

What My 1st At-Home Dads Convention Taught Me

Description

Hey hey! Iâ€™m back from attending the [20th Annual At-Home Dads Convention](#) and, wow, what a weekend! This was my first time to attend the spectacular event put on by the [National At-Home Dad Network](#), but itâ€™s definitely not my last.

My [last post was about how I was leaving](#) to attend the convention, and now Iâ€™m ready to sum it up as best as I can. There is a wave of emotion still building to tsunami-sized proportions inside of me, and putting into words is difficult. Kinda like when you know youâ€™re in love, but in a straight, *brotherly* love kinda way.



default watermark

[View this post on Instagram](#)



I arrived Thursday afternoon and met up with the 2 of the dads I was sharing a room with. The other dad had a late flight that night, but heâ€™s actually from Dallas and I had met him at a local [Dallas Dads Group](#) meet-up. I knew the dad from Dallas was a good guy from the little talking we did before, and thankfully the other guys were all good spirited as well.

As a matter of fact, Iâ€™ll just say it right nowâ€¦ Every. Single. Dad. Was. Awesome! Yeah, didnâ€™t meet a one that put off a negative vibe, and even right after meeting them, I felt I could give them all a hug without second-guessing it. For some, I actually did give a hug. A bro-hug, of course.

Thursday night was just a laid-back gathering for those who arrived a day early and wanted to enjoy a few beers while meeting again or for the first time. Even though we never met face-to-face, I knew most of these guys from talking on Facebook almost 2 years and we recognized each other right off the bat. There was never a dull moment as we all mingled and enjoyed some good craft beer from Raleigh.

Seeing how well our group of dads got along and connected was refreshing to say the least. As a self-proclaimed introvert, I found it surprisingly easy to start a conversation and comfortably chat amongst a big or small group of other at-home dads. Iâ€™ve always heard great things, but actually experiencing it shone a new light on the powerful bonds created almost instantly.

Friday evening was when the event kicked off with a meet and greet in our hotel lobby. They recommended dressing business casual, so I had to dig out my old work clothes for the event. It was kind of nice dressing up (just a little) for a change. Food and drink were provided as well as plenty of memories and welcoming handshakes from more dads Iâ€™ve known online and ones Iâ€™ve never met.

Saturday morning kicked off the convention with a full day of speakers and breakout sessions covering topics like finding a good balance between work (yes, at-home dads â€œworkâ€• too) and family time, picky eaters, blogging, the decision about going back to work, entrepreneurship at home, and even one for dads with daughters. Yes, I attended the dads with daughters session, duh!

That evening we enjoyed a wonderful dinner provided by one of the sponsors, DinnerCall, with food and drinks at a hoppin rooftop bar. Again, all of the dads were extremely happy to talk to each other and swap stories, tips, and thoughts with one another.

Sunday was short but still powerful with more informative sessions on being a better dad as well as formal organization agenda items like voting for board members. Some key members were leaving this year and delivered powerful and emotional speeches to our group of 145 dads. If you think guys donâ€™t or shouldnâ€™t cry, you should see our group and I bet youâ€™ll change your mind; maybe even well up a little yourself.

I might cover the events in more detail in future posts, but the main thing I want to share today is the biggest surprise I received from attending the convention. It has to do with me, how I responded to the

weekend full of activities and never any downtime to be alone.

As an introvert, I tend to crave/need my alone time to clear my head and rest. It's literally a major effort to go out sometimes and can be mentally exhausting. If you're an introvert, you understand, if not, you think I'm ridiculous. To each their own. ðŸ™‚

But this weekend, I learned something about myself; I was able to **break free from my introvert ways** and found myself enjoying the presence of others. Even with such a large group, from going out to a pub to all 145 at-home dads in the convention room, **I was comfortable**. I'm usually all antsy and looking for a way out when we go to a restaurant or something, but everyone just made things comforting.

I don't know how else to say, but I enjoyed every single dad I met and they each offered helpful advice, a good laugh, or just a simple hug and handshake. All of which I never expected.

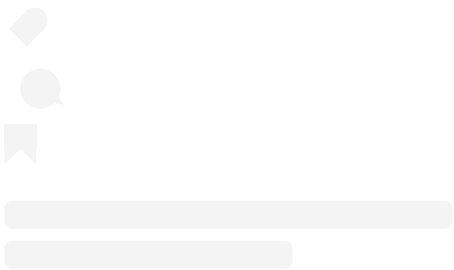
Maybe because we're all in the same boat when it comes to staying at home with our little clones, but whatever it is, I crave more. That's why I plan on attending the 21st Annual At-Home Dads Convention next year, and hope to see all 145 guys plus more!

I'll have plenty of pictures to share from the weekend. Here's a glimpse just to give you a taste of our at-home dad camaraderie.



[View this post on Instagram](#)





However, while the convention did see me lose most of my introverted tendencies, it was not a permanent change.

default watermark



A fellow at-home dad friend caught me taking a *chill pill of loneliness* to text Kelley before going into our hotel room. I still prefer being home over going out much, but now I know I can better manage the situation. And who knows, maybe I™ll find a newer, more extrovert me along the way.

Are you more of an introvert or extrovert?

Ever find yourself feeling like the opposite of how you usually feel when going out around large crowds?

Date Created

2015/09/29

default watermark