

On becoming a father and being a man:
A narrative exploration of the experience of masculinity in the transition to fatherhood

by

Sean N. Larsen

B.A., University of Calgary, 2006
M.A., University of Victoria, 2011

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We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. We also acknowledge with respect the Sinixt and Ktanaha Nations whose traditional territory this research was conducted on.

BECOMING A FATHER AND BEING A MAN

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Supervisory Committee

Dr. Tim Black, Supervisor
Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies

Dr. Fred Chou, Departmental Member
Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies

Dr. Jennifer H. White, Outside Member
School of Child and Youth Care

Abstract

Fatherhood is a gendered relationship between a male caregiver and a child. The change from non-father to father is a significant transition in men's lives. Over the past fifty years in North America there appears to be increasing divergence between socially dominant masculinities and fatherhoods with men taking on more caregiving and domestic work. Using a qualitative narrative research methodology, I interviewed seven Canadian fathers about their experience of masculinity in their transition to first time fatherhood. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and individual narratives were generated. The narratives generated told the stories of fathers who spent more time engaged in direct caregiving and domestic labour than previous generations. They described divergence between hegemonic fatherhood roles and hegemonic masculinity as they transitioned to fatherhood. Fathers experienced a deepening of emotion in fatherhood incongruent with historical dominant masculinities. Overall, fathers found the experience of transitioning to fatherhood as meaningful and rewarding.

Keywords: Fatherhood, Masculinity, Narrative

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Dedication

There was a moment about two years ago where, after months of feeling stuck, anxious, and unmotivated, I briefly considered leaving my PhD program unfinished. In that moment I both did not believe I was capable of completing this degree or that I could overcome my anxiety to complete it. I fully intended to quit and tearfully began grieving the loss of something I had poured immeasurable time, resource, identity, and future hopes into. Out of sheer stubbornness and fear of failure I didn't send a resignation email. Rather, I took my terrified first step towards the final push to complete this research and degree. I am so grateful for the growth that has followed.

I could not have completed this work without the support of my wife, Nikola Larsen, who has stood by my side as I silently grappled with this degree and project and allowed me space, time, and trust to see it through. Thank you Niki. My children are the greatest inspiration of my life and are a constant drive for me to be a better person so that they can have the opportunity to do the same. Thank you Cedar and Cohen- no matter what you become or where you go, you are my greatest achievement. My supervisor, Dr. Tim Black, has been patient, kind, and supportive and I will never be able to thank him enough for helping me see this process through, being a friend and a mentor, and never losing faith in me even when I lost it in myself. Thank you Tim. Dr. Fred Chou and Dr. Jennifer White are both inspirations to me and I could not have done this without their kind and thoughtful support. Thank you Fred and Jennifer.

I also want to briefly acknowledge the privilege that has allowed me to complete this project. Though this has been the hardest thing I have completed in my life, it was never made

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harder by the colour of my skin, my gender, my sexuality, or my financial opportunities. The work that follows was completed in communities with privilege and with people of privilege. I acknowledge this. I hope that moving forward in my career and life that my contributions are mindful of this and I can be an advocate to help the voices of all to be heard and acknowledged.

Lastly, I want to thank the fathers who shared their time and experience with me. I could not have done this project without you. Thank you for your courage and vulnerability in sharing your stories with me and allowing me to share them with others.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background to the study

Becoming a father is a major life transition that includes changes in how men use their time, changes in their relationships and changes in the social roles they occupy (Schlossberg, 2011). Over the past few centuries in North America, socially dominant masculine and father roles were largely similar with fathers exemplifying traditional masculine roles (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2016; Lamb, 2000). However, over the past few decades the dominant father role in North America has shifted towards increased involvement in caregiving and domestic tasks (Doucet, 2006; Pleck, 1987; Lamb, 2000; Marshall, 2008). This “new fatherhood” is divergent from dominant social conceptions of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2016). As such, men adopting new fatherhood roles confront conflicting expectations between being a good father and being a good man (Doucet, 2006; Eerola, 2015; Finn & Henwood, 2011; Miller, 2011). Very little is known about how men experience these conflicts and the ways in which fathers navigate them.

Fatherhood is a social role that describes the parenting relationship between a man and one or more children. In Canada, based on 2016 statistics, it is estimated that there were more than 8, 611, 000 fathers in Canada including biological, adoptive and stepfathers (Stats Can, 2016). Each of these men, at some point and in some manner, transitioned into the role of father from a non-caregiving male and the experience of that transition potentially impacted the way they fulfil the social role of father. Historical research into the experience of men transitioning to fatherhood has explored men’s experiences of specific changes in fatherhood, including how men use their time differently in fatherhood (Knoester & Eggebeen, 2006;

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Gauthier & Furstenberg, 2002), how they rate the quality of their relationship with their partner before and after caring for a child (Olsson et al., 2010; Olsson et al., 2011; Pastore et al., 2007; Shapiro et al., 2000), and how much testosterone is present in the body before and after fatherhood (Gordon et al., 2010; Storey et al., 2000). Each of these specific explorations have found that the transition to fatherhood can be challenging for men. While valuable to our understanding of specific areas in men's lives, these studies tell us little about the specific individual, richly-detailed experiences of men in their transition to fatherhood. However, a growing body of qualitative research seeking to explore these details has emerged over the past few decades.

Qualitative researchers have interpreted gender as a significant factor in men's experience of their transition to fatherhood. Specifically, researchers have interpreted men as wanting to be more involved in caregiving but experiencing individual and systemic barriers to doing so (Doucet, 2009; Eerola, 2015; Fagerskiold, 2008; Finn & Henwood, 2009; Ives, 2014; Miller, 2011). To date there have been no studies asking men to describe their experiences of masculinity in their transition to fatherhood. The proposed study will explore men's narratives of masculinity in their transition to fatherhood, using an interpretive narrative methodological approach (Bruner, 1991; Mischler, 1997; Polkinghorne, 1995; Riessman, 1993; 2005).

Research Problem

The transition to fatherhood, for many men, will be one of the most significant shifts in their lives (Bartlett, 2004; Gray & Anderson, 2010) and each father will likely experience this transition differently. A key interpretation from qualitative research on the transition to fatherhood is that being a good father can conflict with dominant conceptions of being a man

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(Doucet, 2009; Eerola, 2015; Fagerskiold, 2008; Finn & Henwood, 2009; Ives, 2014; Miller, 2011)

and how men navigate these conflicts can shape the father role they enact. As a self-identified man who has transitioned to fatherhood, this research question is one of great intellectual curiosity for me personally, and, as fathers occupy significant space in caregiving relationships, obtaining a better understanding of how men transition into this vital role is potentially important for family-life and parenting in general.

A Narrative Approach

Humans organize and make sense of their experiences through narratives.

(Polkinghorne, 1995; Riessman, 1993). As Polkinghorne (1995) stated, we are storied beings.

We come to know ourselves and the world in which we live through the stories we tell, imbued with meaning, context, perspective and personal relevance and a transition is a story of moving from one way of being in the world to another. A narrative is commonly viewed as a type of story that is organized with plots and a sense of linear chronological movement (Bruner, 1991; Polkinghorne, 1995). Influenced by the interpretive narrative work of Riessman (1993; 2005; 2015), Bruner (1991), Mischler (1997) and Polkinghorne (1995; 2007), I co-constructed narratives with seven Canadian men who have recently transitioned to fatherhood, allowing for a rich exploration of the storied experiences of these men's transitions to fatherhood.

Research Question

The primary question explored in this research is, "What are men's narratives of masculinity in their transition to fatherhood?"

Key Terms and Summary

Fatherhood in the current research will be defined as a caregiving relationship between

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a male parent and a child. A male includes any person who defines their gender as male including cis-gender and transgendered males, while the transition to fatherhood is viewed as the process of changing, adapting to and navigating the fathers' new caregiving roles. The transition to fatherhood, as defined in the current study, begins with a father learning about the potential birth of a child, adoption of a child, or the assumption of caregiving for a child with a single caregiver with whom the male has begun a domestic relationship (commonly known as "step parenting", Juby & Le Bourdais, 1998). The transition to fatherhood includes the assumption of caregiving responsibility and the initial adaptation to the assumption to caregiving and fathers in the current research will be considered to have transitioned to fatherhood based on their own *awareness* and identification of their transition (Schlossberg, 2011).

I begin this study with a review of relevant literature and an orientation to key theoretical influences in Chapter Two. Chapter Three, describes my methodological approach to the research including my philosophical orientations. I co-created data with the fathers through interviews where they were asked to describe their transition to fatherhood including their experiences related to the role of hegemonic masculinity in that transition. I transcribed and analyzed the interviews through the process of re-storying (Polkinghorne, 1995), organization and interpretation (Bruner, 1991; Riessman, 1993). Chapter Four presents the co-constructed narratives of the men's transitions to fatherhood, while Chapter Five includes a discussion of how these stories are meaningful and valuable for increasing our understanding of fathers' experiences, a review of the contributions and limitations of the research and recommendations for future exploration related to this topic.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Gender role conflict in qualitative research on men's transition to fatherhood

Men do not start out as fathers but rather become them. The transition to a father role can be a struggle for many men and, given that current conceptions of fatherhood are dynamic and include potentially competing representations of masculinity and historical male caregiving, fathering is a complex task. As a social construct, the roles fathers are expected to play are created within a particular historical time and place across cultures and geographical locations and what it means to be a father intersects with overlapping societal expectations for what it means to be a man. Though there is a growing body of literature exploring how men experience the transition to fatherhood (Bradley et al., 2004; Doucet, 2009; Eerola, 2015; Fagerskiold, 2008; Finn & Henwood, 2009; Ives, 2014; Miller, 2011), research from related areas including human transitions (Kralik et al., 2006), masculinity (Connell, 1995) and fatherhood (Lamb, 2000; Pleck, 1987) can contribute to our understanding of men's experiences.

In Canada, the range of what fatherhood may look like is remarkably vast (Ball & Daly, 2012). Fathers in Canada span almost all male demographic ranges including age, gender, sexual identity, marital status, and income. Some of the unique subgroups of fathers that have been identified within a Canadian context include young fathers (Pratt et al., 2012), Aboriginal fathers (Ball, 2012), divorced or separated fathers (Whitehead & Bala, 2012), low income fathers (Stega et al., 2012), fathers with children with chronic health conditions (Beaton et al., 2012), lone parent fathers (Ball & Daly; Ravanera & Hoffman, 2012), and gay or trans fathers. Beyond the variability within individual father's lived experiences, culturally speaking, the

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father role is a varied and dynamic social construct. Historically, dominant social and gender roles distanced men from caregiving tasks and located their primary responsibilities and routines outside the home in the workplace, on the sports field, or on the battleground (Gray & Anderson, 2010; Lamb, 2000; Pleck, 1987). However, Canadian fatherhood, and fatherhood across the developed world, is changing (Lamb, 2000), as evidenced by the rise in rates of lone parent fathers (Ravanera & Hoffman, 2012) and stay at home fathers (Doucet, 2004: 2018) within the past 30 years. There are many different ways to be a father in any place or time. Borrowing from Connell and colleagues' writings on masculinities (Connell, 1981; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), I use the term hegemonic fatherhoods to refer to the socially dominant ways of enacting the father role. The word hegemonic refers to dominance or hierarchical superiority within a social context (Connell, 1995). As it relates to masculinities or fatherhoods, the term refers to socially preferred and supported ways of fulfilling the associated roles.

Many factors influence the role that a father enacts. However, central to all conceptions of fatherhood is the gendered clause that a father is a man and what it means to be a man in society is often bound to social conceptions of what it means to be a father. Historically, the father role has largely been congruent with dominant masculine roles (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Lamb, 2000; Pleck, 1987). However, a "new" fatherhood has been described as beginning sometime in the latter half of the 21st century by scholars studying fatherhood in North America (Pleck, 1987; Lamb, 2000). This new fatherhood situates a father's role more inside of the home than previous conceptions and, in doing so, veers away from socially dominant, or hegemonic, conceptions of the masculine role (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The resulting role conflict between the father role and the masculine role is a central

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finding in previous qualitative research on the transition to fatherhood, though not something men have been asked about directly in research (Bradley et al., 2004; Doucet, 2009; Eerola, 2015; Fagerskiold, 2008; Finn & Henwood, 2009; Ives, 2014; Miller, 2011). In the following section, I review relevant research and prominent theories on life transitions, gender roles, masculine roles, and father roles, concluding the section with a review of the small but growing body of qualitative research exploring how men experience masculinities and father roles in their transition to fatherhood. In doing so, I articulate the need for the proposed research exploring how Canadian fathers experience gender in their transition to fatherhood, given that no research to date has asked fathers to specifically describe or tell the stories of their transition experiences.

Transitioning to fatherhood

A transition is the process of moving from one way of being in the world to another (Kralik et al., 2006). The word *transition* in relation to life transitions has a long history of use in anthropological research (Martin- McDonald & Biernoff, 2002; van Gennep, 1960) and more recently in nursing research (Kralik, 2002; Kralik et al., 2006; Meleis et al., 2000). Kralik and colleagues (2006) note:

The literature frequently uses the word transition to describe a process of change in life's developmental stages, or alterations in health and social circumstances rather than people's responses to change. Transition is not just another word for change (Bridges 2004), but rather connotes the psychological processes involved in adapting to the change event or disruption. (p. 322)

Chick and Meleis (1986) provide one of the most common definitions of transition in health

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care as, “A passage from one life phase, condition, or status to another...transition refers to both the process and the outcome of complex person-environment interactions. It may involve more than one person and is embedded in the context and the situation” (pp. 239-240).

Transitions, then, are not just a change from one way of being to another. A transition is the process and experience of a person in moving from one way of being to another that includes the thoughts, decisions and interactions that accompany that change. For example, enrolling in a PhD program and beginning classes are changes but the transition to becoming a doctoral student includes how one identifies with the role of student, how one acts to fulfil that role, as well as all the changes it encompasses.

In many transitions, there is a biological or behavioral marker of the change (Chick & Meleis, 1986). By contrast, in the transition to fatherhood, the markers are the myriad and varied acts of parenting a child or children. Though these markers may be useful in delineating the start or end points of the change, it says little of the emotional or psychological processes that Kralik and colleagues mention. The transition to fatherhood includes both the indications that the transition has started, such as the anticipated birth or adoption of a child, as well as the intra-subjective psychosocial and emotional components of men’s experiences in adopting, enacting, and trying to fulfil a father role. As, Meleis et al. (2000) note, “transitions are both the result of change and result in change” (p. 19). In fatherhood the changes inherent with creating a child necessitate the further changes of providing care for that child and having a relationship with it in the transition to fatherhood.

Schlossberg’s (2011) Transition Model, provides a structure for describing how people may navigate life transitions. Schlossberg (2011) stated that anticipated or unanticipated,

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“transitions alter our lives- our roles, relationships, routines and assumptions” (p. 159). Drawing on the Schlossberg Model, one can assert that men transitioning to fatherhood make changes in their relationships, routines, and roles and these changes interact with and shape each other.

Relationship changes in fatherhood have been studied extensively over the past 30 years (Ahlborg et al., 2005; Ahlborg & Strandmark, 2006; Belsky et al., 1990; Bradley et al., 2004; Condon et al., 2004; Olsson et al., 2010; Olsson et al., 2011; Pastore et al., 2007; Shapiro et al., 2000; Von Sydow, 1999). Generally speaking, research reports that fathers’ romantic partners described changes in their relationship following childbirth as including some improvements, some deficits, and a number of adjustments. Olsson, Robertson, Bjorklund & Nissen (2010) described intimacy between partners post-birth as being at a “crossroads” or a place of potential departure from a previous way of being and an adjustment to a new way of being. Researchers have posited that this new way of interacting can positively (Dew & Wilcox, 2010; Galovan, Holmes, Schramm & Lee, 2013) or negatively (Belsky et al., 1990) influence relationships but that inevitably relationships change with fatherhood.

Generally speaking, routines describe the way in which a person uses their time. Few changes may impact men’s routines and how they spend their time more dramatically than the transition to fatherhood. In addition to the added demands of caregiving, transitioning to fatherhood increases time spent within the family unit and decreases time spent with male peers (Gray & Anderson, 2010; Knoester & Eggebeen, 2006; Gauthier & Furstenberg, 2002). Employment routines in fatherhood have been found to shift by either increasing out of the home paid work time or decreasing this time in favor of spending more time with the family (Astone et al., 2010; Halrynjo, 2008; Lee et al., 2007). Becoming a father means doing new and

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different things, some of which are congruent with traditional masculine routines and others which are not. For example, Canadian men have been found to play an increasingly large role in caregiving for a child and have demonstrated increased equality in domestic tasks (Marshall, 2006; Stats Canada, 2017). This is time spent that is not traditionally associated with a masculine role (Connell, 1995) and adjusting to this new pattern of time use and these potential conflicts can be challenging.

Changes in roles and the resulting role conflict characterize much of the growing body of research on men's transition to modern hegemonic fatherhoods. The word role has its roots in the world of theater- where in playing a role, actors are scripted to act in certain ways to portray something to the audience (O'Neil, 2008). A role is a way that a person behaves that is "different and predictable depending on their respective social identities and the situation" (Biddle, 1986, p. 68). Through social role theory, researchers have explored the different roles played by males and females within a setting (Eagly & Wood, 2012) and the dominant roles played by men have been described through the concept of hegemonic masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2016). In one of the few studies looking at fatherhood through the lens of social role theory, Banchevsky and Park (2015) surveyed parents' perceptions of the father role historically and currently and noted that most parents described the father role as "dynamic" and "becoming more similar to the role of the mother." Thus there is some evidence to support the idea that the father role is changing, with the "new" and more emotionally involved father representing a potential departure from more dominant masculinities.

Men transitioning to fatherhood ostensibly add the father role to their masculine role and, in doing so, there is potential for these merging roles to conflict. Roles that fail to coincide

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with each other resulting in stress for an individual has been referred to as role conflict (O'Neil, 2008). O'Neil noted that Gender Role Conflict can be defined as, "...a psychological state in which socialized gender roles have negative consequences for the person or others. Gender Role Conflict occurs when rigid, sexist, or restrictive gender roles result in restriction, devaluation, or violation of others or self" (p. 362, 2008). Qualitative research on the transition to fatherhood has provided evidence that men find juggling masculine and father roles simultaneously difficult (Bradley et al., 2004; Doucet, 2009; Eerola, 2015; Fagerskiold, 2008; Finn & Henwood, 2009; Ives, 2014; Miller, 2011). For example, Baldwin and colleagues (2018) completed a comprehensive literature review of the mental health and wellbeing of men transitioning to fatherhood and found that the formation of a fatherhood "identity" and competing interests were two key sources of stress and mental health concern for men transitioning to fatherhood. To better understand this role conflict experienced by men transitioning to fatherhood, it will be helpful to first describe socially dominant ways of being a man, as well as socially dominant ways of being a father.

Hegemonic Masculinities

Central to all definitions of fatherhood is the gendered clause: a father is a male parent (Gray & Anderson, 2010; Lamb, 2000). As such, much of what it means to be a father is shaped by social, cultural, and individual constructions of what it means to be a man or masculine. Fatherhood is a socially-constructed phenomenon (Pleck, 1987; Lamb, 2000) and the role of father, including the parameters of acceptable fulfilment of that role, are often determined by dominant social trends and beliefs. As a gendered social phenomenon, fatherhood and what it means to be a father are grounded within social constructions of what it means to be a man

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and social agreements on what men should and should not do within society (Connell, 1995; Pleck, 2010).

Major movements in research on masculinities emerged in the 1980's with Carrigan, Connell, and Lee's (1985) proposal for a new sociology of masculinity. This "moment" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) in research on masculinities continued and has led to some important understandings of what it means to be a man in Western society. The word masculinity refers to male gendered social practice, or, essentially, what men do (Connell, 1995). The differences between male and female biology do not wholly define what men do that is different from what women do; rather, manhood is a social construction that is malleable and changes with cultural prescriptions, language and context. What men do is incredibly varied across individuals and settings and thus masculinity is not a monolithic entity. As such, because men do a lot of things, it is more meaningful to acknowledge multiple masculinities, or ways of being a man, given the complex and divergent ways men enact manhood within any given society.

Connell introduced the concept of "hegemonic masculinity" in 1995 and this remains one of the most commonly cited attempts to define masculinities. Hegemonic masculinities position masculinities hierarchically with dominant versions of masculinity enacted and/or viewed as socially superior. The dominant patterns of how manhood is enacted do not always reflect the majority of men or masculinities within that setting but rather reflect the ideal or hierarchically favored forms of being a man (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). For example, the "Marlborough Man" typology from 1950-1990s of the rugged individualist, who needs no one and smokes his chosen cigarettes out on the plains under the open sky (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marlboro_Man) is an example of a masculine ideal from that

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era.

Describing a complex and vast construct like masculinity, or what men do, is challenging to say the least. To help make sense of this task, Connell (2000) identified four aspects of gender relations influencing masculinities: power relations, production relations, cathexis, and symbolism. *Power relations* refers to the dominant gendered system through which power is held and maintained. Power in Western societies has historically been gendered, favouring the masculine, with men more often in power positions politically and economically. *Production relations* refers to the accumulation of goods or resources and, historically, men have been expected to provide as hunters or gatherers, farmers and, especially following the industrial revolution, through paid work and the ability to provide, as a “breadwinner”, is a central theme in many ideas of masculinity. *Cathexis* refers to desire, or, more specifically, the social construction of desire (Wedgewood, 2009). Sexual desire is often overlooked in the literature, as it is believed to be a biological process, however, as Connell (1995) pointed out through the example of many societies demeaning homosexual relationships, society dictates the dominant or appropriate form of this desire. Desire, as defined by Connell, is the attachment of emotional energy to an object. In hegemonic masculinities, the objects masculine energies have been attached to in the recent history of Western hegemony are females. As such, sexual desire is socially constructed where it relates to masculinities (Wedgewood, 2009) and, as many boys learn amongst their peers in a locker room, social power is influenced by sexual prowess and congruence with dominant sexual norms in society. The message in the locker room discussions I was privy to as an adolescent was clear- being a successful man meant you had sex with women - representing a hetero-normative standard gender binary.

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Symbolism in Connell's (1995) work, refers to societies' symbolic representations of gender. In Western society, the mass media plays a role in what is dominantly viewed as masculine (Ging, 2005). From Rambo to Homer Simpson, male roles are shared and enforced. For example, public media conceptions of the ideal male body have changed dramatically in the past 100 years (Pope et al., 2000). In their book *The Adonis Complex: How to Identify, Treat, and Prevent Body Obsession in Men and Boys*, Pope, Philips and Olivardia (2000) compare how the bodies of GI Joe Action Figures, a toy that was popular amongst young boys and marketed specifically to boys, have changed over time. In 1964 a GI Joe was modelled after a 5'10-inch man with a 32-inch waist and a 12-inch bicep. By 1974 that bicep had grown to 15 inches and in the 1990's continued to grow to a massive 27 inches, five inches larger than former Mister Universe Arnold Schwarzenegger's steroid-infused biceps at their peak. These toys are symbols of dominant trends in masculinity and provide evidence that an ideal male is a physically strong male and, sadly, to an extent that is impossible to obtain even with the use of body altering steroids (Pope et al.). Symbolic representations of masculinity, therefore, do not represent the majority or average of masculinities but, rather, a dynamic social ideal.

Connell has used these four dimensions of power, production, cathexis and symbolism to describe and interpret hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1995, 2013; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Doucet, 2004; Murgia & Pogia, 2013). In sum, hegemonic masculinities shape the larger social practice/performance of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) and, while all men do not cleanly sort into current hegemonic masculinities characterized by aggressive power seeking and the subordination of the feminine, the idea that this is the dominant and favored form of masculinity is supported by substantial evidence (Connell &

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Masserschmidt). However, other authors have addressed the reality that men do not necessarily fit neatly into categories.

Doucet (2006) noted that men do not often meet any clearly defined model of masculinity but rather move between them. Connell described these movements as a process of internal complexity and contradiction (Connell, 1995), but critics of Connell's description of hegemonic masculinities ask why we define masculinities at all when there is so much variation between men and settings (Collier, 1998; Whitehead, 2002). In response to these questions, I tend to agree with Connell (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) that:

We need some way of talking about men and women's involvement in the domain of gender and that masculinities and femininities remain theoretically useful concepts to assist us with making sense of understanding gender relations as well as gender ambiguity (pp. 16-17).

While there are many differences between people, at times, heuristic devices can be helpful to help navigate the complexities of these differences. Further, the very concept of "hegemonic" masculinities, a term anchored in dominant but dynamic social constructions allows for significant variation across individuals, time, and settings. For a review of the significant evidence for hegemonic masculinities in social practice and modern changes to the theory based on this evidence, the reader is referred to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), who point out that hegemonic masculinity may not represent the actual lives of individual men "yet the models do, in various ways express widespread ideals, fantasies and desires" (p. 838). Viewing fatherhood through the quadripartite lens of power, production, desire, and symbolism is

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useful in describing the dimensions that influence men and their experience in the world and represents one of the main theoretical frameworks employed in this study.

