so close to the century mark issue), it will also be rebranded as *Dear Old Dad* and take my “mindless gibberish, personal observations, sarcastic rants, and ‘daddy’ musings, often told from the perspective of the guy occasionally confused for a grandfather” into the blog world. While most new bloggers start from scratch with a single posting and try to develop a loyal following as they add new ones along the way, I have the advantage of possessing considerable content (not all of it particularly good) to populate *Dear Old Dad* from day one. In some ways, *For What It's Worth* was a blog before blogs actually existed. If folks wanted to comment on a particular posting (previously

called newsletters), they had to do so the old-fashioned way...through email or more recently via Facebook. Now they can comment directly on the blog for all the world (or my mom) to see.

The blog (brounesdad.com - no "www" needed) will be divided into various categories so readers can delve into the diverse worlds of Ron Brounes, a Ron Brounes who has evolved considerably since 1997 (well, at least, I am now married with two kids, but still not particularly well-read or well-traveled). Some postings (newsletters) find their ways into two (or more) categories.

Daddy Dearest: The greatest job on earth

My favorite topic these days, bar none. I share the joys of "daddy-hood," but don't pretend to offer any significant insight into this role despite my advanced age. "Younger" friends hope to gain tidbits of knowledge from my vast life experiences, while "older" friends enjoy seeing how I am screwing up my kids, much the same way they did theirs years (decades) before. Mainly, I hope my daughters appreciate these musings one day (at least once they learn how to read).

Love and Marriage: Finally settling down with that special someone

I introduce the world to my "better half," my soul mate, my best friend, my partner in crime (forgetting anything, Dear?) and show how patience indeed paid off as I landed a trophy wife (two years my junior) to stroll through life with. Married friends seek helpful hints to renew that newlywed flame we share everyday, while single friends read with jealousy and hope that they too will one day find similar happiness (right, Honey?)

Age Before Beauty: The inevitable (and often annoying) aging process

Once upon a time, 40 was considered old; now that I am approaching 50, it seems so youthful. These days, injuries take longer to recover from, hangovers last several days, and I am sounding more and more like my parents. While "older" friends are beginning to enjoy their twilight years as empty nesters, I am hopeful that the kids will keep us young or, at least, young at heart (and my "younger" friends would stop calling me Mr. Brounes).

Wild Bachelor Days: The pre-marriage (crazy) dating scene

Before Ron Brounes, the married man, there was Ron Brounes, wild and crazy, eligible bachelor about town (that's how I choose to remember it). In reality, it was Ron Brounes, the guy trying to find a TV in the bar to watch an Astros game. Blind dates were plentiful as were stories behind meeting each potential "Eunice" Brounes (but only some that can be repeated in this forum).

Gone, But Not Forgotten: Friends and family members who left us too soon

Sadly, most of us have experienced loss and grieving...some the ultimate result of time and mortality, others tragic and unexplainable. I pay tribute to those important people in my life who are no longer with us, though their legacies live on in memories of experiences shared together and through the countless lives that they each touched (including my own).

The Old Ball Yard: Sports, fanatics and other obsessions

Sports has always been an obsession of mine, far more from a spectator's standpoint than one of a participant. I relay experiences on the ball field from the perspectives of player, coach, and fan, and even express how obsessions change once family enters the equation.

Travelogue: Vacations, experiencing the world, coming home again

OK, so I am far from a world traveler, but I do enjoy a good trip every now and then (though I'm not sure the term "vacation" still applies with kids).

Random Thoughts: Biz, investing, politics, pop culture, and other realities of life

Consider this the catch-all category about current affairs, the top stories of the day (well, at least, they seemed relevant when written), and other non-affiliated postings (like this one).

So please visit "brounesdad.com" early and often, review postings old and new, subscribe for updates, and don't forget to share comments via the blog (or even the old-fashioned way).