Hegemonic Fatherhoods

Fatherhoods, like masculinities, are also social constructions. In its more general sense, fatherhood is an umbrella term for a caregiving relationship between a man and children. Gillis (2000) wrote that “fatherhood is a historical, not a natural, phenomenon” (p. 227). Fatherhood is a creation of people in a place and at times that creation has served different functions for the people in that place. What it means to be a father is an interpretation of how best to fulfil and not fulfil the role of a male parent. Much like masculinities, there are many ways to be a father in any given place or time and the dominant ways of being have changed over time in response to the perceived needs of the people constructing the role.

Hewlett (2000) suggested that there is archeological evidence of father involvement as far back as 120, 000 years ago as protectors, providers, caregivers, and teachers. Fathers historically spent a significant amount of time in close proximity to their offspring as family groups tended to live and work in tightly connected groupings (Gray & Anderson, 2010; Pleck, 1987). Pleck’s (1987) examination of historical letters and documents for evidence of father roles throughout history has been widely cited as one of the most complete explorations of how the father role has changed, at least in European descendants living in North America, over the past 200 years (Lamb, 2000; Lamb & Tamis-Lemonda, 2004; Gray & Anderson). Pleck interpreted and described four distinct “dominant images” of fatherhood in North America: father as moral teacher and guide, father as breadwinner, father as sex-role model and, most recently, as the new “nurturant” father. These dominant social historical phases in fatherhood

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remain salient in many contemporary fathers' conceptions of "good" fathering (Finn & Henwood, 2009; Miller, 2011) and prominent researchers have cited and carried forward Pleck's work in describing modern fatherhood (Lamb & Tamis-Lemonda, 2004; Lamb, 2000).

Father as moral teacher and guide

Pleck (1987), drawing on earlier work by Demos (1982), described the earliest phase of fatherhood as beginning during the Puritan times of the early nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. During this time period, fathers' work was largely located within the home where fathers were the spiritual and educational leaders tasked with ensuring moral purity. With the location of work centered in and around the family, fathers played significant roles in domestic life. The dynamics of gendered power within the home underwent a transformation as the primary mode of production shifted from agrarian to industrial, from the fields to the factory.

Father as breadwinner

During the Industrial Revolution, many fathers moved from the home into factories and the dominant social models of fatherhood were redefined to accommodate this change (Lamb, 2000; Pleck, 1987). Likewise, societal power began its movement from the cathedral to the factory with the rise of industrialism. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, there was a natural integration of fathers into daily family life due to the "location of work" (Pleck, p. 85) and the necessity of family involvement in the provisional tasks practiced in the home- including "farming, artisan or trade" (p. 85). With fathers' work exported from the home around the industrial revolution, mothers were left to take over the task of domestic oversight and the dominant social construction of the father role shifted its parameters towards wealth

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accumulation and provisioning. Subsequently, as fathers' work moved elsewhere, power in the home was transferred to mothers. Men were now primarily responsible to provide resources for the family through employment outside of the home and, thus, the dominant social motif of fatherhood during this period became father as "the distant breadwinner" (Pleck, 1987).

Father as sex-role model

According to Pleck (1987) and Lamb (2000), the next major shift in dominant father roles came about one hundred years later following the Great Depression and World War II. Following these two dramatic social and cultural upheavals there were many questions about the robustness of manhood, especially regarding man's capacity to provide and protect. These concerns were strengthened with fears of over-mothering and a softening of boys in particular due to the domestic dissociation of fathers due to war and a lack of local reliable employment (Pleck, 1987). In response to perceived needs, the role of father shifted towards enforcing a model of masculinity in boys that was increasingly self-reliant, aggressive, strong, and that opposed feminine traits in males. The primary theme in fathering became "father as sex role model" (Pleck, 1987), drawing on these symbols of the hegemonic masculinities of that time period.

New Nurturant father

Pleck (1987) ended his historical account of fatherhood in North America by describing a "new father"- one that was, once again, more involved in the home. Pleck (1987) cited trends in research looking at male time-use as showing an increase in fathers participating in domestic tasks as evidence of this new fatherhood emerging in dominant father roles. Lamb (2000) branded this new father role the "new nurturant father" and described them as fathers who

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were more involved in caregiving as part of their primary role. Lamb's "The History of Research on Father Involvement" (2000) cites evidence pointing towards this "new" fatherhood motif beginning around the mid 1970's. Lamb stated that "for the first time, many writers and commentators emphasized that fathers could and should be nurturant parents who were actively involved in the day-to-day care of their children" (p. 27). One of the key societal shifts, cited as responsible for the rise of this new fatherhood, is women's increased involvement in the workplace and increased societal emphasis on women's rights and equality (Lamb, 2000). However, despite significant evidence for the "new father" role beginning in the 1970's and current conceptions of fatherhood, evidence still points to mothers as the primary caregivers and men as showing only slight increases in domestic participation (Juster, 1985; Pleck, 1987; Lamb, 2000).

Overall, even though it appears as though caregiving has become a more important part of the father role, it has not replaced fathers' primary breadwinning responsibilities. For example, Juster (1985) compared United States national survey data from 1975 and 1981 and found that 26% of fathers reported spending more time in direct interaction with their child than they had reported in 1975. In contrast to mothers' involvement, Juster found that fathers' involvement increased from 29% in 1975 to 34% in 1981. Even with the increases, fathers were still on average spending about 1/3 as much time as mothers in direct caregiving tasks during this period as this "new" father motif was forming. This trend has continued over time and more recent data points towards increased father involvement in the home in Canada.

Statistics Canada estimated that 8.6 million fathers currently live in Canada with over 3.8 million of these living with biological or adoptive children under the age of 18. According to

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Statistics Canada, the proportion of men who endorsed engaging in household work has risen from 51% in 1986 to 76% in 2015 and the percentage of fathers who endorsed providing help and care to their children (2017) increased from 33% in 1986 to 49% in 2015. These statistics do not speak to qualitative shifts or comparisons of time use devoted to caregiving between mothers and fathers, but do provide evidence for the existence of this new and more nurturant father role.

Pleck (1987) and Lamb's (2000) four historical phases of father as moral guide and teacher, breadwinner, gender role model and the new nurturant father are presented as dominant social "motifs" and, as such, represent constructions of hegemonic fatherhoods through time. Lamb (2000) and other scholars (LaRossa & Reitzes; Hochschild, 1993; Juby & Le Bourdais, 1998) have noted that previous historical phases, such as teacher, gender role model, or breadwinner, are not merely moved past and left behind, but, rather, remain relevant socially and individually to current hegemonic fatherhoods. Even though men appear to be spending more time in the home (Juster, 1981; Pleck, 1997; Lamb, 2000; Marshall, 2006; Stats Canada, 2017), this does not necessarily mean that the role of breadwinner is any less salient to them. Rather than abandoning the previously held pressure to make room for the "caregiver" role, they may be straddling multiple roles creating more opportunities for role conflict to occur (O'Neil, 2008). Despite evidence of more emotionally involved hegemonic fatherhoods, the motif that still appears most dominant in father's reports remains that of breadwinner.

Tichenor et al. (2011) summarized the findings of the 932 surveys they collected from U.S. male partners in committed relationships as:

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Rather than career and leisure competing with fatherhood, men tend to place great importance on all three, meaning that, while (at least some) men may face expectations for greater involvement in parenting and household labor, providing still appears central to the enactment of the father role and may be critical to maintaining the father identity. (p. 246)

Even fathers outside of traditional breadwinning settings appear to endorse some connection to this role. Doucet (2004), in her interviews with 70 Canadian stay-at-home fathers, interpreted that most fathers found a way to continue some connection to the role of breadwinner in the home through part-time or home-based employment that they described as important. While there appears to be increasing societal movement towards a new more involved fatherhood, previous hegemonic fatherhoods remain.

Dominant conceptions of fatherhood are changing and these shifts in expectations of how fathers ought to act within Western societies shapes men's transition to the father role and create conflict between incongruent roles (Doucet, 2004; Eerola, 2015; Fagerskiold, 2008; Finn & Henwood, 2009; Ives, 2014; Miller, 2011). It appears that conflicts between hegemonic fatherhoods and hegemonic masculinities may indeed influence the adoption of a new nurturant fatherhood.

Being a good father isn't necessarily being a good man

Aspects of the "new nurturant fatherhood" role conflicts with dominant models of masculinity. Whereas historical Western societal conceptions of the dominant father role as teacher, moral guide, breadwinner, and sex role model (Lamb, 2000; Pleck, 1987) are largely congruent with historical western hegemonic masculinities, the introduction of the new more

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involved fatherhood is not. A brief exploration of these conflicts provides helpful context for understanding fathers' narratives of their experience of gender in the transition to fatherhood. Using the four dimensions Connell (1995) used to describe hegemonic fatherhood, in the following section I contrast hegemonic fatherhoods, and specifically the "new nurturant father", with dominant masculine roles in Western society.

In reviewing and synthesizing the descriptions of hegemonic fatherhoods and masculinities in North America (Connell, 1995; Lamb, 2000; Pleck, 1987), one might assume that the father role and the male role developed in parallel. In a recent survey of Father's conceptions of masculinity conducted in Alberta, Canada, "father" was one of the terms most associated with historic or traditional masculinity by a significant number of the respondents (Alberta Men's Network, 2016). However, conceptions of a "new" father who is more emotionally and physically engaged in caregiving and domestic tasks veers away from the hegemonic conceptions of masculinity still centered on production and sex role models favoring strength and provision over emotional availability. What it means to be a father and a man will vary across men in any given setting, however, the key concept of hegemonic fatherhoods and masculinities is that there is a social hierarchy of roles for men and fathers.

Power Relationships in Hegemonic Fatherhoods

Unlike in hegemonic masculinities where social and political power systems have favored the masculine over the feminine (Connell, 1995), when it comes to parenting, dominant masculinities have played a more subservient role to that of femininities. This shift came from the movement of production from the home and into factories with the introduction of the father as breadwinner role. This power differential shows up most prominently in the concept

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of “mother as gatekeeper” (Doucet, 2006, 2009; Eerola, 2015; Fox, 2009). Doucet (2000) illustrates this reversal of power systems from hegemonic masculinities by referring to the transition to fatherhood as a “mother led dance” where mothers take “emotional and community responsibility for the children.” Drawing on definitions by Allen and Hawkins (1999), she later refers to this gatekeeping as “a collection of beliefs and behaviours that ultimately inhibit a collaborative effort between men and women in family work by limiting men’s opportunities for learning and growing through caring and home and children” (2006). The concept of mother as gatekeeper of domestic power is parallel to hegemonic masculine power structures in the world of work, where men historically controlled women’s involvement in the workplace. It’s not necessarily that women were not in the workplace, rather the roles they were allowed to participate in were shaped by men and masculinities. Likewise, in the realm of parenting, fathers can be included or excluded by the social and individual power systems that oversee domestic tasks and caregiving most often fulfilled by women and femininities.

Asenhed et al. (2013) conducted a qualitative content analysis on 11 first-time fathers’ blogs in Sweden, where they noted that many fathers described moments of “exclusion” and “inclusion”. The fathers’ blogs were interpreted as expressing how moments of exclusion were believed to be particularly detrimental in their transition to fatherhood and adaptation to new fathering roles. One father stated:

They call it maternity care, and that is partly why the prospective fathers are overridden. Yes, it is the expectant mother that carries the child and it is the expectant mother they take a blood sample from. But the prospective father must also be important? (p. 1313)

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The “new nurturant fatherhood” places fathers more in the home, where they take part in tasks in which they traditionally have had less power or influence than the feminine caregiver. This is contrary to hegemonic masculinity where being a good man is being powerful and in control and, as such, creates potential conflict for fathers in how they view themselves as men and as fathers.

Production Relationships in Hegemonic Fatherhoods

Production relationships refer to the gendered societal expectation around the production of resources. Within hegemonic masculinities, the masculine role has traditionally been in charge of production of resources (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Similarly, historical fatherhoods clearly defined the provision of resources, especially financial resources, as the work of the father (Pleck, 1987; Lamb, 2000), clearly expressed in the “breadwinner” role.

Canadian sociologist Bonnie Fox (2009) noted that early in parenthood many couples described the division of domestic labor as similar between partners. However, fairly quickly, couples found themselves adopting a more traditional division of labour, with the mother taking responsibility for caregiving and household tasks and the father focusing on paid work and career success. Fox suggested that mothers played a role in insulating fathers from caregiving practice through maternal gatekeeping practices. Historically, it appears that fatherhood has upheld the hegemonic masculine ideal of male provisioning. However, the “new nurturant fatherhood” weakens these gender divisions by increasing the role of fathers in the home.

Gender symbolism in Hegemonic Fatherhoods

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The idea that a good father is a good man is most apparent through Pleck's conception of fathers as "gender role model" (Pleck, 1987; Lamb, 2000). Within this dominant phase in fathering, men were expected to be the symbol of hegemonic masculinities for boys (Cabrera et al., 2000). Biller (1971) clearly defined this aspect of the father role in noting that:

The mother has a primarily expressive relationship with both boys and girls; in contrast, the father rewards his male and female children differently, encouraging instrumental behavior in his son and expressive behavior in his daughter. The father is supposed to be the principal transmitter of culturally based conceptions of masculinity and femininity.
(p. 107)

In contrast, Lamb (2000) stated that a nurturant father is a father who is "actively involved in the day-to-day care of their children."

In the new nurturant father role, being emotionally connected and available to children was required or at least an option (Lamb, 2000). Lamb went on to note that by some modern definitions this new nurturant fatherhood has become the "central component of fatherhood and was implicitly (sometimes even explicitly) portrayed as the yardstick by which "good fathers" might be assessed" (p. 37). This model of an emotionally connected, compassionate and nurturing father is in stark contrast to the gender symbolism of hegemonic masculinity in which men, as described by authors such as Biller, are expected to pass on traditionally masculine traits like emotional disconnection, strength, aggression and the subordination of the feminine (Connell, 1995). The interaction of roles is also clearly evidenced when one examines the role of desire in the lives of men.

Cathexis in Hegemonic Fatherhoods

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Cathexis refers to desire or sexuality in masculinity. Hegemonic masculinities typically promote the masculine ideals of sexual prowess and the pursuit of novel sexual partners. In contrast, the new nurturant father is committed to the family often at the cost of his own sexuality, as is evidenced by research looking at sexual intimacy post childbirth with many studies noting a decline in sexual frequency (Olsson et al., 2010). Again, this represents a conflict with hegemonic masculinity and is a potential role conflict for men transitioning to fatherhood. In terms of the role that desire plays in constructing how one is viewed as a man or as a father, the question can be posed, “how does one be a “good man” while having sex far less frequently than other non-caregiving males or single men?”

In summary, being a “good” father within new nurturant hegemonic fatherhood roles has the potential to create conflict with being a good man based on dominant conceptions of masculinities. Hegemonic masculinities dictate that men hold the power, provide the resources, promote symbolic masculine images, and are sexually prolific. New involved hegemonic fatherhoods place men more squarely in the home where the power is held by hegemonic femininities, de-emphasize breadwinning in favor of increased involvement in caregiving and home life, support increased emotional engagement and caring in men, and suppress sexuality in favor of caregiving and family commitment. All fathers are men, but, given that conceptions of masculinity focusing on breadwinning and sex roles, becoming a father currently may make being a “good man” (Connell, 1995) much more difficult or even impossible. Changing to fulfil a “new” hegemonic fatherhood inclusive of greater levels of involvement in the home and in caregiving is in direct conflict with historical and pervasive societal conceptions of masculinity. Rather than choosing to be either a good father or a good man, current research on the

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transition to fatherhood examines fathers who are attempting to straddle both, potentially creating stress and conflict.

Qualitative research on men's experience of gender in the transition to fatherhood

Relevant research literature on the transition to fatherhood for Canadian fathers was reviewed by performing searches using the using the key words "Canadian", "Fatherhood", "qualitative", "transition" and "narrative" on the Google Scholar, PsycINFO, ScienceDirect and PubMed journal databases, garnering a broad array of studies. However, before reviewing the relevant research, it is important to lay the epistemological foundations of the current study and the lens through which research on this topic is evaluated.

The current study uses an interpretive narrative research methodology influenced by the work of Riessman (1993; 2005; 2008), Bruner (1991), Mischler (1997) and Polkinghorne (1995; 2007) and is situated within a broader qualitative way of knowing. This qualitative way of knowing approaches the generation of knowledge, or epistemology, and the understanding of reality, or ontology, differently than traditional quantitative research. Within this qualitative way of knowing, knowledge is believed to be socially constructed and reality is believed to be plural, spanning overlapping social and individual realities (Bruner). This approach emphasises the quality of experience over the quantity of distinct variables to be compared, with deeper understanding sought, rather than prediction and control.

Over the past 20 years, there has been a small but growing body of qualitative research exploring the experience of gender in men's transition to fatherhood (Eerola, 2015; Finn & Henwood, 2009; Doucet, 2004; Miller, 2011; Fagerskiold, 2007; Ives, 2014). In most cases, the question of gender has been secondary, or interpreted post-hoc as a prominent theme across

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data generated for more general purposes. None of the studies reviewed in the next section specifically asked fathers how they experienced masculinity and fatherhood roles through their transition to fatherhood. Given the specificity of the topic, the studies reviewed represent a modest body of research deemed particularly relevant to the currently proposed study.

Eerola (2015) interviewed 44 Finnish first time fathers and performed a narrative analysis on the data generated through those interviews. The three divergent narratives Eerola co-created were titled: a) the decent father, b) the equal father, and c) the masculine father. *The Decent Father* is a gendered paternal role where the father is involved in caregiving and nurturing but he also takes a primary role in breadwinning and providing for the family. An example of one transcript quoted by Eerola to support the interpretation of the “Decent Father” is this excerpt from 29-year-old Olli:

Although I take care of the living . . . I don't want it to be only that, I certainly do want to participate in the care work, too. . . I want to spend time with him as much as possible, and so on . . .” (p. 12)

In this section of the transcript the father begins by describing his fulfillment of his hegemonic masculine role in providing for the family and then stated that he wished to also provide more involvement in caregiving- essentially straddling both the hegemonic masculine ideal and previous hegemonic fatherhood ideal of *breadwinner* first but also as a “new nurturant father” (Lamb, 2000). This reoccurring interpretation of men finding balance and conflict between differing conceptions of the father role was present across all interviews. On this, Eerola noted: “the men also pondered the possible contradictions between work and family, for example, how their possible taking of family leave would be regarded in the workplace or what

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consequences a family orientation would have on their career development” (p. 142). Fathers were attempting to find balance between roles and the polarities of men’s roles; men are well presented in the counter-narratives Eerola constructed.

The “*Decent Father*” narrative is described in contrast to two “counter-narratives”: “The Equal Father” and “The Masculine Father.” An Equal Father narrative included the subordinate narrative of some fathers who described “gender-equal practices.” In this narrative men and women equally split economic and caregiving tasks. The Equal Father sees his role as identical or near identical to the mother role. This narrative included a complete egalitarian sharing of care and paid work. On this narrative, Eerola noted that, “Whereas the decent narrative spoke of the importance of the father having a family orientation, the equal narrative went beyond this, to the extent that the narrative can be described as living for the family” (p. 144).

The masculine father narrative described a father who endorsed strict parental gender roles that draw on “culturally hegemonic ideas of true masculinity” (p. 16). In this narrative, men are solely responsible for breadwinning and women for caregiving and nurturing. In the Masculine Narrative the line between women’s work and men’s work is clear and the difference between them is stark. These are counter to the narrative segment quoted above where Ollie tried to be more equal while still maintaining some traditionally gendered fathering in his emphasis of breadwinning. One can see evidence for the suggestion, based on discussions of hegemonic masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2016) and hegemonic fatherhoods (Lamb, 2000), that being a good father may no longer be congruent with being a good man.

Eerola (2015) and Myykanen’s choice of names for dominant and counter-narratives is interesting in that it separates a “decent,” or societally sanctioned, father narrative from a

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“masculine” one. Interestingly, Eerola interpreted these findings on gendered fatherhood from interviews where gender was not positioned as a central theme. In most interviews, they did not prompt fathers to specifically explore their experience of gender in their transition to fatherhood at all. By not explicitly asking fathers to discuss the interaction between socially loaded fatherhood and masculine roles they may have missed the opportunity to prompt further thought, insight, and narrative construction with fathers. However, Eerola still interpreted these themes as important in a post hoc analysis of data created without these specific opportunities.

One of the most extensive collections of research on the transition to fatherhood has been produced by the QLL Timescapes team of researchers in the UK. The QLL Timescapes team used a qualitative longitudinal research design (QLL), to explore the first eight years of 46 first-time fathers in the UK. Beginning in 2000, fathers were interviewed two or three times within the first year of their transition to fatherhood by the same researchers and then interviewed again eight years later. The Timescapes team has published seven peer reviewed journal articles from Timescapes data (Coltart & Henwood, 2012; Finn & Henwood, 2009; Henwood et al., 2008; Henwood & Proctor, 2003; Henwood et al., 2010; Shirani & Henwood, 2011; Shirani & Henwood, 2011 (b); Shirani et al., 2012) that explored topics such as social class and fatherhood perceptions, paternal identities, financial risk taking in new fatherhood, unexpected life transitions in fatherhood and the value of using a QLL methodological design. Of these articles, the most relevant to the proposed research is Finn and Henwood’s (2009) article titled: “Exploring Masculinities within Men’s Identificatory Imaginings of First Time Fatherhood.”

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Finn and Henwood (2009) summarized that fathers identified the “modern father as a man who de-prioritizes the conventional breadwinner role and recognizes a need for a shared parenting responsibility that revolves around less rigidly defined mother and father roles” (p. 553). They concluded: “What we have aimed to highlight...is the more complex mix of hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities as men adapt to different discourses and practices of fatherhood at different times and often deploying contradictory positions at the same time” (p. 560). Similar to Eerola and Myykanen (2013), Finn and Henwood described a dominant narrative of gendered fatherhood often incongruent with fathers’ imaginings of a less gendered role. This interplay between gender and fatherhood appears to also show up in Canadian fathers’ experiences.

Andrea Doucet has written extensively on the experience of Canadian fathers and their gendered experiences in parenting in multiple journal articles on the topic (2004; 2009; 2014) and a book titled “Do men mother? Fathering, Care and Domestic Responsibility” (2018). Doucet’s writing on the topic of men’s transitions to fatherhood is largely based on her research with stay-at-home fathers, including the most relevant study for the current research, her 2004 article entitled, “It’s Almost Like I Have a Job, but I Don’t Get Paid”: Fathers at Home Reconfiguring Work, Care, and Masculinity.”

Doucet (2004) selected a group of men on the outskirts of traditional hegemonic masculinity; men who had breached the canon of masculinity. Even within this sample of men specifically selected for their divergence from traditional masculine ideals, men still described role conflict, which is interesting in that it may hint at the scope of the influence of hegemonic masculine ideals in fatherhood. Doucet constructed fathers’ responses into a narrative of

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fathers caring for children but also finding ways to stay involved in some form of paid labour or work tasks. Doucet illustrated this with the example of Adam, a father who described his children as toddling around him while he worked on cars (p. 19). While Doucet's (2004) research spoke to the experience of fathers whose experience diverged from social expectations or hopes for fatherhood, Miller (2011) asked a similar but far more personal question exploring the experience of fathers who diverged from their own expectations in fatherhood.

Miller (2011) asked the multi-pronged question of "what can and do [fathers'] accounts of intentions and subsequent practices of first-time fathering enable us to say about individual, masculinist practices of agency, caring and theorizations of doing and undoing gender?" She interviewed 17 fathers about their experience of becoming a father, following a script adapted from Miller's earlier research on the transition to motherhood. Miller's interpretations of the data are succinctly summarized in the title for her article, "Falling Back into Gender?" Essentially, fathers described intending to parent in a more "gender equal" way but within the first two years of parenting returned to more historic gender patterns favoring the hegemonic masculine role of emotionally disconnected breadwinner. Swedish researchers have also examined how fathering practices and experiences intersect with gender.

Fagerskiold (2008) used a Grounded Theory Methodology to explore first-time fathers' experiences during early infancy. Fagerskiold asked 18 Swedish fathers "How do you view your new role as a father?" As part of the grounded theory he constructed, Fagerskiold interpreted that partner relationships enforce hegemonic masculinities or "new" fatherhood practices. An example of this is the "gatekeeping" described by Doucet (2006) and Fox (2009) evidenced in

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Fagerskiold's data by mothers being described as reticent to allow fathers larger roles in caregiving for fear this may infringe on traditional mothers' roles. Further, despite Sweden being a country with extensive paternal leave programs, few fathers in Fagerskiold's study (2008) took advantage of them, instead discussing "breadwinning" as an important part of their role. Despite progressive policy, hegemonic conceptions of masculinity were interpreted to have influenced men's transitions to fatherhood both from individual conceptions and those held by partners. With some participants, Fagerskiold described fathers being asked by partners for more involvement in caregiving and in other partnerships he described partners as limiting their involvement. The expectations of others were important features in determining the father role adopted. Other researchers have also explored the impact of others in health services on men's experiences as first-time fathers during their transition to fatherhood.

Ives (2014) explored the ethical normativity, or how one "ought to act", in contemporary fatherhood and the role of health services in responding to and shaping those norms. Ives (2014) did not specifically interpret gender, or men's experience of conflict with gender roles, as a significant theme in his data. However, the themes Ives did construct can be discussed in a gendered context. The themes interpreted as part of Ives' grounded theory were: 1) "on the outside looking in", 2) "present but not participating", and 3) "deference and support." "On the outside looking in" refers to fathers' descriptions of feeling as though they had a tertiary role in caregiving as enforced by health care's focus on the mother-child bond, caregiving education to the mother, and being displaced physically from their child more often than the mother in health care settings. "Present but not participating" refers to fathers' descriptions of feeling allowed to be present but not an active part in their birth and initial care of their

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children. “Deference and support” refers to fathers describing taking on secondary tasks such as protection and provisioning as a way to feel involved and engaged. All of these themes speak to a gendered caregiving where fathers had a hard time determining their place in caregiving and deferring to their female partners. Ives theory clearly points to the systems around the fathers he interviewed as promoting fatherhood roles in line with more traditional hegemonic masculine roles.

This literature represents a growing body of evidence that the “new fatherhood” identified, classified, and theorized by Lamb (2000), Pleck (1987) and others does appear to influence men’s descriptions of their transition to fatherhood. However, it also clearly demonstrates that traditionally gendered parenting remains a dominant theme. Further, there is evidence that gender roles are of great importance for fathers given the theme’s prominence in many studies despite the lack of explicit researcher inclusion or explicit examination of the topic. Although the literature sheds light on the intersection of gender and the new fatherhood, there is scant available research examining how Canadian men experience gender in their transition to fatherhood. The current study seeks to fill this gap in the extant literature by exploring the stories of how Canadian men experience gender in their transition to fatherhood.

Chapter 3: Methodological Approach

This qualitative investigation used an interpretive narrative research design to gain a deeper understanding of how seven Canadian fathers experienced masculinity through their transition to fatherhood. As described in the previous chapter, though there is a small but growing body of research that has explored the transition to fatherhood using qualitative research designs (Eerola, 2015; Finn & Henwood, 2009; Doucet, 2004; Miller, 2011; Fagerskiold, 2007; Ives, 2014), none have specifically asked fathers to describe masculinity within the context of this transition. This chapter describes the research design, recruitment, participants, data generation, analysis, and interpretation, and evaluation.

Research Design

The current research used an Interpretive Narrative design, which is an approach to narrative research emphasising meaning over structure in storied discourse. The approach used in the current research was influenced by the works of Riessman (1993), Bruner (1991), Mishler (1997) and Polkinghorne (2007) and is situated within the broader fields of qualitative and narrative research.

Qualitative research spans a broad range of method and methodology but can generally be defined as a way of understanding human experience based on rich, often word-driven, accounts. This approach emphasises the quality of experience over the quantity of distinct variables to be compared. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) noted:

The word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency... [qualitative researchers] emphasize

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the value-laden nature of enquiry. (p. 8)

Narrative inquiry is situated within this qualitative way of knowing.

Though the exact genesis of the narrative research tradition is difficult to locate with certainty, most prominent writers in the area of narrative research place it as emerging in the latter half of the twentieth century (Bruner, 1991; Ingraham, 2017; Mishler, 1997; Polkinghorne, 2007; Riessman, 1993). Polkinghorne (2007) noted that “in the 1970’s, a reform movement began to form under the epithet qualitative inquiry” (p. 472) and narrative analysis is situated within this reformist movement. Reformists, to borrow the term from Polkinghorne, asserted that subjective accounts of human experience could form a way of knowing about the world that is meaningful. In the social sciences, this paradigm shift left two camps: the qualitative reformists and the more conventional quantitative researchers. The quantitative camp emphasized valid (objectively observable) and reliable (replicable) study of phenomenon occurring in the natural world, while the reformist camp emphasized “value-laden” human experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Narratives constitute one such value-laden way of knowing human experience.

Over the past fifty years, Narratives have been used in research from almost every social science discipline and profession (Riessman, 1993; 2005). One of the challenges of this mass proliferation is that authors have now used the term narrative to represent a number of different things. Riessman noted, “to put it simply, the term has come to mean anything and everything...” (p. 393). Adopters from different disciplines have adapted the use of narratives in research to best fit the type of research conducted in their respective areas of study. As such,

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this rapid rise and the broad diffusion of narrative-based research has led to a huge diversity in approaches to *what* information is generated, *how* it is generated, and *how* it is interpreted.

The intent of my study is to generate narratives of masculinity in men's transition to fatherhood. As such, I am looking for the personal narratives of individual fathers. A *personal narrative* (Ingraham, 2017) is one way to describe a story that someone tells about their experience in the world. Personal narratives surround us and have been a primary form in the transmission of knowledge across generations and cultures. Ingraham noted that "Indeed, narrative is so ubiquitous and permanent in human interaction that scholars tend to heap value upon it like a bed piled with coats at a party" (p.56). Narratives are not something discovered or taken but rather dynamic creations that evolve through telling and interpretation.

Personal narratives are not static objects that exist in the natural environment waiting to be discovered by the researcher like a new species of frog hiding deep in a misty rain forest. Rather, they are dynamic creations; active layers of interpretation that are told by the narrator and constantly shifting. Reissman (2005) noted that "narratives do not speak for themselves or have unanalysed merit; they require interpretation when used as data in social research" and, as such personal narratives are not a photographic recreation of events in the real world, they are interpreted recreations.

Personal narratives, though influenced by lived experience, are individually and socially-constructed interpretations. They are not diluted views of a physical reality. Rather, they are dynamic and powerful meanings made and remade and, in this vein, Reissman (1993) described five levels of "representation" of experience, which are helpful in framing the important discussion on the potential movements from physical experience to mental interpretation.

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Riessman used the word *representation* to describe layers, or movements, from the physical experience. Scholars, like Riessman (1993), often will hyphenate the word representation in qualitative research, as doing so highlights that a description of something is viewed as a verbal re-presentation. A representation then, like a photograph, is an imperfect and often refocused facsimile of the physical world. In contrast, the word interpretation comes from the latin word interpretari meaning to explain, expound or understand. Riessman's five levels include a process of dynamic understanding where meaning is constructed based on lived physical experience and not simply as an attempt to recreate it. As such, rather than describing these as layers of *representation*, I will refer to them as layers of *interpretation*.

To better describe Riessman's (1993) five layers of interpretation I share the following personal narrative from my own transition to fatherhood:

About six months after the birth of my first child, I was walking along a cobblestone beach in Victoria, British Columbia with her. She was tightly bound to my chest using an infant carrier. The carrying device had enough flexibility to allow her neck to rest on the tightly cinched fabric that cradled the back of her head and gaze upwards at me. Looking down at her face in that moment I felt happy. My sense of time faded. I smiled slightly and as I did so she echoed a smile back at me. My recognition of that subtle mirroring and influence led to an interpretation of a more expansive belief; 'what I do will directly influence the entirety of her life and development.' With this interpretation came a wave of anxiety and then a shift in how I organized my own identity. I was no longer making decisions for myself; rather, I was making decisions that would influence

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the whole life of another human; a human I loved very much and had a deep desire to positively influence. (Larsen, Personal narrative)

The first layer of interpretation described by Riessman (1993) is attending. In the personal narrative I shared, this first layer occurred on a beach on a spring morning. At that moment, I attended to my daughter's facial expressions. I could have attended to a passerby or the sound the water made as it rushed through the cobblestones with each rhythmic surge of the tide. I could have attended to a specific physical characteristic on her face or a stain on her clothes but rather I attended to her expressions as they mirrored mine. In every moment of experience, we are attending to certain features of the environment and not attending to others. This focus of attention is already an interpretation of meaning as what we are attending to is selected, either intentionally or unintentionally, as meaningful, otherwise we would not divert resources towards it.

The second level of interpretation is the telling. The information to which I attended on that beach was recreated within me and the mental sequencing and retelling began internally. At some point I told my partner about what happened on the beach. As I told her, I emphasised certain aspects and omitted others to make the story more tell-able or appealing to her specifically. I did the same when I later told the story to a friend with this telling specifically responding to the question of why I changed the religious traditions in which I was raised, again emphasising relevant meaning for that telling. In writing it here, I have emphasised certain aspects to make it worth telling in my research. The story I tell in this document is congruent to me and my experience but different from each telling to a close friend or my partner before that.

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Following the telling, the narrator seeks to interpret the text in written form; in a “fixation’ of action” as Reissman (1993), citing Ricoeur, has described it. Above I wrote a story that was initially delivered orally. In writing the story, I chose to omit certain nonverbal components such as pauses or facial expressions and, as such, these are no longer part of the telling as they were in the oral accounting. Further, now that the story has moved from an internal dynamic interpretation to fixed artifact of those processes, it is a new creation and physical experience with which to “enter the hall of mirrors”, a term Riessman used to describe this interpretive process. A hall of mirrors refers to multiple mirrors altering what was initially re-presented through multiple reflections. The object reflected is something different after it has been reflected. Similarly, meaning is created and recreated separate from the initial experience described in research.

The next level of interpretation is analysis. At this level, the narrator analyzes the transcript. Reissman refers to this step as a “betrayal” (1993; 2008) of the original experience; a turning from it only to birth it again in ‘alien tongue’ (1993). I believe Riessman’s use of the language “betrayal” here is indicative of a recognized departure from the initial experience and the embarking on the exploration of something new. Indeed, in this step, the transcript in many ways is further broken from the dynamic experience in the physical world and “re-storied” (Polkinghorn, 1995). In the case of the current research, narrative segments were re-storied from the larger transcription to answer the question “what are the stories of masculinity from men’s transitions to fatherhood?” and the analysis was concerned with individual and shared accounts of the transition to fatherhood within and across re-storied narratives.

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Riessman's (1993) final level of interpretation is reading narrative. This level of interpretation occurs when the reader, experiencing a fixed text, begins their own creative interpretive process with it. The reader will enter their own "hall of mirrors" (Riessman, 2015) with the experience of reading the text and interpreting what they have read. As the reader, one now has their own understanding, or meaning making, of my experience on that beach in Victoria that is different from everyone else's reading of it and the reader subsequently builds new interpretations from their own experiences and beliefs about the world.

Participant Selection

To explore the personal narratives of seven men's transition to fatherhood I interviewed seven fathers from the West Kootenay region of south-central British Columbia, Canada. Each participant took part in an interview and responded to follow up inquiries. The fathers recruited were from a semi-rural region and from communities with populations of no more than 15,000 people. The area from which participants were included is rich in mineral resources and much of the economy is based on natural resource processing. The area is also well known for outdoor recreation including skiing, mountain biking, fishing, and hiking. As such, these fathers' narratives often included reference to recreation activities and traditional industrial employment settings.

Seven participants allowed me to represent a number of different personal narratives in the transition to fatherhood. As noted, the value of the information generated herein does not rest on its ability to be generalized beyond the participants and the researcher. Information generated is an interpretation, or levels of interpretation, of a participant's lived experience. The value of these narratives is in the meaning-making from the interviews and the

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verisimilitude, or appearance of truth, of that meaning. Participants were interviewed until the researcher understood their story of transition to fatherhood had been told in sufficient detail. Some participants were contacted after the transcription of their initial interview and asked if they had any further narratives on specific areas such as their emotional experiences during their transition to fatherhood if there were areas not discussed in their initial interview.

“Purposeful sampling” refers to selecting clients that are “information rich” (Creswell, 2005) and was used in selecting participants. Information rich fathers were those who were deemed by the researcher as able to contribute insightful personal experiences of their transition to fatherhood based on ability to communicate their experiences clearly and experience relevant to the primary research questions. Fathers were not excluded based on culture, age or sexuality. Fathers were recruited through snowball sampling, advertisements and partnership with local family medical clinics. Snowball, or chain sampling is congruent with purposeful sampling as information rich participants are often located in a position to recommend other well situated people to the research question (Creswell, 2005; Patton, 1990). In theory, by asking those who have participated to identify others, the snowball gets bigger and bigger. In the case of the current research, the snowball was started with recruitment through advertisements. See Appendix A for a copy of the recruitment flyer that was placed in medical offices and in public spaces visited by families. Due to pandemic social restrictions and a lack of in-person attendance or congregating in medical centers or community centers, these posters only resulted in the recruitment of one father. Subsequently, a digital version of these posters was placed on community websites and recruited four fathers, with the final two participants recruited through snowball sampling.

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Fathers were invited to participate if they define themselves as fathers and were willing and able to discuss experiences from their transition to fatherhood and the meaning of these experiences to them. Participants were viewed as collaborators and co-creators in the research data and they were informed throughout recruitment and participation that involvement was completely voluntary. Withdrawal of both participation and contributed data by the participant is available throughout at the request of the participant.

As the research took place during the first wave of Covid19, restrictions were strict and I was not able to meet with most participants in person. Face-to-face interviews were replaced with interviews over a secure landline telephone. These changes were approved by the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board and this changed the nature of recruiting with no face-to-face meeting of fathers permitted during the data generation period. Only one father, Leonard, was interviewed face-to-face prior to pandemic restrictions.

In total, seven fathers were interviewed at least once and, as noted, most of these interviews occurred over the telephone. The seven fathers interviewed were between the ages of 30 and 45, spoke English as their first language, identified as straight, and they were all white. These demographics were not specifically sought and rather represented those who replied to the request to participate and the majority demographics of the region.

The Researcher's role and location

As the researcher, I co-created aspects of participant's experience with them and was actively involved in the data generated. Data, in qualitative research, is not viewed as something "collected", "found" or passively "presented", rather, I was a co-creator of the narratives with my participants. Who I am and my experiences influenced these co-creations. In

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many approaches to qualitative research, “objectivity” is not assumed possible or sought after and the role the researcher plays in the research is described including an accounting for the “location” or history and beliefs, of the researcher, referred to as *locating the researcher* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

I position myself within a constructivist research paradigm consistent with Guba and Lincoln’s (1994) conception. I assume the related ontological assumption that there are multiple subjective realities and the epistemological assumptions that knowledge is socially and individually created or constructed. Where it relates to research, I believe that each father interviewed expressed and co-constructed with the researcher unique subjective narratives of their transition to fatherhood. There were aspects of these transitions shared between fathers that have been explored, interpreted and organized through data analysis and discussion, but each interview was approached as a unique narrative and each father’s experience was seen as meaningful individually and collectively.

I approached this topic as a 40-year-old Canadian male of mixed Scandinavian heritage from the West coast of Canada. I am currently a PhD student in the Educational Psychology program at the University of Victoria (UVic) and, academically, I have been interested in Attachment Theory, parenting and child development throughout my undergraduate and graduate work. Professionally, I have worked as a child and youth mental health clinician with experience in individual and group therapy for families. I live in Rossland, British Columbia, a community of about 3500 people in the Kootenay Rockies Region of southern British Columbia. I am a father of two children: my daughter was born while I was completing my Master of Arts degree in 2009 and my son was born in 2012 just prior to beginning my PhD studies. My father

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was present in the home for most of my early upbringing and my parents had a traditional split in gendered labor with my father responsible for the breadwinning and my mother for the domestic and caregiving tasks. My father was active in family recreation such as camping, hiking, rock-climbing, and outdoor sport through most of my childhood and I envision my ideal father role as including more caregiving and domestic involvement than my own father.

My beliefs on what constitutes a “good father” include men taking an active role in caregiving, provisioning, and engagement in educational and growth promoting activities, and finding a balance between these roles has not always been easy for me. I have looked forward to fathering since I met and began dating my partner and the pregnancies of both my children were planned and progressed healthily. With my daughter, birth was a whirlwind and was far more intense than I had envisioned. At one point during the birth, my daughter was wrapped in the umbilical cord and her heart rate began to sound faint. I recall feeling helpless. The whole process was awkward, as I attempted to support my wife and not get in the way. I felt present but not active or useful. On the first night after my daughter was born, I was asked to leave the hospital to allow my wife the opportunity to rest and bond. I felt instantly displaced. Again, I did not feel primarily useful; I felt I played a secondary role in the birth of my child.

Neither of my children were able to breastfeed and I felt fortunate to have the opportunity to bottle feed and connect with my children early in this way. I recall feeling overwhelmed and intensely anxious early in my children’s lives but then through involvement feeling more capable and connected. I also remember feeling very anxious about providing for my family and accepted a full-time job soon after the birth of my daughter before I had finished my education fully, due to this intensified felt responsibility towards provision. I have viewed

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being a father as a very rewarding experience in my life and my children have changed my recreation and socializing slightly and made me prioritize my time differently to provide and care for them. However, I feel great pride and accomplishment in the relationship I have with my children.

I approach this research as a clinician-researcher, in that academically I am engaged in this research but view myself first and foremost as a clinician. As such, I want to generate data with clinical utility. I want to study fatherhood because of my work with children and families and find ways to better support men as they transition to fatherhood. I believe fathers can play a valuable role in the development of the emotions, cognitions and behaviors of their children and that by better understanding the transition to fatherhood, I may be better able to support men in that transition.

Data Generation Procedures

The primary data generation method used in my research was the conversational interview (Mishler, 1990). Mishler wrote that, “an interview is a joint product of what interviewers and interviewees talk about together and how they talk with each other” (p. vii). Data generated through these interviews are co-creations, or recreations of shared experience, jointly composed within the interview with the researcher present and active.

In Riessman’s (1993) five levels of interpretation, the first level of “attending to” occurred prior to my meeting with them as a researcher for an interview. Before creating a narrative with the researcher through interviews, the participant must have attended to some aspects of their experience. As researcher, I became involved at the second level of interpretation: “the telling.” The first telling occurs during these conversational interviews with the participant

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telling the researcher about their experience. These interviews generated a detailed account of the participant's experiences relative to the conversation with the researcher (Riessman, 2008), not viewed as mirrors of events as they occurred in the physical world, but, rather, viewed as an interpretive act by the participant.

All interviews were digitally recorded with the consent of each participant. Interviews were set up via text message, telephone calls or emails with potential participants. Prior to the interview, participants were informed of the limits to confidentiality and that the researcher was a mandated reporter required to report any disclosures of imminent suicide risk, disclosure of a child who has been abused or is in need of protection, or any vulnerable adult who has experienced abuse or is in need of protection. No breaches of confidentiality due to these limits were required during the data generation process and participants were asked to sign an informed consent form prior to beginning the interview (Appendix B).

In total, seven Kootenay area fathers were asked the initial question: "Tell me the story of masculinity in your transition to fatherhood?" I asked one question at a time and then listened to participant's responses as they shared their experience. During this conversational interview, the researcher attempted to ask minimal questions, adding some prompts when needed to carry the story forward, and using emotional reflections and paraphrases. With some of the fathers, more questions were required to help generate a narrative rich interview. See Appendix C for a full copy of the interview guide including some potential prompts.

Completed interviews were then transcribed verbatim, with the transformation from oral story to written data viewed as an interpretive act. As part of the hermeneutic circling (Bruner, 1991) although the entirety of the interviews were transcribed verbatim, pauses and nonverbal

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gestures were not included in the transcriptions, as I attended primarily to the perceived themes and meaning of the interviews more than the structure of the telling. I completed all of the transcriptions and, although the work was tedious, transcribing the data personally allowed for a deeper engagement with the participants' stories (Riessman, 1993; 2008).

Following the initial verbatim transcription, I produced a revised transcription, which included the removal of all identifying information and pseudonyms added in place of participant names. During this step the transcription was "cleaned" for increased readability with some by cutting out of repeated words and unfinished statements, perceived to be lacking any discernable interpreted meaning.

I then broke the clean transcript down into narrative blocks. Narrative blocks were chunks of storied content. These narrative blocks were interpreted and separated into segments of text that contained similar narrative meanings. For example, stories relating to increased risk perception in fatherhood were grouped together. I very crudely began to arrange the blocks to help organize the document based on narrative, or storied, segments and then these segments were further edited for readability, forming the foundation for the individual narratives presented in Chapter 4. I coded these initial segments based on the meaning of the segment, accomplished by printing off each transcribed and segmented narrative and writing interpretations of central meaning and themes in the margins.

Re-storying narrative data and Generating Narratives

Following the transcription and initial coding of narrative segments, I constructed individual narratives from the text, employing Bruner's (1991) definitions of what constitutes a narrative. This step continued the refinement from the narrative blocking described above.

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Bruner identified six features that form a meaningful structure in locating narratives, which shaped how the narratives in this study were arranged, constructed, and interpreted.

Bruner's first feature is *narrative diachronicity* and he noted that, "a narrative is an account of events occurring over time." Riessman and Quinny (2005), in answering the question "what distinguishes narrative from other forms of discourse?" note that a narrative has "sequence and consequence..." (p. 394). Narratives tend to have a sense of temporal flow, which tends to favor conceptions of time with a linear movement from past towards the present. In the narrative of the experience with my daughter I shared earlier in this document, the story flows with an "as it happened" sense of timing that could have corresponded to questions of "and then what happened?" moving the reader forward in time. In the narratives of fathers generated in the current research there is a temporal progression from conception, to pregnancy, to birth and to the transition to caregiving parent. Fathers told stories about their transition with varying degrees of temporal flow, at times cycling back to earlier experiences, and one of the initial steps in the analysis was to organize the participants' stories with a temporal flow.

Bruner's second feature is *particularity*, referring to a distinct narrative being bound to a particular topic. Bruner noted that the written narrative is more the "vehicle" and not the "destination" (p.6). This comment from Bruner describes the difference between the structural approach to narrative research emphasised by early researchers like Labov (1972) and the more meaning focussed narrative approach adhered to by researchers like Riessman (2014), Mischler (1997), Polkinghorn (2007) and Bruner (1991). In a more structuralist approach, the particular

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words and structure of the narrative, as described, are the targets to be assessed. In a more interpretative approach, the meaning of narrative, as generated in conversation, is a tool towards interpretation and increased understanding.

Analysis in the current research began with generating narrative segments related to masculinity in the transition to fatherhood. Coding transcriptions for storied segments on this aspect of the research was one of the initial steps of analysis. Interview content not related to the interview question was not included in the re-storied narratives. As the current research is interpretive in nature, segments with meanings associated with the research question of what are men's stories of masculinity in their transition to fatherhood were of primary importance and not the actual narrative structure as presented in the initial interview transcripts.

Bruner's third feature of a narrative is *intentional state entailment*. This holds that narratives are told with intention about actors acting in specific settings. In the current research these settings and actions form "a basis for interpreting why a character acted as he or she did" (p. 7). The meaning derived was not a guess at the "real" motives of an actor as they occurred in a physical world. Rather, they were an interpretation; a creation of meaning from the narrative through the experiences of the interpreter, meanings which are dynamic and change, shifting with time and telling. The meaning I created from my own experience with my daughter has slightly shifted beyond the lived experience, the first telling of it and even my first writing of it in this document. The fathers in the current research acted or felt a variety of things related to their transition to fatherhood and their conceptions of masculinity and these potential influences are important parts of the narratives generated.

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Bruner's fourth feature is *hermeneutic composability*. Hermeneutics refers to the process of meaning-making. Each narrative text, as described by Riessman (1993), underwent multiple levels of interpretation. Interpretivist users of narrative in social science research tend to agree that narratives do not exist without flexible interpretation (Riessman, 2005; Bruner, 1991; 2004; Squire, 2008). However, with this flexibility comes the increased need for *hermeneutic circling* (Bruner) or the need to justify the "rightness" of the interpretation that has been presented. The intent of a part of this document is to justify and describe the interpretive conditions and the reasonability of the interpretations I made about the narratives generated. This has been done by circling back to large sections of the original transcripts throughout this document (Riessman, 1993; Squire, 2008) and by having participants review transcriptions and interpretations (Bruner, 1991; Polkinghorne, 2007; Riessman & Quinney, 2005). This was also central in my decision to re-story narratives entirely in the words of the participants. In doing so I sought to maintain meaning through the words they used and how they organized them to allow the reader the same interpretive evidence I had in making my interpretations.

Bruner's fifth factor is *canonicity and breach*. Bruner argued that for a narrative to be worth telling, "a tale must be made about how an implicit canonical script has been breached." Essentially, if the expectation has not been breached, then why tell the story and what can be learned from it? This is present in Labov's (1972) initial notion of a "complicating action" carrying the story. However, as we move further into the realm of interpretative narrative research, the nature of these breaches also becomes more interpretive. For example, Squire's

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(2008) notion of culturally-focussed narrative research encompasses not just what was said but the broader setting in which it was said.

In the current research, I have explored men's transitions to fatherhood and the degree to which the accepted views of fatherhood and masculinities within the narratives differ from the personal and cultural canons of what was expected. Stories without a breach of the canon tend not to be great stories and are likely not worth telling in a research context. In the stories created in this research, breach is often exemplified by moments of expectations or previous models not being met. The stories created with fathers all contain meaningful breaches of their individual or cultural canon of fatherhood roles, hegemonic masculinities or individual expectations often exemplified by "surprises" in their experiences.

Bruner's sixth feature is *referentiality* and he noted that "narrative 'truth' is judged by its *verisimilitude* rather than its verifiability" (p. 13). Verisimilitude refers to meaning-making from a story appearing to be true. For example, the narrative I opened with has value because it adds to my goals as a researcher by describing my experiences relevant to the research question. In the current research, stories are believed to have meaning for the fathers who shared them initially due to their choice to share them in research interviews and their ability to add to the purpose of the current research. Further, many of the narratives discussed reflect bigger cultural discussions such as appropriate masculine expression of emotion and hegemonic conceptions of breadwinning as central within the father role.

These six features were used both to identify narratives within transcriptions and to re-story narratives for presentation and interpretation. The procedure for this analysis of the data included initial coding of the transcripts, accomplished through multiple readings and

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highlighting of text segments believed to have meaning relevant to the research question.

These storied segments were then taken from the initial transcriptions and re-storied inclusive of Bruner's (1991) narrative features, which involved: re-storying them with a sense of temporal flow and chronicity from past to present; grouping segments of similar topic and meaning; including narrative segments that describe or express motivating factors for the actors; finding and emphasising segments of canonical breach; and, preparing the text to increase its readability and clarity by editing out unnecessary or unclear segments of speech.

Evidence of Quality

I conducted the current research within the qualitative tradition of inquiry. The prevailing trend in the verification of historical, positivist, approaches to research has been to judge the quality of the research based on validity and reliability. Validity refers to perceptions of the likelihood that what is studied actually reflects occurrences in the natural world. Reliability refers to perceptions of the likelihood that what was claimed as true from the research can be repeated and that the interpreted truths are maintained over time. Validity and reliability are reasonable markers of quality when observations of samples are used to generalize guesses about broad groups, as is often the case in quantitative research. However, these are less valuable when exploring and interpreting meaning from individual realities as is often done in qualitative research.

Reissman (2005) noted that "Narratives do not mirror, they refract the past." Unlike Labov's early conceptions of narratives, many modern narrative researchers do not hold the assumption that the narrative studied reflects the physical world directly and see it as work of interpretation and not recreated reality (Bruner, 1991; Clannedin & Connelly, 2000;

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Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 1993; 2005). The story has a life of its own, as it is lived through each telling and hearing. Further, a story, or narrative, is seen to be temporally located and dynamic. As a story is told, it will change with each telling reflecting changes in the realities around it. There is no assumption that a story must be identically repeated to be valid. Bruner (1991) wrote that, “inevitably we assimilate narrative into our own terms.” Narratives are built from the interpretations of events, real or imagined, and change over time and, as such, the concepts of validity and reliability are inadequate in determining the value of narrative knowledge claims (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990; Mischler, 1990).

Polkinghorne (2007), in discussing verification of narrative analysis, noted that:

“what makes for a valid [or valuable] knowledge claim is dependent on the type of claim that is made... Narrative research issues claims about the meaning life events hold for people. It makes claims about how people understand situations, others and themselves.”

Narrative approaches emphasise human experience in a broad sense, inclusive of constructed meaning and experienced emotions. Any knowledge claims made within these approaches must be appropriate to that approach to be considered trustworthy (Bailey, 1996; Mishler, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 1993; Sandelowski, 1993).

Riessman (1993) noted that in narrative analysis we seek to produce research that is “trustworthy” and not “true” (p. 65). She differentiates between these two terms by noting that *truth* assumes an objective reality where *trustworthiness* (Bailey, 1996; Mishler, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 1993; Sandelowski, 1993) describes a world in a social, more constructivist, lens. Riessman further suggested that the *validation* of narrative work should be

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considered based on the four variables of persuasiveness, correspondence, coherence and pragmatic use. These four variables provide a broad framework for a discussion of the validation on narrative work that encompasses many of the key considerations discussed by prominent writers on narrative research (Bruner, 1991; Mishler, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1988; Sandelowski, 1993). These four considerations do not represent rigid, clearly defined, constructs easily located and added, rather, they are ongoing discussions to be had. Congruent to the interpretive nature of narrative research and narrative analysis, with each of these discussions are multiple interpretations and it is the author's duty to argue that they have, much like with the narratives, made good interpretations.

Sandelowski (1993) wrote that, "trustworthiness becomes a matter of persuasion whereby the scientist is viewed as having made those practices visible and, therefore, auditable; it is less a matter of claiming to be right than to have practiced good science" (p. 2). The researcher seeks to persuade the reader not that their claims reflect a valid or reliable reality, or that their claims are the one truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, but rather that the interpretation they have made is reasonable.

Persuasiveness refers to the ability of the narrator to convince the reader of their interpretations. Persuasiveness is similar to the concept of Bruner's (1991) *hermeneutic circling*, which is the task of convincing the reader that our interpretation of the narrative is a good one and that it answers the research question being explored. Bruner states that, "[n]arrative 'truth' then is judged by verisimilitude' rather than its verifiability" (p. 13) and that this *Verisimilitude* relates to whether or not something appears true. Generally speaking, when a narrative is audited by a reader, the first question explored is "does the interpretation feel correct based on

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the information provided?” As noted, every level of interpretation of experience carries the potential for a multitude of interpretations. Riessman (1993) noted that persuasiveness “ultimately rests on the rhetoric of writing...” and certainly includes our ability to use writing to convince the reader that the interpretation we have made is good and that it feels right. The purpose of the research should be clearly described and interpretations must support this purpose.

Correspondence, Reissman’s (1993) second variable of validation, refers to taking our interpretations back to those studied. This is a common practice in both narrative research and qualitative research in general and has also been referred to as *member checking* (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). Lincoln and Guba, two prominent writers on qualitative research methodology, noted that member checking is the “single most critical technique for establishing credibility” (p. 239). However, the process of member checking raises certain concerns in regard to the nature of interpretation. For example, does the value of an interpretation rest on previous levels of that interpretation? Interpretation is dynamic and individual. How I interpret transcripts of a conversation will be different than how the reader does, based on my ontological assumptions of multiple realities, the reality I inhabit and filter experience through is different from the reader’s. Riessman (1993) summed this concern up in noting “in the final analysis of the work is [the writer’s]. We have to take responsibility for its truths” (p. 67). Narratives are a collaborative act between the researcher and the participants, however, the completed product is the responsibility of the researcher.

The main benefit in corresponding with participants in the current study was not in verification or in having them tell me, the researcher, that I had made good interpretations.

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Rather, returning transcripts and re-storied narrative segments to participants allowed for a continued exploration of the experiences talked about. It allowed a new level of interpretation to occur in which the teller becomes a reader of the experience as well (Riessman, 1993). This expanded their interpretation and meaning making from the initial experience or towards the reading of the experience. An example of correspondence in the current research can be seen in Jimi's narrative.

I contacted Jimi and asked him to describe any changes in his emotional experience of the world in his transition to fatherhood. I asked him to describe any changes in emotion, which were described in a number of the other narratives, but not present in Jimi's initial telling of his transition. Jimi was not provided with any information on the emotional changes described by other participants, but he replied in our subsequent conversation that he had experienced some significant shifts in his own emotional experience. He described the love he felt for his child and how it differed from any other love he had experienced in his life and there was significant meaning in this narrative telling that represented a part of Jimi's story of his transition to fatherhood that would not have been generated in the narrative without that additional correspondence. This demonstrates clearly how constructed meaning is dynamic and how correspondence is a returned volley or a return to a "hall of mirrors" to use Riessman's (2015) term.

Correspondence in the current research occurred when I contacted participants during the narrative analysis. Participants were asked to review re-storied narratives and note any segments they would like edited or deleted, if the narratives felt congruent to their experiences, and if there was anything they wanted to add to their narratives. Six of the seven

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participants responded to this member checking. All of the fathers that responded to member checking said that the re-storied narratives were congruent with their experience. Two fathers added further narrative content. Three of the fathers also commented that the experience of reviewing their narratives was meaningful for them and a powerful experience.

Coherence refers to the degree to which interpretations are coherent with the actual interview transcripts. This is often accomplished in narrative by including large chunks of these transcripts as they relate to the interpretations. However, the point in narrative is not to contrast predicted meanings with expected meanings (Polkinghorne, 2007). As noted, there is no one 'right' meaning that we are trying to align with, rather we accept the interpretive nature of narrative analysis and interpretivist narrative researchers dig deeper; generating their own meaning from the texts. These meanings are not presented as constant across all readers but rather are presented as good interpretations with some degree of verisimilitude; or the appearance of being good based on the interpreted processes through which they were generated.

Polkinghorne noted, "The development of narrative interpretations is less rule derived and mechanical than that often found in conventional research. Instead, they are creative productions that stem from the researcher's cognitive processes for recognizing patterns and similarities in texts" (p. 483). As Riessman (1993) was quoted earlier, at the end of the day, the interpretations we make are ours, we need to own them, and use our writing to justify them.

In the current research I present re-storied narratives comprised entirely of "chunks" of text directly from participant transcripts. The order and organization of the chunks as well as the chunks selected reflect my interpretations of meaning, but through these large chunks the

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reader is able to audit these interpretations and the meanings I derived. A common practice in narrative research is to re-story narratives into the words of the narrator referencing sections of the transcript to increase persuasiveness. I chose not to follow this format in the current research. The “results” of my research are presented as re-storied narratives constructed entirely of the participant’s words. In reading the transcripts I felt the language used and the manner of speaking located the narratives and the fathers’ experiences, adding evidence for my interpretations. I do, however, include a full interpretive summary in my words of these narratives in Chapter 5.

Riessman’s (1993) final validation variable is *pragmatic use*. Pragmatic use refers to validating data in a way that is congruent with the philosophy and methodology (Polkinghorne, 2007). Narrative analysis is a series of interpretations and an acceptance that there are multiple other potential interpretations. Narrators work to persuade the reader that the interpretation they have made is a viable one and to provide the reader all the necessary tools to make that assessment. Though there is no recipe book to what steps need to be pragmatically followed for interpretivist narrative analysis, there are some strategies that appear to have some acceptance and value amongst the academic community engaged in this work (Bruner, 1991; Clannedin & Connelly, 2000; Polkinghorne, 1988; Ingraham, 2007; Mishler, 1990; Riessman, 1995; 2005).

Riessman (1993) described some of the information given to the reader by a pragmatic narrative researcher as including “(a) describing how the interpretations were produced, (b) making visible what we did, (c) specifying how we accomplished successive transformations, and (d) making primary data available to other researchers” (p. 68). Generally speaking, Bailey

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(1996) describes this as making “the research process visible” (p. 191). There is value in this act of transparency as the narrative researcher will not be the only one making interpretations as the work lives beyond the printed page into the interpretations of those who encounter it. Readers filter the information through their own experiences and beliefs interpret their own meaning from it. Providing the reader with all the information necessary to judge the researcher’s interpretations de-privileges the researcher and empowers the reader to make good interpretations.

One key way of making the work of the researcher visible is to share the primary texts generated with the reader (Mishler, 1990). By allowing the reader access to the transcribed interview data, the reader is empowered and the researcher vulnerable. Their interpretations are now able to be audited and their interpretations observed and evaluated. The reader can see, to an increased degree, how the data transformed between these levels of interpretation. In more traditional models of positivist quantitative research, the goal is to describe the research process and prove its limited impact on the ‘findings.’ There are no ‘findings’ in interpretivist narrative research; only collaborative creations. Interpretation is the medium of creation and rather than argue against the narrator’s impact, the process is made visible to honour and highlight the tools through which the creation was shaped. Transparency was another goal in presenting my re-storied narratives entirely composed of actual speech from the fathers interviewed.

In essence, verification of narrative analysis is a narrative or storied process in itself. In the following chapter I attempt to tell persuasive stories of masculinity in men transitioning to fatherhood not only in the narratives but also of the process through which those narratives

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were generated. What is conveyed in that chapter are not valid or reliable “truths” but rather interpreted meanings and meaningful interpretations. Throughout this report I have made my research process and materials transparent to the reader, or, in the words of Mishler (1990), I have offered “the visibility of the work” (p. 429) and identified my key influences in the discipline of narrative research (Bailey, 1996; Bruner, 1991; Clandenin & Connelly, 1990; 2000; Mishler, 1990; Polkinghorne 1988; 2007; Riessman, 1993; Sandelowski, 1993).

Chapter 4: Re-storied Narratives

The research question explored in the current project was “what are men’s narratives of masculinity in their transition to fatherhood?” There are two parts to this question: The first concerns interpretations of masculinity and second concerns a man’s transition to fatherhood. To answer this question, I have co-constructed narratives with fathers looking at their interpretations of masculinity through their transition to fatherhood. I have presented the narratives below to best represent the meaning I interpreted from fathers’ stories. All narratives presented are re-storied for temporality, particularity, intentional state entitlement, hermeneutic composability, canonicity and breach and referentiality (Bruner, 1991). The following narratives have been re-storied composed entirely of the father’s actual words.

Within each father’s individual narrative, the narrative is broken down into chapters. These chapters signify a distinct part of their story distinguished by temporality or movement in time or a difference in meaning: for example, pregnancy represents a distinct chapter in their stories to the birth of the child and the assumption of care post birth. These chapters are titled based on my interpretation of a core meaning from the chapter and, in many cases, chapter titles were taken directly from the transcripts. These core meanings were the meanings I interpreted when reading and reflecting on the narratives. Each of these chapters is broken down into verses, which are used to group distinct meanings, as interpreted by the narrator and myself as primary researcher. Grouping the text in this way allowed for simpler referencing of distinct sections of text through the discussion and improved readability of the large text segments presented.

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Leonard

Chapter 1: My father was more involved than his father

- 1 [My Dad] coached me in basketball, coached me in baseball and made me every breakfast as far as I can remember much to my mother's chagrin... so he was a very involved father. I got a hug every day and he would take us to the step and we'd step up and give him a hug.
- 2 His father was a classic staunch English father and my father repelled from that and did it differently and then...when I went to high school my mom went into a professional career ...my Dad sold his business and became a stay at home father basically...
- 3 ...my memory is that my father was much more involved in my parenting and maybe it is just because he coached us and stuff like that... It is something I want to channel so something I think a lot about.

Chapter 2: The emotional rollercoaster of In Vitro Fertilization

- 1 We moved to [our home community], bought a house, [my partner] went off the pill and we tried for a year and then went to the doctor and they just said you minds well try [In Vitro Fertilization (IVF)]. You have the means and are at the age.
- 2 So we did one round in the fall and it didn't work. It's like a rollercoaster. You get good news and get all these information inputs and then bad news. Good news- bad news- good news- good news- bad news.
- 3 So the second time we did it was my Mom's final days. We had these guys implanted two days before my mom passed away. She was three months from diagnosis to death and

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then you had this IVF roller coaster tapped on to the final six weeks of that... so it was quite an intense couple of months...

Chapter 3: It's not real until we have the baby

- 1 I remember we had two implanted... It's weird with IVF because you know you're pregnant because you've had two implanted and then you do this urine test and if it looks good there is a bunch of, in my experience, you don't have kids till you have kids because you have been on this rollercoaster from the start. All of pregnancy feels like that... like is this going to come through or not... you are more conscious of it for sure. She carried much more stress than I did for sure but yeah it's like much more conscious.

Chapter 4: Birth is an intense experience

- 1 The birth process was pretty cool. It was a planned C-section...
- 2 Because [my partner] is a doctor she knew everyone in the room... [but] it was a very foreign environment for me. I wasn't adequately briefed and I didn't fully understand the setting... like walking into that room and like Jesus there is a like a dozen people in here and there is all these lights and aprons and she is on her back with a cloth up to [her shoulders] and you can't see her body and there is another dude sitting right there with a giant machine...
- 3 ...I have a much greater appreciation now for people that aren't familiar with medical systems that have to go into it. Like me going into it... [my partner] knew everyone... on a first name basis which made it a lot easier for me to step in and not worry about any of that.

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- 4 ...[Overall] It was cool but it was kind of like this abstract cool. You are sitting there holding her hand and you can hear the doctors talking and you know there is something going on and you hear the baby scream and super exciting tears and smiles and then the process between them screaming and then me getting to see my children or holding them was longer than I expected.
- 5 ...it was just kind of like a higher heart rate, like it felt like you're holding your breath just a little bit. [My partner] was not freaking out so I'm not freaking out... because she knew the system. If none of us knew the system I might have been freaking out. And everything was fine
- 6 but I guess just not having a clear understanding of how that transition from her to a bed to be checked out and back to me was going to work. So they got...both [twins] out and I think both were screaming and then it quickly felt like minutes but it was probably a matter of seconds before okay everything is fine. Then they go over and they ask you to cut the cord and then they bundle them up and peel off your shirt and I get to hang out with them on my chest... That was super cool. It's not as intimate as you think again with the amount of people in the room. It is super surreal.
- 7 It's kinda like what now? ...here we go!

Chapter 5: Having twins meant I had to be more involved as a father

- 1 So we stayed at the hospital for five or six days. It was good. It was amazing how much support- like you have this big suite of a room and nurses coming in every couple of hours and so an incredible amount of support from them to teach you.

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- 2 So because twins- the breast feeding step with them is a little more involved like milk coming in and milk coming in enough. So they started out on the breast but weren't getting enough so they were getting formula as well and then we got to this position with these tiny little catheter tubes that you would slip between the nipple and their mouth so that they are getting formula and breast milk. So when we got home they were up every two hours and feeding took probably an hour where you are both up doing- like I'm warming formula and then back in...
- 3 ... [Coming home from the hospital] was pretty good...you don't do anything as it's sort of Groundhog's Day on a two-hour cycle day or night. We had a freezer full of food. I actually found it relatively easy- the first bit other than the sleep. Like I did well with my sleep but still there was a lot of lack of sleep
- 4 ...we got into making cakes, like these super complex cakes, cause you have all this time on your hands because they are sleeping all the time. So you are able to do stuff throughout the day. Like home around the house just pull out a cook book and see what we can do here...
- 5 ...But it felt like hibernating and sheltering in place with them...You go for a walk everyday but then apart from that it was just like hang out. They are not moving so you don't have to child proof everything. You have to figure out your formula and how to sleep with the two of them. Swaddling. Diaper changing...
- 6 ...So I was very involved... I can totally see how it would be different without the twins part. Like my Dad always said that whenever one of us screamed he was the one to get us

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and bring us to our mom so he was involved there. But I can see how it's not like that always.

7 For example, [my partner's] brother had his third child and like two weeks after this child was born I'm asking how it was going and he's like oh "I'm doing fine" and so we are asking like oh are you sleeping well and he is like "oh of course- like why wouldn't I be?" You've got a two week old!... and it effected his life like zero, like he had no understanding of it...

8 ...yeah, I think twins is a different process for the father, you are much more involved. It is much harder to feel outside this like relationship building [when it's just one child] because they are attached to the mother's breast for x numbers of hours a day.

9 There is a relationship building there... without that I could see how you could feel as an outsider- "like don't do that" or "we don't do that with the baby" type of thing. I don't think [I experienced that] but for some reason I have an appreciation for how it could be much more with a singleton as with two you don't have a choice. Many do but we- there was much less opportunity for that, but I could see how it would be a thing...

Chapter 6: Your life isn't yours anymore

1 ...I would say my hardest week of parenting was the first week back [from our year away in New Zealand] for sure... We had this interesting transition where our year off we spent nine months in Ontario and three months in New Zealand and we were just traveling the whole time. So we were canoeing or we were hiking and there wasn't anything like you were in a tent so you were just hanging out with them or you were cooking dinner. Like there was nothing that you needed to get done...

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2 ...we came back here in January when they were a year basically and all of a sudden [my partner] has got to go to work and I also want to get stuff like I've had this renovation and like it doesn't have to get done but I want to get it done and all of a sudden there is this transition to time pressure which is incredibly soft in our circumstance but still you've felt this like it was the first time in my life where I felt the real value of time.

Where like stop messing around and when you have a free moment you get something done...

3 ...It was just these guys- I don't know if they were having an off week too or maybe sensed the transition themselves but it just felt like chaos. It felt like the way parenting is depicted in the movies whereas prior to that it was really easy.

4 ...all of a sudden trying to get them to do anything- like okay I want you to sleep now and to try and get something done and then okay they don't want to sleep. What are we gonna do now. Because there are two of them you are dealing with that twice. So it amped up the stress. It's calmed down significantly since then. We have gotten into routines and found out how to make it work. It's relaxed on the fact that things don't have to get done. I Realized that a bit more. I've Settled into it...

5 ...Even like we have this dog. It's super high energy. Like she needs a walk or two a day or else she is just berserk. Pre-kids it was no problem. Young kids it was no problem. Just strap them to you and go for a walk. Kids this age it is usually not a problem but something you have to think about and plan in your day as something you are doing. So a few of those things layering on. It has definitely upped the stress...

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- 6 ...So you get to do a lot less of what you want to do generally. Like your life isn't yours anymore... So a lot less recreation certainly since we've been back. I mean it was a short ski season and getting out if you're lucky two days a weeks and prior to having kids it was five days a week like before kids we basically just took winters off and skied...
- 7 ...I don't know many people [here]- I don't have any male friends anymore or at least not here because it's just been with the kids... I don't really have the people here but maybe it stopped me from meeting them cause I'm doing those things less...
- 8 ...I don't know if it has to do with kids but not being employed with a group of people for sure impacts it... My last major employer was... around like construction and there I had a group of friends around the job I worked in but because I've never worked for a builder [here]. I've never made that connection. So any men I can call friends are spouses of [my partner's] coworkers. That has changed since I had children I guess... the time I spend with friends...

Chapter 7: We are lucky to both be very involved

- 1 I've been told I can't call it babysitting if they are my own children. I have had people say, I don't know the exact phrasing, like "stay-at-home dad" or there is another phrasing along the same lines. I think that is similar to this conscious struggle because my wife is working part time and I'm working part time a couple days a week around the house... I try to like explain that. I don't know, sometimes I try to explain that to justify that I'm not just the "stay-at-home Dad."
- 2 Also, to call me a stay-at-home Dad I think is missing a huge part of it because Mom's at home too like five days a week. I feel like I'm unjustly given credit in that the privilege of

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our situation is overlooked. I feel incredibly privileged to be parenting in the arrangement we are parenting in. To think of a mother going back to work in six weeks and not having that support.

Chapter 8: I'm not just worried about myself anymore

- 1 Canoeing is probably the most risk we took- and hiking too in New Zealand. So I think in New Zealand you'd do these hikes and they have this incredible infrastructure there for hiking but there are things that are easy to do but you get half way in and you say I can't do this- so like you turn around and go back. So like your threshold of risk is based on them...
- 2 ...I guess I have thought about it a little bit. I guess just recently I thought what would it look like if I broke my leg. So now I'm beyond useless. I'm more of a burden than they are if that happened. But it hasn't consciously influenced the risk I've taken much I guess but I also haven't been in the opportunity to take risk.

Chapter 9: I didn't expect to feel this angry

- 1 ...The other emotional change I've seen would be the anger. I guess when the anger spikes that is the time where I am feeling like I'm not doing this well. Like I shouldn't be doing this... It only happens when I'm alone so I think the societal pressure that it's not okay makes it happen maybe. It only happens when I'm alone because I'm alone dealing with it and that I know it's not okay....
- 2 ...Like if there is something that has come up in terms of my parenting it's that I need to work on that anger. I knew I had a temper. Even when they were like really young. Like the shaken baby thing I didn't really understand until you are a parent. It goes from zero

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to a hundred man and then goes back to zero. It's the same thing at this age- like they are in their high chairs and they are just like screaming at you and it's like "FUCK!" ... [the anger I have felt has] been something that I've noticed has been pretty impressive.

Chapter 10: I'm more than just a stay-at-home Dad

- 01 ... [I see masculinity as including] handiness- like ability to problem solve physical things like build counters or change a tire...I've developed like a skillset that has like trended in that direction. Like I haven't worked on my listening or like traditional feminine qualities...
- 02 ...if anything I think I've been cooking more. I've spent more time in the kitchen than before we had kids. Part of that is that my food requirements are quite low compared to [my Partner] like I have been trying to step up my game in terms of what is considered a decent meal but I can't see a need to express what is like more masculine in spending more time at home...
- 03 ...I feel like in order for me to describe [masculinity] that I would be reaching for societal norms- like I haven't thought about it enough to have a picture in my head so I would be reaching for what I think it describes... We have a joke, again not entirely appropriate, my wife will say sometimes this is why she's not a lesbian; like I make the fire, I do the renovations, I do the quote-unquote manly stuff- the stuff that basically requires a bit more muscle maybe.
- 04 I don't feel any...like if anything in our relationship I want the boy to wear pink as much as the girl kind of thing. If anything I'm dragging my feet more around like trying to impose gender on them like trying to impose what I think are societal constructs on them

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- 05 I don't know- obviously I am pressured a little bit by societal constructs around masculinity but I don't think about from like a parenting perspective. If anything it is about trying to step it back...
- 06 ...I think there's like, in describing our situation sometimes [to others], there's a like 'what do you do?' Like you are hanging out with a group of doctors and most of them are male and you're the male spouse and they are like "what do you do?" I feel like then there may be a little more pressure to like construct something beyond just caregiver. I definitely have the tendency to. I'm conscious of it so I feel like I try to self-correct. I still think that I'm on the side of like trying to project something outside of what it actually is. Maybe that's masculinity like role. Like I have a Masters degree and I'm not working anywhere close to what I trained in. So maybe it's trying to justify a little bit that move a way in career but I'm sure part of it is tied up in masculinity.

Chapter 11: I didn't consider myself a man until I had kids

- 1 ...well it's interesting. I really didn't consider myself an adult- which I guess you can say is like a man- until I had kids... There is this sense of responsibility. Like checking behaviours that you knew were inappropriate and you shouldn't be doing and now you are like a father or a Dad. Like I know that's not appropriate. Like language I've used with you I'll have to check with my children. So I felt sort of that responsibility I guess like turn on a little bit...
- 2 ... [When I'm with them I feel] pride. Like walking downtown with them in the stroller I have a grin on my face. I like it. There's some pride there. [People respond to you with]

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more openness. There are kids so people want to interact with the kids more- like you are talking to more people you pass on the street...

3 ...It's fine and I haven't had any moments where it's been like awful yet. I have some friends with kids like a little bit older and they are having temper tantrums in the checkout isle and it's like oh god am I this kid's father and we haven't had any moments like that yet.

4 Right now it's just all been all positive...

5 ...I'm super stoked on my kids... Like just to see how they get along and how they don't get along. Like their different attributes... I'm amazed at how early... like within six weeks there's kind of like a transition at six weeks that we ran into where they went from screaming babies to tiny little persons... but I was pretty blown away at seeing how early I saw that I got attached to them... Like I understand parents taking pictures of their kids and talking about their kids all the time now. Every day you see something that is cool to you as a parent and not necessarily to other people but like these are little people that their hard drives are just like booting up...

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Bob***Chapter 1: I want to parent like my parents did***

- 1 My folks were really hands on. My Dad puttered around the house a little bit. I remember they both raised us and we were always going on walks together. I kinda want to parent like my parents do. I think we do parent like my parents do. I have no regrets from growing up.

Chapter 2: We're going to make excuses until it is too late to have kids

- 1 We talked about having kids for a while and we were always coming up with excuses like this isn't a good time or this isn't a good place in our career or I wish we had our house paid off a little more but I finally told my wife one day we were going to make excuses till it is too late to have kids.
- 2 That's kind of when we decided that we were going to try. It didn't take that long. She got pregnant pretty quickly there...
- 3 ...I had just got back from my friend's bachelor party and we were out house-boating for a few days and I was pretty excited but I was pretty haggard too and I don't think I really responded with the same excitement that she was responding with.
- 4 It was one of those- like holy shit this is happening now!

Chapter 3: During pregnancy I started looking into the future more

- 1 [During pregnancy I] Definitely started looking into the future a lot more. I mean we were just living day-to-day, just kind of carefree, and do whatever you want and then started thinking about how this was really going to impact us. Like we can't just both piss off for a bike ride or go out for three or four hours together. That's just not going to happen. Even

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my wife missed a whole year of skiing and she was dealing with that too and I didn't have my ski partner and didn't ski as much either because I felt I had to stay home and help her out with stuff too...

2 ... [She had] bad morning sickness and not just at the start but all the way through. She was on medication and she was up a lot puking. She struggled a bit. She also started getting bad wrists through her pregnancy and it was getting worse and worse and worse...

3 ... [Her being in pain] changed a lot of my responsibilities around the house. I was doing a lot more cooking and cleaning and you know a lot of the stuff that I kinda expected her to be doing. Like we had our blue jobs and our pink jobs; like I would be out there shoveling and do all that stuff but I had to do a lot of her stuff too. Like she physically couldn't do it anymore. She was fine to share those responsibilities.

4 Definitely right from the start of pregnancy was a change in our dynamics in our relationship. She got pretty moody too. I definitely learned a lot more patience. I learned maybe to bite my tongue and choose my battles.

5 I mean you know what's coming and that you are gonna have this kid and that things are really going to change at that point and you are never going to go back.

Chapter 4: The birth was something I did not expect

1 [The birth was something] I was not expecting. You have people telling you that you are going to see some stuff that you cannot un-see and it was eye opening to go through that. I was surprised by how long it took and at how physically demanding it really was. She

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- was in a lot of pain and hurting. It was actually kinda funny seeing her demeanor change almost instantly after she got that epidural.
- 2 Then just learning all this stuff. Like we took prenatal course going into it. Like we met a lot with other couples expecting and they prepare you as much as they can but nothing prepares you for actual child birth. Like how medical it was.
 - 3 She had it really bad. She stopped building fluids and started losing fluids, so they induced her. They induced her on a Monday, went in on the Tuesday to get checked out and it was a different doctor and the anesthesiologist called and said they were doing work on the hospital and going into emergency power and the backup generator might not come on for a couple hours and so if she is going to be having a baby at this time maybe that is not the best idea. So they un-induced her. So she was still going through contractions and it stretched out for two more days before she finally got into the hospital.
 - 4 So by the time we got there she was exhausted. Contractions for like three days. She was not in a good place. It was nice the doctor came up and gave her the epidural and changed things for her.
 - 5 Even the childbirth part she struggled. The doctor was telling us that he had notified ER and we were probably going to need to do a C-section and she heard that and you could see her demeanor change and she was like I'm not having this and like redoubling her efforts and trying different positions; Let's get this thing out now kind of thing.
 - 6 Good for her. She is a champ and had a natural birth... they try to teach you some of that coaching stuff in the prenatal course. It's really challenging. It's a really intense experience. My wife doesn't remember any of it at all anymore. Even me I just remember

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bits and pieces. Like they aren't as clear anymore. It was really exhausting and a hard thing to remember. Then the whole learning process starts when you have this little guy and what are we gonna do?

Chapter 5: Everything has been a giant surprise

- 1 Everything has just been a giant surprise to be honest. I thought we would get out of the house a lot more and travelling a lot more but some of that is due to the current situation (COVID19 Pandemic). I thought we would be camping a lot more and just out a lot more. You don't dictate that anymore. Like your baby dictates that schedule. I try to be as structured as I can but if he doesn't want to go down in the morning, he is not going down. He will yell and that is something I have to understand and something I have to cope with. It's not like my dog where I tell my dog to go lay on the bed. I can't do that with a child. They don't know anything. Like everything he has to be taught; No sense of self-preservation yet..
- 2 ...I used to game a lot and that is kinda gone. It's out the window. We are really cautious about adjusting our screen time cause we don't want him growing up in front of the TV but at the same time it is starting to come around that it is really convenient for him to sit in front of a TV and I can get stuff done...
- 3 ...[I'm] a lot less active than I thought I would be. I have put on like 20 pounds since her pregnancy and in the last year. It was a huge surprise to me. It came from a change of routine and diet. Like I get home and she is tired and nothing is cooked or pulled out to cook so we'll like order out or just grab out some junk food. Like crush a bag of chips and it's not healthy at all. Too many beers too- because you are not going out and doing stuff

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and spending a holiday at the ski hill. Have a few more drinks here and few more drinks there and it adds up to. Something I have been trying really hard lately to get back on the train to curb the drinking.

4 ... but just how much of the time we do spend chasing after this kid or taking care of this kid and even now I am like oh my God some days I just follow him around cleaning up his stuff. Like a little tornado. He'll go into one cupboard and throw stuff around and we'll put it away and then get into another. It has been hectic and busy....and like duke out my routine and find what works for me...

5 ...There is so much more now to consider. You never had to consider before like how to set up stuff for like camping or whatever. There has been so much learning and adjustment. Tons of it. I don't think that is ever going to change. I used to be comfortable. I had my own routines and did this and that and partied but that is gone. My routine is his routine.

Chapter 6: The roles reversed and now I'm the one getting up with the baby

1 It was nice to have that month off to help out and try to get everything in there and it wasn't that much time but still nice. Like organize the baby room and sort out clothes. She was tired too and just slept a ton and was sleeping the entire time the baby was sleeping so it was kinda up to me to take care of a lot of stuff. Like helping her out and keeping her fed. It was exhausting those first few weeks...

2 ... It was nice when I was working she would get up and be with him because I was working and needed to be up. Now that role's kinda reversed and I'm the one getting up

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with him crying... I'm at home now right... just that whole transition now where we have completely switched roles.

- 3 She's going to work and coming home and sitting on the couch and telling me how tired she is everyday... I think she is starting to see some of the things from my point of view. Things like when you get home and work hard that I didn't appreciate. Like here's the baby, I'm off to do something fun. Like I think she is starting to see that like maybe that wasn't the best thing she could have been doing. I can start seeing it from her point of view too but obviously I'm not nursing so there is that whole aspect there I'm missing out on. I'm starting to see it is a lot tougher to get stuff done when there is this little guy around the house kicking around the house...
- 4 ...[but]I like it man. I don't mind it at all. Obviously I can't nurse him back to bed so he actually goes to sleep faster with me as he knows he isn't going to get any food so just pick him up and rock him for a few minutes and he goes back to sleep. I think my wife has a bit of animosity towards me about that because she can't do that. She can't put him down and he is down in a couple minutes. Cause he sees food. Maybe because she thinks she should be able to do all of it. She is starting to cope a bit but it will take a few more weeks for her to get used to it.
- 5 Like the other day I had a chat with her cause he woke up about half an hour before she walks out the door so she got up and brought him into the bed and nurses him for 10 minutes and was like I have got to go, see you, and just left off to work. I had to tell her afterwards like you can't do that. You can't just like nurse him for a few minutes and then leave. It would be like me getting up in the morning and making breakfast and coffee and

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- when you are half done dump it and kick you out. You are gonna be grumpy. You are not going to respond well to that. Same with the baby right.
- 6 She has been pumping now more in the morning if she doesn't get to feed him at night. That is something she had a tough time accepting as she feels she should be the one getting up and nursing and I'm like your job is to go to sleep so you can function at work the next day and my job is to now deal with the baby.
- 7 There is different routines now and we have a different idea of how things should be done. It will take a bit of time to figure out and now it is me dictating that to her. Like this is my routine and you need to adapt and not the other way around. It feels weird. Really weird and she didn't take it well to begin with but she is starting to come around and listening.
- 8 For example, he wakes up in the morning and she will get him and bring him in and nurse him and lounge. I'm not like that. If he is up at seven then I am going to get up and change him, feed him, play a bit and he has two naps now whereas before she didn't get out of bed till nine or ten then he would have one nap and then he is not getting fed first thing in the morning and his lunch doesn't' happen till two or three and dinner is later... Like we get in arguments a little more now. Trying to express that like this is how you did things for those first few months and this is how I think things should be done...
- 9 ...I didn't think I would have that active a role in the whole thing while I was working as well. But that is how it was. I would be working and I would come home and be with the baby. I thought I would be coming home from work and I wouldn't have as much of those responsibilities. I don't know what I was thinking...

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- 10 ...it has been a huge learning curve. I didn't think it would be that big of a curve for me going off after being around for 14 months. Like there is cloth diapers. I don't know how to fold cloth diapers. The cloth diapers just ended up in the cloth diaper rack for me to use and put on the kid. Now I do all that stuff. I am learning how to do all this stuff... I actually thought it would be a more traditional thing- but like I come home and do all the diaper changes and feeding him and getting him ready for bed.
- 11 Like she would bath him but I'm the one getting him ready for the bath to the point where I would physically lift him into the bath. She does the bath and then I pick him up and deal with everything until he is sleeping. Maybe it would have been a little different if she wasn't so sore but... who is to say I wouldn't have taken those roles on anyways because I'm not complaining about it. I do enjoy that. I like putting him down and sometimes that is the only time you get cuddles...
- 12 ...on parental leave I took some flak from some of the older guys at work. Stuff like "oh we never even considered doing something like this" and they talk about me behind my back, like who does this guy think he is taking off for however months like willy-nilly taking a break. There is still this like you have a lot of old guys working there and that's how it was when they had kids. I hear like "oh back in my day we wouldn't even be in the hospital when we had a kid- we would be on the golf course and someone would call us and tell us the news on the sixteenth hole." It is just such a big disconnect between those generations.
- 13 Some of the guys have actually stood up for me and said... "I wish it was a thing when I was having kids because I would have taken it." So you get these different perspectives.

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Some people are great with it right. Like I have sporadic friends that are taking as much time off as they can because they want to be there and see it but there is still that stigma around here like I should be at work and she should be at home.

14 I've heard it called baby vacation a few times...by people who haven't done it. Like single people without kids who have no inclination to ever have kids... It's kind of a sour point because that is exactly how they see it... My wife is working so I get a few comments here and there. She likes to call me the "house bitch" or the "house wife" or the "trophy husband" and I'm like I didn't say that when you were off. Like it's funny for a man to be doing it or something... I don't really appreciate the "house bitch" comments. It feels demeaning like I'm being told it's not a man's place. Like I can put a lot of time into getting the place cleaned up and I feel like I am a little more on top of the housework and maybe it is just that honeymoon phase and it could very well be. So those kind of comments- I find them a little demeaning. I think she is just joking but it still kinda feels like I'm being told it's not my place.

15 A lot of the old guys at work are actually supportive though and seem to wish it was a thing for them. It was a different time back then when they had their kids. It's woman's work or it was. It's woman's work so why would you even consider that... I was talking to some of the old guys at work and it has absolutely changed. In their stories they didn't do any caring. Which sounds easier but you are not going to have that relationship. He will grow up and you won't have that. I really do think that both parties need to be involved. I like to think he is going to grow up to be a better person to see both of us in that caretaker role- like both of us as a primary caretaker. It is nice that he gets different

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perspectives from us both. If it was just my partner bringing him up and me being hands-off then he only gets that one perspective. Now there are two different people talking to them and influencing them. So I definitely think it has been a positive change for sure.

I don't know if I could have that hands off relationship. He is so much fun to be around and interact with. He doesn't know how to talk back.

Chapter 7: If I get hurt who will look after my son?

- 1 Things changed so much from being carefree and no responsibilities to actually thinking that you know if I get hurt I have a baby I have to take care of. Like how is that going to impact me.
- 2 Thinking of the risk. Yeah, definitely not going as hard and especially at the ski hill- not as hard at it as I used to be. Like yeah if you break your leg, it is not a big deal for work but with kids it is. That started pretty shortly after pregnancy...
- 3 ... but I want him to explore and to take risks. I want him to get hurt and scratch his knees and that is growing up...

Chapter 8: It has been awesome connecting with my son

- 1 Yeah like I knew I'd love him but you know you hear so many stories of sad things happening to families and now it definitely hits a lot closer to home. You start to understand and you do get teary eyed when you read some of these stories. It hits home for sure...
- 2 ...It has been awesome connecting. So much fun. Just the look he gives you and he is a happy baby. He is always smiling and can always get a laugh out of him and just enjoyable to be around now and to interact with. In the first few months he didn't do anything but

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now at like 14 and a half months he is just spitting out his first words and starting to pre-stand and take some stutter steps. It has been fun trying to encourage him and get him to push him.

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Jimi

Chapter 1: My Dad didn't have a loving father and he did his best to get away from that

- 1 My Dad was a hippy in the 60's and then kinda got a bit more corporate by the time I was a child. I was their first kid and they did a really good job... I would say for the most part my experience of being a son to a father was a really good one. My brother and I still very much do love our Dad and he really did try to do his best to direct us. We had a really charmed childhood...
- 2 but I felt that some of those traditional gender-type things like asking us not to cry when frustrated and I don't really recall if my dad used language like "Man Up" but he might have.
- 3 Both my parents were really loving but my Dad certainly had outbursts of anger. Not physical. I think I got spanked once as a kid and my parents felt worse about it than I did but my Dad certainly had a temper and could blow up. I used to have the little bit fear of him sometimes.
- 4 I can think also in that early 80's there I think that looking back I would have loved for there to be more of the notion of the modern style of parenting available to new parents at that point. I think that there was a lot of incorrect expectations on kids back then that I got and then I may have been or had some bad habits enforced into me as a kid that I am going to do my best to not enforce into my kid...
- 5 ...I'll get into the generational stuff. I don't think my Dad had a great loving father who was a good role model of love and acceptance and I think that he did his best to get away from that model of what he grew up with but it was still there. It was just harder because

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when he was young and his Dad was parenting, his dad was the yelly one. The one who had really high expectations and a solid line and followed orders.

6 I think my Dad was part of the sixties. A lot of people were hippies and there may have been the counter-culture against the Dad as well as society but when you went to be a Dad that was his model. I don't know if he was reading parenting books at the time but he was a workaholic and worked a lot and he travelled for business and so he wanted to be mostly having fun and doing sports and stuff with us when we were kids. I don't know how much of the active day to day parenting he did with us when I was really small. I think he went back to work quick after I was born and Mom did a lot of that day to day stuff...

7 ...I would say consciously I was never like oh I don't want to be like my Dad. That was not really in my head. I would say more because I have ended up in youth services and education I have done a lot of work in pedagogy and early childhood development and so a lot of that was just sort of fed into what I believe is the best way to raise kids. And so there's some pushback there on those practices but not necessarily against my Dad, it's more against what I think what was in vogue as parenting back then and what was the norm in parenting back then.

Chapter 2: I've always wanted to be a father

1 Well, I would say going back years I pretty much always known I wanted to be a father. I didn't have a lot of passion or direction or anything but always in the back of my mind it was like yep I want to raise kids and I want to have my kids and I want to try to make the world the best place for them, ... so it's always been something I really focussed on...

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- 2 ...Throughout my years of dating from my late teens to my mid-thirties [having children] was always something that partners and I discussed but I sorta did the serial monogamy thing from partner to partner for about three year periods for a while and there was never a period where we were getting close to talking about starting a family. Then with my current partner we just hit it off really fast and within a year we had moved in together and by the end of that second year we were talking about how we both really wanted kids so let's think about it soonish. So at the end of our third year we were actively trying.
- 3 That was part of what had us move to a small town because we weren't comfortable with the idea of raising a kid on pretty mediocre salaries in [a more expensive larger urban center]. We couldn't see ourselves being able to afford anything other than a crappy one-bedroom apartment or basement suite so we started looking for small towns. Work moved us out here...

Chapter 3: After the miscarriage it was hard to get excited about the pregnancy

- 1 We had a miscarriage that was pretty tough on both of us. I felt more disconnected from that than my partner did of course. I was really excited but trepidatious to be a Dad initially... so we were pretty knowledgeable about what our chances were for miscarriage in healthy women and so those first couple or three months we were really excited but we were being careful not to let anyone know and so we didn't have the extra stress of trying to tell people that we'd lost the pregnancy when it happened and we were able to just sit with it alone for a little bit.

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- 2 I had trouble in the second pregnancy... getting super excited even after we passed that really dangerous point I would still have a little bit of real worry about getting too excited in the back of my head. So I wasn't revelling in my partner's pregnancy and also it was a really tough pregnancy for her. So the pregnancy wasn't really like fun and joyful it was a lot more of trying to support her from feeling terrible every single day.
- 3 ... [However] I think I was a pretty decent birth partner. In being supportive and trying to actively be an equal in all the things leading up to fatherhood. I read a bunch of the books and we had a home birth and it was really cool and empowering to be in the bed and gripping my partner's hands to help her push and be right there.

Chapter 4: Dadding is exhausting

- 1 I feel a selfishness when I am like oh I just really want to go play video games tonight. I don't want to do bath time. I don't want to go do something to improve the house or the property. Like I need my down time. Dadding is exhausting. Like it is the most rewarding thing ever but a couple hours with your kid reading to them constantly or them jumping all over you I am like oh I have no more energy for anything that is not my version of fun now...
- 2 ...So I thought that I might get a little jolt of passion for work and be a little more into my work and come home a little more refreshed and that would mean that my work life balance would not really upset it but I certainly feel a lot more kinda getting to the end of the day and just worn out and that was one of those things that you both expected but still kinda surprised by.

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- 3 Like I knew that I would be exhausted as a Dad but when you feel it, it is different- it's not what you expect

Chapter 5: I jumped into the dad stuff that traditional fathers wouldn't have

- 1 You know how I said that part of me was hoping that when I became a Dad I would be almost mystically imbued with more drive and more passion and that didn't happen and so now I feel like I work just as hard as I was working without getting much more out of my work and now I'm trying to share as much workload as I can at home...
- 2 ... [soon after birth] I jumped right into some of the Dad stuff that maybe traditional Dads of the past might have been a little more icked out by like changing diapers and putting coconut oil in butt cracks right off the back. Right in there with my partner about getting super jazzed about things like peeing on the potty...
- 3 ...Like I'm not taking on the full equal partnership at home. I try to really pick it up and do more and make sure that I wasn't leaving too much physical and emotional labour on my partner but she still does a lot at home and then has the baby a lot like every single day and so there is that imbalance there as far as parenting is concerned.
- 4 However, I was definitely the breadwinner. So now living [in the pandemic] I lost about half of my income or at least 40% or somewhere in that area and I only work from home now pretty much 99% of the time. So now I am home more and my partner qualifies for the emergency benefit and I don't and so she is bringing in more money now and I should be stepping up even more than I already am from being home and helping out.

Chapter 6: My worrying went up as a father

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- 1 So even during pregnancy and where we see ourselves now I have always been a bit of a worrier. With my family and past partners I have always been the type that if someone isn't back when they say they will be I will be the one to fret and panic and that was definitely amplified during our pregnancy. If she was out with friends and was 10 minutes late my heart would start racing and horrible scenarios started playing out in my head.
- 2 My baby doesn't go anywhere without one of us but I am already seeing that when he is old enough to be out somewhere without us it's going to be hard for me and I may struggle to let them go...
- 3 ...I'm not sure I would describe any of that as protective as that isn't quite right but when things are out of my hands with someone I love I just get a lot of worry about worst case scenarios. Yeah I just need to reconnect with them to know that they are alright. I think that upped quite a bit during the pregnancy because I felt like my partner was even more vulnerable maybe because of carrying around a child with her...
- 4 ... [related to risk] I think I have become a more focussed and aware driver. I think I have done a little less speeding a little more checking of my mirrors and in the neighbourhood watching people transgress traffic laws or whatever now really irks me in a way that it didn't used to... also when I go out for an evening walk with my dog I feel a lot more nervous about what would happen if I were attacked by a bear or a cougar at night while walking my dog. I don't really remember that being something that was in my head when I would walk in the same neighbourhood before my child was born.

Chapter 8: My emotions have deepened since becoming a father

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- 1 ...I for sure think my emotions have deepened since becoming a father. The love I feel for my child is like no other I've felt before. What I mean by that is that it doesn't feel like a "stronger version" of the way I love my partner or my parents. It feels like a completely new form of love. If you told me I could only pick one kind of love for the rest of my life, it would be this new one.
- 2 As well, I think I'm more emotional around the concept of death (especially within a family) in movies, music, etc. I think tears come much easier since my son was born. I think this is all after birth, or possibly since labour started.
- 3 I was cautiously optimistic during pregnancy, but don't think I felt my emotions more deeply during that period. I may have even steeled my emotions more during pregnancy, not wanting to get my hopes up in case things went wrong.
- 4 I don't feel I've become easier to anger or irritate... except I feel more worried and angry about the state of the world; like climate change, plastics in the ocean, people buying into partisanship and conspiracy... So around my family, friends, and co-workers I'm no more aggressive than I was years ago, but when I'm considering the greater world around me, or see litter while out on a walk, my ire and despair are felt much more keenly than before becoming a father.

Chapter 9: I feel like a "Dad" and that being a "Dad" supersedes any other role

- 1 When they came out I pretty much immediately felt like a "Dad" and felt really nurturing and closely connected... It felt right. I'm not saying I feel like I'm the perfect Dad or anything like that. I absolutely don't. I feel like this is stressful and I'm exhausted and

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sometimes I doubt what I'm doing and I don't like that I'm not super motivated to go out and read every single parenting book but it feels right to be a Dad...

- 2 ...I feel like a Dad and I'm just trying to think of how that changed in my view. I used to feel a lot like an individual and I didn't necessarily see myself as part of a two-person partnership. I would think of myself and my partner as someone who lived at home with me and we were in love and now I really feel like a Dad- like that role supersedes some of my own.
- 3 That is part of how people treat you too. Like you go into work and you haven't seen your coworkers in a while and the first thing they ask is about your kid. Like it's almost like you have become a different person due to what society thinks and just the fact that this little person exists you now changed your being into being the dad rather than being me the person who is going to have a kid at some point... it is definitely not a bad thing but is it a good thing? ... A lot more people tend to ask the person how is the baby or how is the little person doing and people who like babies of course are going to be focussed on that but there is no negativity wrapped up that idea it's just like okay I have been superseded by my adorable baby.
- 4 ...I will say like a stereotypical, I think I feel more status when I walk around with my kids that I might look more desirable to other people that I'm being a good Dad like I have this baby that is clearly being well taken care of and loves being with me. I think that it feels good to have people to look over at you and to smile and you get that feeling that they are smiling at the kid but they are also smiling at you. Like "ahhh look that that guy being

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a good Dad.” I definitely feel like in a societal way that my status has gone up a bit by being a Dad...

- 5 ...I don't know how much I am aware of what society expects [of men] anymore... So I don't buy into a lot of the manly stereotypes. When I think forward to what am I excited to teach my child when he is older. It's not like sports or drinking or trucks or whatever... I can't wait to just watch them grow up and I hope they end up liking some of the same things I like but I am much more focussed on the role of being a good parent and “Dad” is just the language that I have for that.

Chapter 10: I worry about potential pressure from masculinities on my child down the road

- 1 I don't feel any societal pressure to butch him up or man him up. We would consider ourselves pretty modern in our outlook and in our roles. We definitely gendered them and identify their gender and call him little dude and little bro but we are not invested so much in gender stereotypes and if he goes super masculine or super fem we are really fine with that. So I would say I just don't feel a lot of pressure.
- 2 Like I have never felt weird about what colorful outfit we have put him in going out or like does he look dudely enough and when he was really little and people weren't sure of their gender it never felt like a slap or an insult or anything. Not yet anyways...
- 3 ... When he is socializing with other kids I don't know if that will change. I am aware of the things that may become issues down the road... like the other kid in the neighbourhood closest in age to him comes from a family where they're definitely on the conservative side of things. They are hunters. They like guns. So he is already like oooh...if they become

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good friends then what influence is that other family and other Dad going to have on my kid who I want to raise in a certain way?

- 4 So I already feel some pressure from potential masculinities on him down the road which is crazy but maybe similar worries come up for all sorts of parents... and I don't have a problem if he expresses an interest in sports... or actually I might have a problem if he wanted to get into hunting or certain team sports. I might not be super comfortable bringing him to some. So I might be a block on some of the more traditionally masculine things he might be interested to do but I may just tell him that hey I'm not interested in doing that at all.
- 5 I am the type of person that uses the phrase *toxic masculinity* and it is something I believe in and feel I see in the world. In this small industrial town there is a lot of traditional masculine behaviour and that is not something I align with at all. So definitely there is a sort of push-back on that from me and I don't really call people out so much on it when it is my kid but like we subtly move people away from talking about our child that he's going to be a lady's man... like more we really seriously ask people "we don't want gifts for him but if you do please don't buy him super gendered stuff like military camo baby clothes or stuff like that." So we have kind of actively put out there into our friends and acquaintances that we are not looking to follow traditional gender expectations for a boy you know what I mean. We want him to just be a happy kid. He has trucks and stuff like that in our house and he is super into trains but it's not like we pushed that onto him.

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Kurt***Chapter 1: My father was traditional in his views but not a traditional father***

- 1 [My father and I] had a pretty good relationship. We considered each other close friends into my teen years...
- 2 ...He was traditional in his views, but I wouldn't consider him a traditional father. He was a traditional Irish father anyways because my father was quite emotional and would cry a lot. He wasn't very hard on me. He almost kind of just wanted us to do what would make us happy. He had traditional views but it was not the way he parented... It was traditional [in that] Mom was at home and Dad worked...we were quite close. I would say we've been quite close most of my life up to my teens especially... but as far as emotions go, he would display it all.

Chapter 2: Being a father is something I have always wanted

- 1 Well [Being a father is] something that I've always wanted. I think when I gave up wanting to be a big brother I started wanting to be a Dad. It started very young for me.
- 2 I got married at 24 and three years later our first little girl came along... [Though it was] not planned- we were pretty close to trying so we had got pretty slack so kind of an accident but almost on purpose...
- 3 ... [finding out about the pregnancy] was kind of a weird one. We were having a fight my wife and I and it was small but distressed. We were in the middle of the fight and my wife just kind of said "this is why I'm over-reacting..." and threw the pregnancy test at me... the frustration with that argument just completely dissolved and I was just incredibly happy and it was one of those moments where it feels like an energy is coming out of

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your body. I think most people can relate to that one... it was pretty good. It was filled with a lot of excitement.

- 4 We were also building a house at the same time so there was a lot of stress about that going on and a little bit of anxiety about being a Dad but for the most part a lot of excitement.

Chapter 3: I wondered if I was good enough to be a father throughout pregnancy

- 1 There was a lot of anxiety during pregnancy. You know, am I ready? Am I ready to be a good role model? A lot of the anxiety of being a parent even as I continue through it has been from that place of 'are you good enough?'... That kind of anxiety...
- 2 ... Through the pregnancy I was actively taking on a lot more responsibility in trying to improve myself to be a better role model- a better person for my [child]. I started thinking a lot more about that in pregnancy and really trying to make those changes. Like getting ready for it. Am I ready for the big change that was coming and just scared if I could do it I guess.

Chapter 4: What if I lose them before I have them?

- 1 [The birth] went pretty good. My wife doesn't really like to say that but they said it was a pretty textbook birth so there was no real tension during birth. It was pretty good.
- 2 I felt that I liked being in the room and just kinda went into the zone trying to take care of her and massage her throughout the process.
- 3 There was one moment at the end when [my child's] head was sticking out and it was just her head and it was very blue looking and that was the one moment of panic... I had to

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kind of step away from the bed at that point... Yeah again it was really that fear. I thought I was losing them before I even met [them]. No one had prepared me for that...

- 4 ...All the way along it was very hard to watch my wife in pain but everything went quite well.

Chapter 5: I completely lost my autonomy as a father

- 1 [Once I started caregiving] ... I completely lost my autonomy... In terms of you are not really on your schedule anymore.
- 2 ...Honestly [time was] taken away- wasting time was really what was taken away.
- 3 ...It's been an adjustment to learn to have to prioritize... [Prior to parenting a child] I was split between not doing a lot and between sports and activities- soccer, snowboarding, wall climbing, kick boxing... I haven't had to sacrifice too much of that. It would have been a lot of free time that I have sacrificed...
- 4 ...it is definitely more focused. Snowboarding really stands out. You are not doing full days anymore. It's like two hours and you are back... Sometimes it's to give my wife a break a little while and sometimes I'm up there and I miss them.

Chapter 6: Realizing I could be a good father felt good

- 1 ... the first week we were struggling, well I wasn't struggling, my wife was struggling with breast feeding and we went to see a lactation consultant down in the hospital and she could tell that I was being very timid with the baby and treating it like it was maybe fragile and they just kind of almost not physically but grabbed me by the lapel and said you've got to kind of be dominant here and take care of your two girls and stand up. You know it

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was pretty quick but I kind of picked up that pretty quick and have been working on it since to be that person...

2 ...I worked for the first three months of their life but I've been a stay-at-home Dad since...

It came at a time where I wasn't very happy with my job. So, it made sense from a lot of different perspectives and so my wife and I were actually really quite aligned. It was just an easy conversation. It just seemed seamless in a sense.

3 We were kind of cautious as we didn't know if my wife would change her mind once the baby came along but it kind of went as planned...

4 In reference to the paid and unpaid, that was an easy enough transition although I have certainly felt a lot of guilt that I wasn't, you know, helping the finances of the house anymore. I suppose that would be a bit of a traditional upbringing bringing that out in me like a man should bring home the bacon type of guilt... I think [that was a] little bit [of a surprise] yeah... I would say it was very strong for at least the first year. I guess I said to myself and realized that [parenting] is an important role. It's not that I didn't think it was an important role but just that my contribution- I'm not sure quite how to say it...

5 [When I first took on the primary caregiving role] I just remember it being a really happy time. Actually, that was probably a better moment for feeling confident and like I got this. I think up to that point, I was trying to be more assertive. I think I was still letting my wife kinda drive the bus of parenting and it wasn't until I became the primary caregiver that I really became confident... I was kind of struggling a little bit mentally, like I kinda get a little bit of depression, and I think my wife was worried that I wouldn't be able to rise to

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the occasion. She was pretty happy when I did and actually showed a little bit of confidence.

Chapter 7: I notice more fear now as a father

- 1 I think I was quite carefree before [children] and very much like if I die tomorrow I would be fine kind of thing, but there is definitely a lot more to live for and I don't mean that in a negative way but there is definitely more fear now...
- 2 There was one funny moment [during pregnancy] where I felt the baby kicking and I was kind of poking back and my wife gave kind of a gasp at one point and I had thought for a split second that I had actually hurt the baby and I just broke down in tears even though I knew a moment later it was silly and my wife was gasping at something else. It was the first time I realized how much I loved something I hadn't even met yet. That was a big one for me to kind of discover how strongly I really could feel about it... It definitely prepared me for the love and simultaneously the fear of caring for something so much.
- 3 ... I would say especially if I am snowboarding on my own I definitely take it a little easier or go to runs that I am more familiar with and don't have big massive cliff drops or anything but that would be the personal ones but risk in terms of other people, especially my daughter, that has just gone through the roof. It was something that I didn't really expect...
- 4 ...I mean I don't know if it's a strong enough story but my wife was giving me- or just messing with me, that I have become the helicopter parent and this was just as my daughter was learning to walk and this was the standard ten months and so the next day I said okay I'm not going to helicopter parent as much and of course she falls and splits

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open just underneath her eye and I thought it was a funny one. The first one I decided to stand back she did hurt herself. It also taught me that she needs to learn and get her bumps and bruises. [It] is funny because [Between my partner and I] if you see us snowboard I am the risk taker and she is the conservative one.

- 5 I think it was there from the start, ever since the story of poking the belly and thinking that I was hurting [them] that's where it first showed up for me. I think it really showed up as a dominant trend after I became primary caregiver... [I have my child enrolled in a nature program and] that has been a good one because I have been a little hesitant to bring her out into nature and I don't really know why. I think having that plan and having activities that were nature related has really helped to break through that barrier... I think managing risk in nature and not being able to relax and seeing a hazard in everything and so you just resist going out the door. So being with the and being part of taking those little risks has been helpful to feel a little better about it but I still find it hard.

Chapter 8: As a primary caregiver the crying bothered me more than my partner

- 1 ...I might be going off track- but one thing that I found interesting... so we were doing sleep training when my [partner] was primary caregiving and she couldn't listen to the crying so I had to do the sleep training. Now that I have become the primary caregiver the crying kinda bothers me more and now my wife can listen to it more. It reminds me of that switch to kinda being the one for them and my need to keep them safe...
- 2 ...[Further] both my wife and I we are fairly low energy and just we're this "ying" kinda person and we have this "yang" that's come into our family. We used to have the quietest house on the street but now it's the loudest. That's been an interesting adjustment...

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- 3 ...I think I've become more resilient and definitely more patient. Even though I thought I was pretty patient but in real life wasn't very patient enough.

Chapter 9: I thought I was more patient and that I'd be less quick to go to discipline

- 1 I never really considered myself particularly masculine... though I guess it depends on what is meant by masculinity... I know I mentioned the traditional bringing home the bacon thing but overall I am pretty okay with it...
- 2 ... I mean I would say that maybe [I see masculinity as] just kind of traditional, almost virtuous, aspects of masculinity but maybe not the macho, you know, most of my friends that I hung around before COVID were all the moms and that didn't bother me in the slightest...
- 3 ...there's one that kind of, I don't know if it's particularly masculine, that I felt I would kind of go to a place of discipline over compassion a little more frequently than I thought I would. I thought I was a little more patient and wouldn't go straight to the discipline... I think the script of discipline. It was almost a frustration a lot of the time... It took quite the adjustment but I would say in the last four or five months I have gotten much better at it just-
- 4 I think some of it too was just learning to let go of control even though again it surprised me I didn't think I was the kind of person who needed a lot of control. Yeah letting go of that it took a while. I've just about got there.

Chapter 10: Am I man enough to be a good dad to a boy?

- 1 Well we have number two on the way and around the masculinity thing when we found out we were having a boy I was anxious. I haven't figured it out yet so I might not be able

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to elaborate like a little but it's like "shit can I be a good Dad to a boy?" I didn't think it would matter to me. I thought I would be more excited about a boy but again like a kinda responsibility gave me a little anxiety around that time... I can't really put my finger on it. I guess in a small way because I consider myself to be slightly on the effeminate side of masculinity maybe a boy would need a more male or macho role model? At the same time...it's been a tricky one for me to really figure that one out.

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Johnny***Chapter 1: We were fulfilling our destiny bringing a child into the world***

- 1 My partner and I had talked about having a baby and so the pregnancy was intentional. We both agreed that was the route we wanted to go.
- 2 She took a pregnancy test sometime cause she was feeling different and we had the results and we were both feeling really excited- really happy.
- 3 Everything felt as it should be. We were fulfilling our destiny by bringing a child into this world into a beautiful happy home with two parents that were very much in love with each other and a child is a product of our love...

Chapter 2: During the pregnancy there was a lot of planning

- 1 The pregnancy was very good...
- 2 My partner looked amazing. She was very radiant. People were very supportive. We had a lot of great community support. All our family were very excited for us. Everybody was coming together and everybody was coming together in support of us. I think that was really beautiful to see...
- 3 ...during the pregnancy there was a lot of the planning. The planning, the researching, what I could do to be a part of the pregnancy. One of those things involved taking a course on the Monahan method of natural childbirth and also attending group sessions with a maternity class. We were having meetings with doctors and we hired a Doula. So I was part of the interview process of finding the right Doula that would work for us. We decided to have a homebirth in my house. We found a person with a birthing pool; a little

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birthing tub that we brought in and set up. I was really involved in every aspect of the planning. I was researching what the father's role is for the birth.

4 ...I felt really lucky that there were some resources in our community and that it has a very supportive birthing/ child-birth community. I was really lucky to have a friend who taught this method of natural child birthing and she gave us the course for free... If I hadn't had that course under my belt I honestly don't know where I would have been without it.

5 ...Knowing that my partner was with child and we had a child coming and I really kind of noticed my drive to prepare for the child. My drive with my business was really ramped up. I seemed to be firing on all cylinders. It's like the baby is coming so just my level of excitement and preparedness for the birth and for just being a man...this is what being a man is about. It's no longer thinking of myself. Okay I've got a child coming into the world and I need to make changes and to make space for that child.

6 ... it was big for me, but I sold my motorbike...feeling that I was always going to be single and I had a motorbike that I built from the ground up and that meant a lot and when I sold it I was just kind of letting go and know that I wanted to be spending more time with the child when they arrived and maybe the motorbike was a little dangerous and I had to think strictly about okay my child is going to need her father to be around and if I was in an accident or something that would harm my family and I had to make decisions that were best for my child now that would impact my family. It gave me a lot of joy and so my motorbike and my snowmobile- two things that might be trivial but to me they kind of

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gave me a lot of joy and it was strange but for a guy, selling your motorbike is really fucking hard.

Chapter 3: Hollywood wrecks birth for a lot of parents

- 1 The birth went really well...
- 2 ...There's that question where I didn't know how I was going to respond to it. It was a really visceral experience seeing a human being come out of your partner and into the world. There is no prepping that is done- there is no prepping that I had ever done to kinda really prepare myself for what it looks like to see a human being birthed into this world and know how I was going to respond. It was a big unknown to me. I think maybe if you live on a farm and you see animals give birth then you maybe have an idea of what it's going to look like but I certainly didn't and I had heard of stories of men not being able to handle the visual experience or the blood or all the experiences that come through it.
- 3 I know that Hollywood certainly wrecks it for a lot of parents. What you see on TV is nothing like the real experience. I just really feel like men are not prepared for the reality of the experience... even with the preparation there was still a big unknown because of how I had been programmed for years by watching TV shows of what the experience was going to be like. A lot of that information from the media that comes at men is not correct. It is false. It is fake. It is made up. It is Hollywood...
- 4 ...I think men when they are involved then instinctively there is something that triggers- like a switch flipped and I knew instinctively what my partner needed. I felt involved in the process. I felt lucky that I had a lot of the training and support to be a part of it. It was

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exhausting but there is a lot of adrenaline... You knew she needed me and she's been carrying this baby around for nine months and I thought it was the very least I could do.

- 5 A big part of fatherhood felt like geez I'm really just bystander for a big part of it but I didn't want to feel like a bystander. I just wanted to be as supportive and involved as humanly possible. Just knowing what childbirth- how intense it is on a woman's body and I figured the least I could do is be there as much as humanly possible.

Chapter 4: There is that masculinity that drives men to provide

- 1 So, [after the birth of our child] I started to notice my time use and my routine became a lot different. My partner and I started to get kinda worried about finances a bit... [so] issues about financial security came up and we wanted to provide for our child... I was shouldering the burden of the financial load for the family. That meant that I had to spend a little more time working so that Mom could stay home and that started to create some challenges.
- 2 It feels like there was two parts. The first part of preparing for being involved emotionally was all in place. I think what I wasn't prepared for was after the birth not being as involved as I was pre-birth. I wanted to spend more time with my daughter and my partner and that just wasn't our society. Our society didn't facilitate that. My upbringing and my masculinity told me "hey this is the way it's going to be," you just have to go out and work because you want your child to go to college and you want your child to have more time with Mom because Mom doesn't want to work as much so it's a trade-off...
- 3 ...I definitely feel that there is some inherent primal drives... there is that masculinity that drives men to provide. I see that being kind of in direct conflict with sometimes their

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partners needs of wanting to have more connection and there is a trade-off. There is a trade-off for going and working and leaving your family and through that trade off there comes a level of disconnection...

4 ...There was definitely two parts to it. When I would come home, I would be loaded with groceries and gifts and things and that felt good to provide and to just be home. I was just happy to be home and I tried to not think about it too much, but it was definitely really hard for my partner. It was hard for my daughter because she would be more volatile when I wasn't around. She would cry a lot more but when I was home if she was crying with her mom, she would come with me and she would calm down. It would give her mom an emotional break and allow her to reset but I think that a child needs to have two parents at all times present and I see that now but it's a little late...

5 ...I really wanted to spend time with my daughter but my partner she didn't have a large skill set that would allow her to... I mean she was only working three days a week after a certain point but for the first couple of years my work changed, and my work dried up at home and so I had to travel out of town to work and the distance created challenges... it came as a surprise and neither of us foresaw that I'd have leave town to go to work but I would only leave for three days, I'd work for three days eight hours away... or nine to ten hours away... and come back. So I was working three days a week outside of town and it was hard... I had hired some childcare worker to come and live in our house and support my partner while it was happening for those three days so that she had an extra set of hands around but I felt that my partner and I were starting to drift.

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- 6 ... As soon as I started to see it, I accessed some counselling and I was able to get into so that we could iron out any wrinkles and stuff came up where she was feeling abandoned. That I would go away to work while she was at home with the child but it was a financial necessity due to the expenses we had.

Chapter 5: When I became a father I was more averse to risk

- 1 Definitely when I became a Dad I was more averse to risk.
- 2 Looking back at it- I think there's something that happens and I noticed like a physical change in myself. I think my testosterone level dropped at one point where I was more cautious... I don't know...
- 3 I think looking back on it I probably shouldn't have sold the motorbike... I think part of the reason that my partner fell in love with me and wanted to have a child and raise this family was because I was a certain way. Because I was this strong masculine figure and then when my child came along that kinda shifted for me. Where it was kinda more cautious and... I don't know, there is a part of me that wonders if that would have played out differently...
- 4 ... I'm expected to have that sensitivity, that masculine and feminine, where I'm asked to be more in touch and in tune and then at the same time that strong closed off... I don't think I was able to balance that properly...

Chapter 6: The trade-off of time with my child or providing wasn't fair

- 1 ...by working more I was providing more, and I felt that was my responsibility and

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I felt I was living up to that responsibly. I was highly productive. I was really motivated. I was really excited to have a family and a loving partner and a child and that was what important to me.

2 ...looking back the masculinity played a huge role. I saw myself as the provider and it was my responsibility to sacrifice my time with my daughter and with my partner to be able to go out and essentially, it's a hunter-gatherer thing. I went out and I worked so that my family would have food and roof over their head and be provided for and with the necessities that come with having a child and being able to pay for vehicle repairs on two vehicles and for the materials for the chariot, the bike attachments, the backpacks, the cool clothes, any sort of furnishings for the child, for all the groceries, all the utilities, the expenses for our home... I shouldered... as the man it was my job to carry the financial load so that Mom could be a mother and nurture and have nurturing time.

3 In essence I did feel like it was my cross to bear but I was missing out on time with daughter and my partner...It was a horrible choice to make. At the same time my partner wanted to spend more time with my child, and I felt it was more important that Mom spend more time because that is their maternal instinct and I'm the provider.

4 Looking back, I don't feel that that was fair. Like I felt a big loss because I wanted to spend time. I wanted to be there. I wanted to spend time nurturing that new relationship with my daughter and I felt that our society structures it so that my emotional needs to be with my child don't fucking count. Mothers get maternity leave. Where's my fucking maternity leave. I want to spend time with this child and this child needs me.

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- 5 She's asking to spend time with me as much as her Mom. She doesn't see me as a financial provider and Mom as the nurturer. She saw both of us as being really important to her and there was a part of me that recognized that it was hard on her seeing her father being gone for three nights- four nights a week and that tore me up. They don't talk about that...
- 6 ...I think that we could have got by with less. Like maybe it wasn't necessary that I went away for work. Just looking back on it and wondering maybe if we could have gotten by with less.
- 7 ...Men have zero roadmap to that- I still haven't seen it and even just talking about it I'm starting understand a little bit more about maybe what happened and that is my sex drive; we stopped having sex; the sex drive dropped off and we weren't really involved as a masculine-feminine with each other with my partner and when that dropped off it just led to a whole host of problems.

Chapter 7: It's a certain kind of love that you don't get to experience without having your own child

- 1 [After the birth of my child] there were very big changes in my emotions. I noticed that I just felt a real love.
- 2 My brother had three children at the time and I always thought he was crazy for having so many children but I think that, and I've always kind of questioned why people have so many children, and their lives seem so chaotic but having my own child the light switch was flipped and I understand now something that I never could have understood without having my own child...

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- 3 ...it's a certain kind of love that you don't get to experience without having your own child... [It's] a tall order to describe that kind of love because again even having siblings describe it to me it's like a secret. It's like a secret club. It's a secret emotion that you can't taste or you can't access it unless you have created another human being and you feel that sense of purpose and wellbeing and connectedness and awe. I can't imagine how to put it into words.
- 4 I imagine some people might experience it from the sense of anytime you create like maybe if you create a garden and you have love for the fruition of your garden or maybe an artist that creates a beautiful piece of work that you are proud of. It has taken a lifetime.
- 5 But it still has its own unique feeling because it comes from deep within your soul... I wish I had the vocabulary to describe it. It's an unconditional love and it's knowing that you finally have purpose for being on this earth and that is to raise a human being in the best way possible...

Chapter 8: I think my drive to provide came from my father's drive to provide

- 1 I spent a lot of time sitting with where that drive came from and where my decisions were coming from. I looked back at my father and my great grandfather and I saw that they did the exact same thing as me. They were just really focussed on being providers and working and I remembered my childhood that I didn't want my Dad to go to work but the most important thing to me as a child wasn't what I was having for dinner, what kind of bike I got or how many Easter candies or presents I got. I just wanted time.

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Freddy***Chapter 1: In that split second you just go all in***

- 01 It's an interesting one. So to be totally up front we didn't plan ahead really. Our daughter was never planned... Like we talked about kids but I don't think anyone is ever ready for it. So when it happened we were like "okay."
- 02 I was out running and went on this giant three and a half hour run and right before it my partner and I had this conversation about how, "ahh my boobs really hurt" and I'm like, "maybe you're pregnant? See you. I'm going for a run." Then I came back and she was holding a pregnancy thing and was like "we're pregnant" and I was like "oh shit. Okay!" So, in some ways I think for me it was kinda like a shock to the system but it's not like it was a total deal breaker. It was like "okay cool" ... Totally left field...
- 03 ...I've always thought there are two ways to approach things: You can freak out or you can just do it. I think the whole idea of responsibility and what this means and even though people have been going through it for millennia and millions of years or two hundred and fifty thousand or however you want to look at it, like you just don't know what to expect and this is kinda nerve wracking. There is a lot of mystery to it and even though you see people around you and your friends have gone through it and the whole thing you don't know how it's going to play out for your particular self.
- 04 So initially I was like holy shit! Okay. I don't really know what to think. I was like oh man life is going to change so much. In that split second though you just go all in. Like okay. This is happening. We are doing it! Now it is like how to be the best father I can in my own head. I'm like how can I be available, be around, and be more involved.

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- 05 To be honest, I think you're under the impression that like social life was going to disappear for the next year. Like you won't be socializing... like even though I had people around me that had kids, you aren't doing it yourself so you don't know anything... So you construct this reality in your head like socializing is over, my active hours are cut down, I have to make sure I'm around now...
- 06 I don't know how to care for a kid. I'm like oh my god it is going to be crazy. This is super overwhelming. This is insane and at the same time you are excited even though you are totally nerve wracked and anxious about the whole thing because everything is shrouded in mystery.

Chapter 2: You have nine months to figure it out

- 1 Then for me it was one of those things that I think nature has figured it out better than we have. Like you find out you are pregnant and you have nine months to figure it out. Nine months to make those macro-changes to make it more conducive to having a family and you have nine months to adjust to everything and come to grips with how it's going to roll in the future. It's like nature has a funny way of doing that. It gives you steps. It's not like you are pregnant and the baby is here in a week...
- 2 ... [My partner and I] have an amazing relationship so we are very in-tune with each other. So my initial thing was to make sure that she is okay and to make sure that she is as comfortable as she can be even though we were kinda in this crazy situation where like I still have to travel and still go places and she was still working and it was a bit of a crazy time but yeah... I mean in terms of everything... not too much changed and it hasn't felt like that because everything happened incrementally so I felt like even at first I was very

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anxious about it and I was trying to get as much socializing in as possible and group socializing because I felt like that was going to change and exercise and everything else but ultimately my partner and I were doing everything together.

3 I guess it was more normal than I expected. Like 100%. I mean you build up these expectations in your head of what it will be like but until you actually experience them you have no idea... you've built up something in your head to be huge and then actually go through the process of it and it's not that bad at all...

4 [However]...almost instantaneously this very broad sweeping sense of responsibility. It was a very refreshing thing because I think up until that point we are all kind of living our own lives for our significant other and ourselves to a certain degree. I'm not saying we are all narcissistic or self-centered but to a degree until you have something that you have to like- there is no way around it- it really upends your life and it's no longer about you and it's about the collective. The "we."

5 Or it's about that little person who you are about to have in your life for the rest of your life kind of thing. It is a really incredible perspective shift- I mean it hit more after the birth than it did beforehand but it definitely was creeping in on the front end as we were approaching delivery...

6 ... you have this low creep of yes this is actually happening. You have this conscious change of like, okay, I need to make sure that things are good to bring this person into the world... and that you are mentally ready. Make sure your partner is mentally ready. We were just grooving basically and making sure that everything is taken care of.

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- 7 I think it takes a pretty big... it takes something that is unavoidable to feel that because to do that on your own sometimes doesn't happen because you are not looking that way... For me it was super positive.
- 8 I'm kind of always actively seeking change or seeking the next thing or trying to find solutions to problems or find myself new challenges and I didn't look at my pregnancy as one of those but it was definitely this point where it was- you can look at it two ways: you can choose to accept everything coming your way or you can hide from it. For me it was this pretty positive mental shift and I could feel it gradually happening. Your purpose is not purpose of self- it's purpose of family which is pretty cool.

Chapter 3: No one is ever prepared for the experience of birth

- 01 For us beforehand we talked to some people and they recommended prenatal classes and I'm so happy I talked to them. If I was going in there totally unrehearsed I'd have been freaking out more. I'd have been like what is this? Is this bad? Is this good? So many questions. Because we did the prenatal classes they kind of give you- like no one is ever prepared for that experience because it is so visceral and so in-your-face and so raw and one of the craziest experiences of all time. So you can't be totally prepared for it but it felt good going in knowing a few things.
- 02 It's funny like...when her water broke... it broke when she was out hiking. She was on top of a mountain when her water broke. She was like toughing it out but she was having contractions on the way down and so I had to rip down the trail and book it up this mountain and help her down and carry her off. She has a crazy high pain threshold but she was almost ready to go when we got there.

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- 03 So we get [to the hospital] and the doctors like “oh I’m sure you have a little longer and we’ll probably send you home” and she was like 8-10 mm dilated and he was like “Oh! You have got to go.” So we were just in it.
- 04 That’s kind of been our life. Like our life is very spontaneous and there is not a whole lot of routine to it. I mean, there is routine now but up till that point... as things happen we kind of just roll with it.
- 05 So the birthing process was wild. It kind of just fell into a rhythm after a while. We looked at each other and we were like, “alright, let’s do this!” She is doing her thing and you are there. You are just there to let them know you are there.
- 06 Like it felt like I was in a boxing match and that’s how I’d explain it. You are like okay you get your first set of contractions and then it eases off and then you get the next- round two and round three and you are just over there... She’s like Rocky and you’re that little guy like “you got this Rock!” and patting her head with ice water so she can do her thing”
...
- 07 It was insane to watch... like you’ve always known that she was like a super strong person and she took no medication at all. Like nothing. Like she told them she really wanted to have as natural a birth as possible like no medication. She said she wanted to go through it all so I know what I’ve been through for our child. I was like, “Fuck! You are so hard.”
It’s insane.
- 08 ...that’s the mentality you carry to try and help her through in any way I could and a lot of that was just being there which was pretty wild and making sure that she was okay and doing the ice bath and all that stuff...

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09 ...then they come out and it's just overwhelming. Like holy hell this is incredible. Like life is the most fucked up thing and it's crazy. It's awesome.

10 At the same time my partner had this thing where she was bleeding a little bit and so when my daughter was born she was out but my attention was making sure my partner was okay. I didn't even ask if it was a boy or a girl. I was just like checking to make sure my partner was alright. Once I knew she was, I was like okay, holy we have this little child. Initially because there were slight complications and my attention was totally diverted.

11 When that was okay they were like don't you want to know... and I'm like oh yeah, right, tell me cause now you have my full undivided attention because things had calmed down.

12 Yeah. It's pretty blissful but it's also just like an overwhelming sense of responsibility.

13 Like this very hard, okay, now you are a Dad. Like now you are official. You are responsible for someone else's wellbeing and they are more or less totally dependent on yourself and one other person and that's it.

Chapter 4: Holy fuck! What are we doing?

1 ...I remember they are like okay you guys are good to go home and here's your two nappies and hit the road. We were like "Holy Fuck! What are we doing? We don't know what we are doing." I've talked to a lot of parents and they have that like wait you can send me home with her? Like Jesus! I don't know- we don't know what we are doing good God! That is a pretty mind melting experience...

2 ...because of my job I just told my sponsors like hey guys we are having a kid and they were like take as much time as you need. I've been riding for these people for over ten years so they are good friends. So I took four months off. Like I rode to get exercise but

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nothing for work for four months. I was just around. We went for walks. It was just Dad.

Like come to grips with being a Dad. We kind of planned for that. So there wouldn't be any pre-emptive like having to get back right into something because that would have made the transition harder...

3 ... I think the more time you can spend initially you grow that bond and it's stronger ... I feel like if I wasn't exposed to so much at the beginning that it would take a much longer time to adjust to being a Dad and understanding that she's little and they are very fragile but super resilient.

4 To experience that is like anything. You don't know anything till you experience it. Like you can read about it in books but until you experience it, you are never truly in it. It was just good to be on hand and be able to navigate that kind of just coming to grips with the new reality. Like coming to grips with the new frequency of things...

5 ...We've always build our lives around things we really want to be doing. Those kind of [societally gendered] constructs like never really crept in but yeah when it comes to there are certain things that mean a lot to me in a sense. Like I need to have an outlet for my creative aspects of my life or I'm a grumpy bastard and my partner wanted to be a Mom. Like she wanted to be able to give all the attention that she can and the fact that I can provide that situation for our family is pretty sweet.

6 As we go deeper and deeper into it... there [are] times where I feel like I need to earn...how do I put that?...

7 ... there's times where I feel bad for my partner but it's not my partner feeling bad for herself. It's me feeling like I should feel bad for them because maybe she is not getting

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these things she wants but she assures me she gets to do the things she wants to do. Like I feel like I'm maybe doing more outside the home or for my own kinda goals in the world right now. But I don't know, our perspective on those things are sometimes a little different... she has really given most of herself and I feel crazy fortunate so she's made it super easy in a lot of ways because she wants to do so much of that stuff and just be a mom.

Chapter 5: It was much more wanting to be around

- 1 ... [Getting back to work] felt good, it was just different because you don't necessarily want to leave. Before you would get excited about going on trips but now it was like someone calls you or you plan a trip or a project and you can't just takeoff. There is definitely a reluctance to go away. Like I didn't really want to leave Canada or be gone for too long.
- 2 It was just different... the things that used to be exciting are lesser value now. There is not this mega drive in some areas. There is still a drive to be creative and do these things but there is not the need to make it happen because the perspective shift and priority shift.
- 3 It was like, yeah we could do that but let's cut it down a couple days. I would kinda fast track things. It was much more wanting to be around...
- 4 ...for me in terms of that, it's kinda like even from like a career standpoint I'd been thinking about doing other things and it just motivated me to go out and do those other things. The motivation was a shift... to realizing the value of life and why would I just sit in something because it is comfortable. So I started taking not really chances but I was like okay screw it; it was a sense that it kinda lit the fire under my ass to go and do the things

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that I had been thinking about for a long time... Things are finite and so why am I instead of doing something for me I mean I'd always build these plans around doing things that would help the whole industry or company to better everybody's situation.

5 so when my child came around it motivated me to be like okay this kinda stuff feels good, it's for the right reasons, like just go and do it rather than just keep pumping my own brand. Like who gives a shit? It was a good perspective shift. Looking much more or activating these like feelings and under rumblings I've had around helping the collective whole rather than just try and further my stature for my career...

6 ...like 100% I don't travel so much and I'm very selective of what I choose to take on. It is things that take me away from being at home or being a Dad. They have got to mean a lot and be for the right reasons. Early in my career it was very much take everything that came your way. That was the nature of it. It was grab and go. Now, you are very aware that it is taking time away from you being at home with your family...

7 ...I had a younger friend... he was quite a bit younger and I remember him having a moment where he thought he might have gotten someone pregnant and he was like "Ahh man. I have to give it up." Cause he was trying to make a ski career at that point and he was like "I have to give it up because I would rather give it up than be a shitty Dad" and that was a very mature thing to come from someone who was like 23. I guess I never had to make that choice but having a kid does change the stuff you take on for sure.

Chapter 6: You are definitely more aware of the things that could go wrong

1 Yeah [risk awareness] is definitely part of it. It's part of that shift. I remember when they had her and they were cleaning her off and I was like "Whoa- ease it up a bit" but I knew

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the nurses had been doing this for a while so they know. But when they actually have your freshly born child and cleaning them off and they seem like they are being rough and your perspective of rough in the moment is totally diluted because holy hell everything is super fresh- like "whoa be careful!"

2 And I remember yeah there is that protector but there is also you realize how fragile everything is... Your world doesn't become a scarier place but you are definitely more aware of it and the things that could go wrong...

3 ... [coming home from the hospital] it is nice to get back in your own house; in your safe place because you are much more conscious of your safe zones and things you can control. It was really nice to get back to the house.

4 For the first long while if we were somewhere and she was unhappy it cut straight to the heart. Like we have got to change the situation here or take her home. Just hyper conscious of everything... I thought I'd be a little more not nonchalant... but it took me a while to fall into that.

5 ... [In general], I've been very conscious of risk for a while because of some of the exposure I have put myself through. It comes back to that sense of responsibility. Like if you die in an avalanche doing something that is obviously extremely exposed then in my mind I know that people need that risk; like they are geared that way. They need that outlet. That's what makes them tick.

6 I guess like now I will not take unneeded risk. For me it's like I can't talk about other people but I did used to do [a really dangerous extreme sporting event] but I never enjoyed it. Not once. I hated it every time. I was like Fuck this. I was only there because

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my sponsors wanted me to be there. I think the first year I wanted to be there but every year after that I didn't. It just wasn't me. There were other things I could be doing and making much more of an impact than hucking myself off that cliff and potentially breaking myself. Those years of doing [that] woke me up to that...

7 ...So yeah, I have been trying before and now a little more, so I was trying to mitigate risk as much as possible. Still putting myself in what people would view as harm's way but for the most part trying to negotiate as much as possible because I was pretty conscious of it as you would be after you have taken enough hits to the head or spills and lost enough blood.

8 But yeah- when it comes to being a Dad... since I view what I do now as a very, like some people would say it is risky, but from what I'm used to being exposed to it is just a fraction of what it was so I feel much more comfortable with it and don't feel I'm putting myself at any added danger...

9 Like right before she was born I was in New Zealand for six weeks and it was pretty long and crazy big film shoot. One of the places we went to exploded last year and killed everybody on it. Like 18 people and burned a bunch of people and we spent like three days on it and we were the only people to be on the island for more than 24 hours and we spent three days on it. Like you look back on those sort of things and it seems very silly... like extremely silly. I remember even at the time it seemed in the proper realm of risk and felt stable. I have a lot of things I now look back on as a Dad and think it was dumb.

Chapter 7: Some people put too much emphasis on being a good man

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- 1 I look at being a man a bit like being an athlete. Part of that is like... if you're going to be an athlete you could be only that one thing. You can become that thing and that's it because it just takes everything to get there. But ultimately if you just do that one thing you are going to get left behind. To make it last you have to embrace the evolution and are constantly setting goals and being a beginner and being not very good at things but moving forward and constantly learning and gaining. That just transforms your lifestyle.
- 2 You are trying to be the best you can be and putting in the work to make sure you are not just sitting back. You are actively pursuing how to be better. If you have an argument with your wife or girlfriend and it's not like one of you is wrong but maybe there is something I missed and you have to peel back the layers. I think if anything, I feel like being a man, or your sense of masculinity, I think the closer you get to just being a good human than masculine or not I still want to be that.
- 3 That stuff just comes naturally. That doesn't define anything. For some people I think they put too much emphasis on it like trying to be a man but forgetting to be a good person...
- 4 ...my juvenile perception of being a man was being capable in the outdoors and that was everything from rock-climbing to whatever. There was a thing where if the zombie apocalypse hits and you can survive in the outdoors then you are man. It was someone physical. Someone who is self-reliant and someone who can be depended upon. For me that, like someone you know has your back, it could even be...I'd say reliable. That mixed with like the mountain man thing... that was my initial perception of what it meant to be a man.

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- 5 Then as you start like having girlfriends you also start to realize that a massive part of being a man is also being a human and compromise is huge part of it. Like looking at what is valuable and what means something to someone else. Understanding the emotions of someone else and how much they value certain things. Like seeing that and being able to compromise in your own self to accommodate other person's needs is like a huge part of being human and you know people and the social peer thing and
- 6 I think emotions are always looked at as a negative when it comes to being a quote unquote man, but if you are emotionally conscious and you understand what is going on to where you can read a situation much better than you can if you are looking at it from this one aspect of like emotion is weakness...and in fatherhood I think it was just amplified. Like you realize you are now an example for this little person that is in your life and so you are trying to be the best self that you can be and provide the best environment. So maybe they can express the feelings or whatever that I didn't or just be better and just give them a good life.
- 7 It really came down to working on being present and making sure that the quote unquote energy in our house is positive and luckily because we have such a good relationship the atmosphere in our house is extremely positive. Don't get me wrong we are like every other couple and have tiffs and stuff. Just being very conscious of our child's emotions and making sure that she is happy."

Chapter 8: Being a parent is the best

- 1 ... I feel there is a whole lot of negativity around being parents and I don't understand why. I don't know if it people who are unhappy in what they are doing are projecting. It

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got to a point where so many people that you run into made a point of telling you how shitty it is going to be. I talked to like ten people on the strip and eight of them told me it was going to be shitty. So I'm like okay was it really bad for you? That's your experience but we were of the head space where we just start telling people that we don't really feel that way but we are just waiting to see how it goes. That's all we can do. We ended up like if the conversation was going that way it was like "man sounds like you had it tough...I dunno" you find these walk arounds because we don't want to hear it. We just don't need to hear that. It's not supportive. It's not positive. Everything will be what it will be and we can't control that... Yeah it was negative...like we didn't know where it was coming from. You are happy parents and you are talking about how shitty it's going to be. It totally seemed very like a talking oxymoron. It's like the cultural script.

2 We have been open when people ask us- it is the best!

3 I had this conversation with a friend and I was like dude it is the best and he was like man you are one of the few people to say that. I was like dude it is fucking awesome. It is so sweet. Life doesn't change as much as you think it's going to change. He was like awe man that is refreshing to hear.

Chapter 9: We are a collection of our experiences

01 I mean part of it was childhood man. We are products of our environment and our experience. We are like a collection of our own experience. I mean I look at stuff like even canoe trips with my Dad and my brother and my sister and just thinking those were pretty blissfully badass times. They were sweet. Like this is it and I want to be like this and that is the Dad I want to be. Those are like the moments I really look forward, or like aspire

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towards, like when I think about the Dad I want to be. Like doing badass things and just creating those memories for them.

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Neil

Chapter 1: Everything just kind of fell into place

- 01 We'd started talking about it and probably three years or so before we actually had a baby and we were very prepared for it. Both of us really wanted it to happen and it happened really quickly and we were just super happy about it.
- 02 It felt like it was just like it was supposed to be. Everything just kinda fell into place.
- 03 It happened quick and easy and it was good. I know I was really happy and that's all I can really say about hearing about it. I was ready for it and happy for it.

Chapter 2: Pregnancy was really tough

- 1 [Pregnancy] was tough. It was really tough.
- 2 So... my partner had an extra lobe on her placenta and that lobe meant that pretty much at any time at a certain point in the pregnancy that it could come off and that's where nutrients and food go into the baby. We had to go into ultrasounds every second week. We must have done like 16 ultrasounds by the time it was done. It was a lot. So that was kinda tough and that's where I had to kinda call on that aid in my own emotions and trying to stay strong for my partner through all that stuff. It was hard...
- 3 ...They did a really good job, the Dr.'s and the midwives, of telling us right away that it could be a problem. To be prepared that it could be a problem but at the same time maybe it wouldn't be a problem... [and] we were almost at the midpoint where they told us you are home free and you are going to have the baby here. You are good to go. We were like a week away from that point. We knew we could maybe have to go but I think we were starting to shift into thinking everything is going to be okay and we are going to

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be here. Then it changed... [all of a sudden we had to rush off to Victoria because of complications].

- 4 ... It was difficult... We were told that we were going to be set up with a certain doctor and just had to call them when we got there and they would get us in. That didn't happen... we got into a different doctor the next day. So we go to the next doctor and my partner is freaking out. She is scared and I'm just trying to keep it all in. Telling her it's going to be okay. Telling her we were there in the best place we could be. All that stuff you would do to support your partner.
- 5 So I go to the doctor and there are kids everywhere and it kinda seems like a really busy office. I'm trying not to be judgemental but everyone is at that poverty line. I was like where are we? After having one-on-one sessions here with our midwife it was a complete 180. Then we get in with the doctor and I guess she is a nurse practitioner who specializes in the baby science... and she is super-fast talking and at one point my partner just breaks down crying. Then she finally slowed to down to make sure my partner was okay.
- 6 Anyways it ended up being really good and then we were in a strange hospital pretty much every second day getting tests and stuff done. There was some hiccups there. We ran into this one OB that was supposed to give us the plan... This guy comes in and he is a short stocky guy and he had this golf shirt on and the neck is all stretched out, he looks sloppy, he has these loafers on and there is blood all over one of the toes and he sits down and he is like "Oh hi... how is it going" and we are like "ahhh- good?" and he goes "Sometimes babies are just born small so we are just going to see what happens" and we are just like "ahhhh- we've been told you might induce in a couple days and that doesn't

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sound right” so I don’t know if this guy even looked at the chart but he finally did and made some more appointments for us. My partner was ready to kill the guy and I was trying to give him the benefit of the doubt that he is actually a doctor.

7 All that stuff was a huge stress and scary because we are in a new place. The only comforting thing was that we were able to stay with my Dad and my stepmom down there so we had a nice comfortable home to live in. If we didn’t have that it would have been a completely different story with all that was going on...

8 ...to be honest there almost came to a point where there was no managing my emotions. I was just suppressing my emotions as much as I could and making sure that my partner was comfortable and in a positive train of thought... I had to be emotionally strong for her but there was a time during that where I could feel it eating away at me. It was getting to me so I had to take some steps to make sure that I was expressing it and I wasn’t allowing it to bottle up and become a negative thing...

9 ...I went to a therapy session- like counselling or whatever. It was my first time ever. I did two sessions and by the time I was done I felt pretty good about where things were and was able to talk a few things out and it worked really nicely...

10 ... [Going to therapy] was interesting for me. Obviously working with high risk youth and stuff it was something that you advocate for and even just working as a hockey coach and stuff it is something that comes up in life. I think a lot of people don’t think they are ever going to need it or there is nothing actually wrong with them. So I kind of adopted the approach of there is a bit of a cry in society for that kind of thing to become more normal. I kind of approached it as that. I have these feelings and can feel them bubbling a bit and

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maybe I should talk about them. Also I can do it and then become an advocate and say that I did it.

- 11 After the first session I felt super guilty. It was so weird because I knew I was doing the right thing and everything went pretty good but it didn't feel normal and I felt really guilty. It was really strange... I don't know if it was that I didn't expand on things as much as I should have? The fact that I was there and I wasn't sure if I really needed to be there kind of thing.
- 12 After the second session I felt great. Like there was no hesitation I went back for the second one. We continued on where we left off after the first one and I felt amazing afterwards. I felt really good and it really helped me get through the pregnancy.

Chapter 3: The birth was very emotional

- 1 The birth was hard too. Before the birth we went in for one of our appointments, or ultrasound and stress test, and we were close, it was 37 or 38 weeks and it was getting real close but the placenta had stopped or had just started slowing down. So we went in for our regularly scheduled checkup and we thought we were home free and were going to get to 40 weeks or whatever it was and maybe it would be a natural birth and everything would be good. But nope.
- 2 We get the ultrasound and they put us in the room and okay we are going to send you upstairs and we are going to induce labor tonight. So that was okay and we were ready to go and my partner was hoping for a natural birth but we were okay with whatever is going to happen.

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- 3 So she goes upstairs, I go up with her, they decide they are not going to induce at night and I can't stay at the hospital so she stays. I had to go back. That sucked. She was in the best place possible so I was totally comfortable with her being there and that was good. It was hard being apart because we had been together every single day for the past six weeks while we were there. Then just yeah it was tough being apart at that stage but it was just a night and I think they gave her some kind of sleep medications so she slept well. So that was okay and then I went back in the morning and we were just kinda waiting and waiting and waiting and finally they induced at like seven o'clock.
- 4 Then it's just kind of a crazy haze of she's in a lot of pain. I don't know what to do to make the pain better and I feel bad for her. So the birth started basically at seven o'clock, or I think it was actually five o'clock, and then he wasn't born till seven but she tried to do it natural and she didn't want pain medication. Then just sitting there like trying to support her but at the same time just take the pain away. Just go right for the epidural in my head and just hoping she does it. She's saying she's going to try to get through it and in so much pain. Finally, she decides to take the epidural and inside I am celebrating a victory.
- 5 So then she is trying to do the natural thing and he got stuck in there and it wasn't going to happen. They tried moving him around, flipping him and doing everything they could. So she had to go for the c-section.
- 6 That was another place in time where we had to be separated because they had to get her ready for the surgery and stuff so that was tough. Again it was only like fifteen minutes but felt like forever.

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- 7 Just waiting for her to be ready and they brought her into the room with her and it was the classic surgery room that you see on TV and I had never really been in one myself. There is this big blanket with just her head sticking out so she can't see anything and they are like you are welcome to watch if you want and I was like there is no way I am watching that. I'm just going to sit here by her head and just be with her.
- 8 So they started their thing and they are talking and they are surprisingly casual for what's going on. But that's okay. They are professionals and we were in a really good hospital for that sort of thing...
- 9 ...we are just over ten months past it now but it feels like so long ago. If we had this conversation closer to ten months ago I probably wouldn't be able to keep myself together. It was super emotional. Yeah it was traumatic... it was scary and potentially traumatic but at the same time it just kinda was what it was and we had people there that did a good job of making us feel comfortable with the decisions.
- 10 So my partner is there. It's just her head and I'm sitting there and they are like okay we are going to get [them] out of here... So the table just starts shaking like you can tell... it looks like someone grabbed her legs and were just trying to pull them off. It startled me with how much force was going on just on the other side of that sheet. It didn't last that long. It felt like a long time because it was kind of shocking.
- 11 Then they got him out and babies don't cry, or at least he didn't cry, right away and I didn't want to look over the sheet and I'm like come on...come on... and then all of a sudden you hear him cry and it is good. We were both happy. Then they were like you can look at the gender. So I look over and I see him there and he is just like pure white and

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covered in gunk and stuff and I see it is a boy and at that point I just couldn't keep my emotions in anymore.

12 Everything just exploded... It felt like hours but it took me about three minutes before I could tell my partner what the gender was because I was just like a flood of emotions... It was this healthy baby and just the fact that he was out of there and everything that we had gone through was I guess over and kinda the end to all that process and everything... Yeah it was just a crazy emotional thing and I don't think I have ever been through anything close to that before.

13 Then after that they had to sew my partner up and get her good to go. So I had to leave again but they brought my son out for me so I was able to hold him while we waited for her. In the end, everything we went through, it was an amazing experience. It was just crazy.

Chapter 4: It was nice to have that time in the hospital to recover

1 So- he was kinda small, he wasn't like a premature baby but he was kinda small, and they wanted to keep us in the hospital just to monitor him and make sure that he gained weight and everything because I guess they come out at a certain weight and they lose weight and then they put it back on. So they wanted to make sure he put the weight on. So we stayed in the hospital for a week. It was good. It was actually really good because we had all the support we needed with the nurses for any questions we had and it really gave both my partner and I both a chance to release a lot of emotion from all of the stuff we had been through.

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- 2 From there it's like when we got into our room with him we probably cried like every hour. Just looking at him and like crying. It was a really good emotional release for us and I think in a way a debrief just being in there together and figuring out how to change diapers and all of that stuff... I think it would have been really hard if we had left right away and just being new parents and even just that emotional piece of just being able to like come down from that high. It was probably like three days or so before we were even close to level again...

Chapter 5: Right from the start parenting felt more normal than I expected

- 1 ...It was good being able to get into parenting. My role wasn't super important as far as caregiving or taking care of the baby. The mother is the one the baby relies on. So my focus was just to support my partner in what she needed as much as I could. So, just keeping things clean around the house and trying to do meals and stuff like that. We also had her mom here for a while and we had my mom here for a while and so my role was limited at the beginning... I kinda expected that. I talked to enough fathers to understand that there is a good chance that I won't be really needed or wanted... It was kinda hard to not be like right in there and not be important. It was kinda hard, but like I said, I was also prepared for it.
- 2 We tried to bottle feed so we tried like I would get up in the early morning before I went to work to bottle feed and it really didn't last long. It wasn't because I didn't want to do it. It was just the fluctuating times and I still had to go to work and then my partner just took it over and just wouldn't wake me up and I would be like you've got to wake me up to do it and she would be like 'no you have to go to work.' So that didn't last very long.

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I think that kinda bummed me out a little bit because I really enjoyed that time in the morning and felt like I was doing something to help out. So I think what was hard was not being able to be completely hands on to help through the early process...

3 ...It's kinda been a surprise to me that it doesn't feel like things have changed, like obviously they have changed but I guess to reword it, I guess it is a surprise that it feels so normal. I expected it to be more dramatic. I expected to feel like life has changed a whole bunch and things are crazy but I really feel like everything is normal and like this is how it's supposed to be...

4 ...I think what fulfilled me in that father role was just supporting my partner as much as I could. I guess that is not a direct father role with the baby but just making sure she had what she needed. I know that even now my role is developing more and I am able to be more hands on and do more things and be more involved so I knew through that early stage that my time would come and I just needed to support the mother and make sure that she was happy and healthy and getting what she needs because she is giving everything she has to taking care of the baby...

5 ...I don't think my life has really changed a ton. I probably take on more of the household day-to-day stuff than I used to. That is probably a good thing and that is not a bad thing at all. Again, that just came from the early stages where I was trying to help my partner out as much as I could and that has just carried over. Before the baby if there is a sink full of dishes maybe I would leave them till tomorrow or for my partner by now I'll just do them. That's kinda my role now is to make sure I'm helping out more with the household chores... she is still doing so much and still doing so much to take care of the baby... but I

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can make sure the kitchen is clean so that when she wants to make dinner it is ready to go. That kind of thing.

Chapter 6: I need to stay healthy for them

- 01 Now I'm worried about being healthy and being around. I've always thought about being healthy and living for a long time and all that stuff but now it's more. Like I need to make sure that my back is strong as I've had some back issues and it's really important to make sure that my back is strong so that I can play with my kids. Things like that I never would have thought about before...
- 02 ...I don't think that [my sense of risk] changed a ton other than just a need to make sure that I'm healthy... I mean an example is like I have my motorcycle right and everyone knows it's dangerous to ride a motorcycle but I don't want to change who I am completely because I don't want to rob my kids of the person I am... I want to be myself and continue to be who I am so that they can get that experience and know me for who I am so they can feel okay being who they are.
- 03 I can't just like lock all the doors and stay inside all day and say I have got to be safe... I take some precautions that I wouldn't usually take but at the same time make sure that I'm not changing too much... I don't want to eliminate risk because I think that it gives me a bit of an edge and gives me the stuff to make me happy and so I think I need a little bit of risk but I don't want to be too careless...
- 04 ...Then financially I think I have always been fairly good with money but I think now thinking of his future and the family's future I think that my brain is really like clamping

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down on how do we maximize our finances so that in the future we can provide a good experience for our family...

05 ...I guess there's just all the new things that happen that are scary right. Like, the first time he falls and hits his head it's like "Oh my God he hit his head!" Then he hits his head like five times a day. Like I want you to stop hitting your head but obviously it's part of the process so like those kinds of things I guess. Like they kinda stick out... I guess those are the things you don't really think about. I guess you know babies hit their heads but when it is your own and he stands up for the first time and then like straight leg falls back and it's just those things you don't think about that happen. Then they become normal... to a certain degree anyway.

06 Like at first they feel so fragile and it takes a while to realize they will make it. They have a bit of resilience.

Chapter 7: I was surprised at how emotional being a father made me

01 ...I was surprised at how emotional [becoming a father] made me. There was one time where [my partner] slipped and fell. It was early on in the pregnancy. It wasn't a bad fall or anything. She just fell on her butt and she went into the hospital to get checked out. She gave me a call and she was really upset and told me what happened and so I was like okay I'll leave work right away and be right there. I think that was the first time where the emotion just kinda hit me really hard. I had to tell myself, "okay, I've gotta do those on my own." I've got to do this emotional piece on my own and then when I get there, I have to be strong and make sure that she is comfortable and I'm listening to the doctor and

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picking out the positive pieces and being strong emotionally and being there to support her in that fashion.

02 So the emotion, that hit me. That kinda surprised me... I think it was fear- like maybe anxiety but I didn't really dissect it at the time. I was more trying to get through it so I could put it deep inside me I guess and put on that face for her but it was probably fear I would think. Fear for her... fear for the baby.

03 ...I mean maybe it was a change or maybe I had just never been through anything like that before. I guess it's a change being a father and that is a change. So my whole world was changed I guess and my emotional awareness probably changed too.

Chapter 8: Being a man means sometimes holding in your emotions for others

01 To be honest most of [my thoughts about fathering] was about how to be a man in today's world and then how to hand those kind of qualities down or teach those qualities.

02 We are kind of in a weird time sometimes where people aren't super happy with masculinity and that kind of traditional thing so that was kind of something that I thought about. Like how do I be a man but also not portray those traditional kind of traits that are looked down upon today...

03 ...In the traditional sense man is a protector and not just to family but of the community and people around them. With that comes things like aggression and anger. On the other side of it you have to also be approachable and emotional but emotions are kind of looked down on by a lot of men. Through fatherhood I've learned that traditional thing where men hold emotions in that is something that I have had to rely on in certain stages

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just to be strong for the family but you have to know how to communicate that and how to debrief it at the end and stuff.

- 04 That's kind of mixing how I see men should be and how men are viewed or whatever... like we talked about that emotional balance and I'm sure that's going to come into play as I go down the road as a father. There is going to be times where I need to keep it in and there are going to be times where I need to show it. Being able to be an example of that balance of masculinity and being tough and of being sensitive. I feel like it's still kinda up in the air. I think that is going to get explored as we go down the road.
- 05 A part of me is maybe trying to do more traditional masculine stuff and like do more things hands on like fix cars, build things and do stuff like that so that I can be an example. At the same time, I already was like that so I don't know if that has more of an influence now being a father or not. It's hard to say what has changed because it all feels normal still.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Summary

The aim of this research was to contribute to a more profound understanding of masculinity in men's transition to fatherhood. This aim was influenced by various lineages of academic work including research on men's transitions to fatherhoods (Doucet, 2009; Eerola, 2015; Fagerskiold, 2008; Finn & Henwood, 2009; Ives, 2014; Miller, 2011), life transitions (Meleis et al., 2000; Schlossberg, 2011), fatherhood (Lamb, 2000; Pleck, 1987), and hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2016). Using an interpretive narrative design influenced by the works of Riessman (1993; 2005; 2008), Bruner (1991), Mischler, (1997) and Polkinghorne (1995; 2007), I interviewed seven first time fathers and co-created narratives that answered my research question of "What are men's narratives of masculinity in their transition to fatherhood?" This research question contains two elements that were central in each narrative generated:

1. What are men's narratives of their transition to fatherhood?
2. What are men's experiences of masculinity in the transition to fatherhood?

My interpretations echo and expand on previous findings on masculinity in the transition to fatherhood and provide new contributions to what was previously known. I begin this chapter by discussing the interpretations from this this research in the context of previous research on hegemonic fatherhoods and masculinities. This will include noting where my interpretations align with what was previously known and how the narratives generated in the current research add or expand on previous findings. I then discuss the unique interpretations made from the narratives that represent novel knowledge about masculinity in men's transition to fatherhood not previously discussed in the literature. I will conclude the chapter by

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discussing the limitations of the current research, recommendations for future research and practical clinical implications from this research.

As described in chapter two, Hegemonic Masculinities (Connell, 1995) refer to hierarchical descriptions of what men do within a given setting. Though there is no one specific way to be a man in any setting (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2016), there are socially dominant ways to act within the role of man (Connell, 1995). This is also true of fatherhoods where there are many ways to be a father with some deemed more socially desirable or common than others. It has been stated in previous literature pioneered by the works of Lamb (2000) and Pleck (1987) that what it means to be a father has changed over the past few decades in North America. This theory has been supported by time use studies in Canada (Marshall, 2006) where it is clear that fathers are now spending more time engaged in caregiving tasks than they did historically. The narratives generated in the current research were congruent with these findings, as most of the fathers I interviewed described playing a more active role in parenting than their fathers did before them. Further, though fathers described spending more time at home than previous generations, they also discussed the motivation and stress they felt to enact other historic hegemonic fatherhood conceptions including father as breadwinner and father as gender role model.

The New Nurturant Father

All of the fathers interviewed described wanting to play an active role in providing direct care to their children and participating in domestic tasks. Five of the fathers interviewed spoke about a movement towards more direct caregiving in their fathering from how they were fathered or how their fathers were fathered. All of the fathers described providing direct care

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to their children including feeding, bathing, and changing their child's soiled diapers; fathers also described increasing their domestic workload in fatherhood including more laundry, dishes and household chores. This trend of increased caregiving and domestic care by fathers over the past few generations mirrors findings from Canadian statistics (Marshall, 2006; Ravanera & Hoffman, 2013), which identify greater involvement in the home with father's participation in housework rising from 53-71% between 1986 and 2006 and child care participation rising from 38% to 52% over the same period. This pattern of increased involvement led Lamb (2000), and Pleck (1987) before him, to posit that a new fatherhood was becoming more prominent and desirable. In this new fatherhood men were now more engaged in the care of their children. Lamb coined the term "New Nurturant Father" to describe hegemonic, or socially dominant, father roles as including more and better caregiving.

Lamb's conception of a "new nurturant" father and the generational shift towards this aligns with Jimi's narrative of the change in quality of care he witnessed between his grandfather, his father and him when he said:

...I'll get into the generational stuff. I don't think my Dad had a great loving father who was a good role model of love and acceptance and I think that he did his best to get away from that model of what he grew up with but it was still there. It was just harder because when he was young and his Dad was parenting, his dad was the yelly one. The one who had really high expectations and a solid line and followed orders. (Jimi, Chapter 1:5)

Jimi's grandfather was clearly a disciplinarian and Jimi saw his father as intentionally diverging from this way of being.

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Leonard also described this generational shift in caregiving when his father dramatically diverged from his grandfather and adopted the role of primary caregiver during Leonard's adolescence and Leonard's mother became primary breadwinner.

[My grandfather] was a classic staunch English father and my father repelled from that and did it differently and then...when I went to high school my mom went into a professional career ...my Dad sold his business and became a stay-at-home father basically... (Leonard, Chapter 1:2)

Leonard emulated his father and also adopted a primary caregiver role while his partner, a family physician, worked. Leonard stated that he wanted to be more like his father in his connection with his children and also his ability to manage and express emotions.

Contrasting with Leonard's narrative, Johnny's narrative could well be summarized as a story of a father who initially wholly adopted the breadwinner role in his fathering and later transitioned towards a fatherhood more aligned with the new nurturant father role described by Lamb (2000). Prior to the birth of his child, Johnny planned to be active and engaged in all aspects of caregiving. However, as his partner chose to stay home with their child, he felt a pressure to provide and spent increasing time away from home in a breadwinning role. This is similar to Miller's (2011) finding in her aptly titled research report, "Falling Back into Gender." Johnny fell back to the masculine breadwinner role despite fully anticipating being a more involved father.

I saw myself as the provider and it was my responsibility to sacrifice my time with my daughter and with my partner to be able to go out and essentially, it's a hunter gatherer thing. I went out and I worked so that my family would have food and a roof over their

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head and be provided for and with the necessities that come with having a child and being able to pay for vehicle repairs on two vehicles and for the materials for the chariot, the bike attachments, the backpacks, the cool clothes, any sort of furnishings for the child, for all the groceries, all the utilities, the expenses for our home... I shouldered... as the man it was my job to carry the financial load so that Mom could be a mother and nurture and have nurturing time. (Johnny, Chapter 6: 2)

Driven by a sense of responsibility to emphasise the breadwinner father role, Johnny began to feel as though he was missing out on the relationship he wanted with his partner and child. Johnny believed this sense of responsibility was influenced by the fathering he witnessed growing up.

I spent a lot of time sitting with where that drive came from and where my decisions were coming from. I looked back at my father and my great grandfather and I saw that they did the exact same thing as me. They were just really focussed on being providers and working and I remembered my childhood that I didn't want my Dad to go to work but the most important thing to me as a child wasn't what I was having for dinner, what kind of bike I got or how many Easter candies or presents I got. I just wanted time.

(Johnny, Chapter 8: 1)

Johnny regretted his initial focus on the breadwinner role and saw it as irreparably damaging his relationship with his child and partner. Johnny shifted his employment following the breakdown of his relationship with his child's mother and stayed home with his child as a primary caregiver for a period. Johnny's transitioned from a breadwinner role to one more focussed on spending time with his child and directly caring for them.

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Beyond direct caregiving, all of the fathers in the current research also described narratives of increased domestic involvement to varying degrees. For example, Jimi and Bob said:

... [soon after birth] I jumped right into some of the Dad stuff that maybe traditional Dads of the past might have been a little more icked out by like changing diapers and putting coconut oil in butt cracks right off the back. Right in there with my partner about getting super jazzed about things like peeing on the potty... (Jimi, Chapter 5: 2)

and:

...it has been a huge learning curve. I didn't think it would be that big of a curve for me going off after being around for 14 months. Like there is cloth diapers. I don't know how to fold cloth diapers. The cloth diapers just ended up in the cloth diaper rack for me to use and put on the kid. Now I do all that stuff. I am learning how to do all this stuff... I actually thought it would be a more traditional thing but like I come home and do all the diaper changes and feeding him and getting him ready for bed. (Bob, Chapter 6: 10)

Both Jimi and Bob described being very involved in direct caregiving tasks with their children and acknowledged that their involvement breached expectations from traditional hegemonic masculinities. Jimi planned on being this involved but Bob was surprised at how involved he became.

Similarly, Neil also described increasing his involvement in domestic tasks like household chores that traditionally would not be considered masculine. He endorsed less direct care than some of the other fathers but saw supporting his partner through more unpaid domestic labour as part of his role as father.

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...My role wasn't super important as far as caregiving or taking care of the baby. The mother is the one the baby relies on. So my focus was just to support my partner in what she needed as much as I could. So, just keeping things clean around the house and trying to do meals and stuff like that. (Neil, Chapter 5: 1)

Despite the increased participation in caregiving and housework, fathers also acknowledged that it was not an equal split with their partners doing more in the home.

...Like I'm not taking on the full equal partnership at home. I try to really pick it up and do more and make sure that I wasn't leaving too much physical and emotional labour on my partner but she still does a lot at home and then has the baby a lot like every single day and so there is that imbalance there as far as parenting is concerned. (Jimi, Chapter 5: 3)

Jimi's narrative aligns with time use studies in Canada where while father's participation is increasing, mothers still do more caregiving and unpaid domestic work (Marshall, 2006; Stats Canada, 2017). Further, though fathers participated more in caregiving and household work, breadwinning was still a prominent part of their conception of their role as father.

Father as Breadwinner

Though there is clear evidence for the prevalence of a new nurturant fatherhood, previous hegemonic fatherhoods appear to remain powerful influences on the men in this study in determining how to enact their father role, a phenomenon that is well-supported in the literature (Eerola, 2015; Lamb, 2000; Miller, 2011). As Tichenor and colleagues (2011) noted, "...men may face expectations for greater involvement in parenting and household labor, providing still appears central to the enactment of the father role and may be critical to

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maintaining the father identity” (p. 246). In the current research, despite fathers’ unanimously describing increased involvement and desire for involvement than previous generations, many still described breadwinning as central to their conception of fatherhood.

Johnny’s narrative centered around his drive to provide for his family and the harm he felt this drive caused. He said:

I wanted to spend more time with my daughter and my partner and that just wasn’t our society. Our society didn’t facilitate that. My upbringing and my masculinity told me “hey this is the way it’s going to be,” you just have to go out and work because you want your child to go to college and you want your child to have more time with mom because mom doesn’t want to work as much so it’s a trade-off... (Johnny, Chapter 4: 2)

Johnny initially saw providing as his primary responsibility. He worked away from the home, needing to leave for a few days a week, and felt rewarded in his fulfilment of the breadwinner role. He stated that, “[w]hen I would come home, I would be loaded with groceries and gifts and things and that felt good to provide” (Johnny, Chapter 4: 4) and “...by working more I was providing more, and I felt that was my responsibility and I felt I was living up to that responsibility” (Johnny, Chapter 6: 1). However, Johnny also felt trapped by this conception. He said, “I did feel like it was my cross to bear but I was missing out on time with my daughter and my partner...It was a horrible choice to make” (Johnny, Chapter 6: 3). Johnny felt robbed of a more meaningful relationship with his daughter and partner. Being a man to Johnny meant providing but after some reflection he did not feel like a good father, pointing to a possible irreconcilable role conflict with current conceptualizations of manhood and fatherhood.

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All of the fathers I interviewed referenced breadwinning in their narratives and described it as an innate drive to provide. However, all approached this drive differently. Freddy said, "...as we go deeper and deeper into it... there [are] times where I feel like I need to earn...how do I put that?..." (Freddy, Chapter 4: 6). Freddy, who travelled regularly for employment as a professional adventure athlete, saw his role as the father as providing and allowing his partner the opportunity to stay home with the child. However, Freddy adjusted the nature of his work to allow him to be home more; he straddled the role of breadwinner and new nurturant father by being more present in the home while still taking on the role of primary breadwinner. Freddy, Jimi, Neil and Johnny all described a traditional gender split in labour division in parenting and as such maintained the masculine ideal of male as having power over production relationships (Connell, 1995). Three of the fathers I interviewed chose to stay home with their children as primary caregiver and disavowed themselves of a traditional breadwinner role. However, even these fathers spoke of the breadwinner role's influence on their fathering and conceptions of fatherhood. Perhaps the starkest example of the appearance of the de-prioritization of the masculine breadwinner role described by Lamb (2000) and others in the "new nurturant father" was seen in the narratives of those fathers who adopted the role of primary caregivers.

Leonard, Kurt and Bob chose to stay home with their children while their partners adopted the role of primary breadwinner in the relationship. Similar to what Doucet (2004) found in her interviews with primary caregiving fathers, the movement away from hegemonic masculinities was complicated and complex for them. For example, Kurt said:

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I have certainly felt a lot of guilt that I wasn't, you know, helping the finances of the house anymore. I suppose that would be a bit of a traditional upbringing bringing that out in me like a man should bring home the bacon type of guilt... I think [that was a] little bit [of a surprise] yeah... I would say it was very strong for at least the first year. I guess I said to myself and realized that [parenting] is an important role... (Kurt, Chapter 6: 4)

Breadwinning was initially more central in Kurt's conception of the father role than caregiving and he had to convince himself that caregiving was a good use of his time as a man.

Leonard similarly struggled with complex feelings around not providing financially. However, Leonard felt most stressed by his perceived lack of adherence to traditional dominant masculine roles when with other men:

Like you are hanging out with a group of [men] and they are like "what do you do?" I feel like then there may be a little more pressure to like construct something beyond just caregiver. I definitely have the tendency to. I'm conscious of it so I feel like I try to self-correct. I still think that I'm on the side of like trying to project something outside of what it actually is. Maybe that's masculinity like role. Like I have a Master's degree and I'm not working anywhere close to what I trained in. So maybe it's trying to justify a little bit that move away in career but I'm sure part of it is tied up in masculinity.

(Leonard, Chapter 10:6)

For Leonard he worried that staying home as a caregiver was something about which he would be judged negatively by other men and something with which he felt uncomfortable when around other men. He further stated, "I'm working part time a couple days a week around the

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house... I try to like explain that... to justify that I'm not just the stay-at-home Dad" (Leonard, Chapter 7: 1). To add value to his role for others, Leonard tried to maintain some connection to more traditionally masculine roles and was uncomfortable being identified as "just a care-giver." Doucet (2004) referred to this as stay-at-home-fathers keeping a "foot-in-the-door" to traditional masculinity through household renovation or home industry.

Bob found that the language of others, and especially his partner, appeared to unintentionally degrade his contributions in the home. He shared that:

...She likes to call me the "house bitch" or the "house wife" or the "trophy husband" and I'm like I didn't say that when you were off. Like it's funny for a man to be doing it or something... I don't really appreciate the "house bitch" comments. It feels demeaning like I'm being told it's not a man's place. (Bob, Chapter 6: 14)

Bob described the joking of others as confirming social gender roles and that the traditionally feminine role of caregiving was viewed as of less value than breadwinning. Breadwinning remained a prominent part of the father role for the fathers I interviewed. However, in all narratives, and especially in the narratives of Leonard, Bob, Kurt, and Johnny, there appeared to be an intentional reconfiguring of the value of caregiving within the father role. They had to intentionally tell themselves it was valuable, as valuable as breadwinning.

Father as Gender Role Model

Though many of the fathers directly noted that they did not believe masculinity, or their conceptions of masculinity, played a significant role in their transition to fatherhood, the examples above suggest that it may play more of a role than they believed. Further, these conceptions align with what has been previously described by Lamb (2000), Doucet (2004) and

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others. Though a number of the fathers described not feeling strongly influenced by conceptions of masculinity in fatherhood, or feeling a need to be 'manly' in relation to hegemonic masculinities, the masculinities were, nevertheless, present and appeared to be influential when these fathers spoke of raising boys themselves.

Raising boys catalyzed thoughts and fears of masculinity for fathers. However, the fathers all approached this differently and related to their own adopted father and masculine roles. For example, Neil felt a drive to emphasise some of his behaviours that aligned with hegemonic masculinities to model them for his son. He noted:

A part of me is maybe trying to do more traditional masculine stuff- like do more things hands on like fix cars, build things and do stuff like that so that I can be an example but at the same time I already was like that so I don't know if that has more of an influence now being a father or not. (Neil, Chapter 8: 5)

Though Neil felt he participated in traditionally masculine behaviours prior to becoming a father, he also felt a specific urge to model these for his son. This is reminiscent of Lamb (2000) and Pleck's (1987) historical conception of the hegemonic fatherhood role of "father as gender role model." This post-war hegemonic fatherhood ensured that men both publicly enact and teach hegemonic masculinities. This is also congruent with the central dialectic in Neil's narrative of feeling a pressure to withhold the expression of his emotions publicly, to appear strong and masculine for his family, and also to find ways to express his emotions privately out of the public eye. This emotional suppression is congruent with Connell's (1995) conceptions of hegemonic masculinities where Men are to be powerful and vulnerability is feminine.

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In contrast, Jimi's narrative included actively protecting his son from the expression of some aspects of hegemonic masculinities he believed were harmful or "toxic." For example, Jimi noted:

... [I] might have a problem if he wanted to get into hunting or certain team sports I might not be super comfortable bringing him to. So I might be a block on some of the more traditionally masculine things he might be interested to do but I may just tell him that hey I'm not interested in doing that at all... (Jimi, Chapter 10: 4)

Jimi and Neil's appraisals and constructions of masculinity influenced two different approaches to raising their sons. Both fathers described more engagement in caregiving than the generations before them, but Neil sought to maintain certain aspects of hegemonic masculinity and Jimi sought to promote deviation from these. Both fathers saw it as their responsibility to influence and shape the masculinity of their male children.

Kurt also felt a unique pressure in fathering a boy. Kurt's conception of masculinity included strength and control and, though this was not how Kurt viewed himself prior to having children, he still struggled with this as a new parent. Before having his first child, Kurt worried that he would not be a good father but, through parenting, Kurt felt more capable and positive about his capacity. At the time of his initial interview Kurt was expecting a son. Kurt, whose first child was a girl, said the fear of expecting a boy was different. He said:

Well we have number two on the way and around the masculinity thing when we found out we were having a boy I was anxious. I haven't figured it out yet so I might not be able to elaborate like a little but it's like "shit can I be a good Dad to a boy?" I didn't think it would matter to me. I thought I would be more excited about a boy but again

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like a kinda responsibility gave me a little anxiety around that time... I can't really put my finger on it. I guess on a small way because I consider myself to be slightly on the effeminate side of masculinity maybe a boy would need a more male or macho role model. At the same time...it's been a tricky one for me to really figure that one out.

(Kurt, Chapter 10: 1)

Kurt was surprised by his own expectations of what it meant to raise a boy to be masculine, specifically describing the "macho role model" as part of his conception of the father role in raising a boy. For those fathers I interviewed with male children, "Father as a gender role model" appeared to remain significant in their lives as men and fathers.

Lamb's conceptions of socially dominant, or hegemonic, fatherhoods including the new nurturant father, the breadwinner and the gender role model all appear to play a role in the fathers' narratives of masculinity in their transitions to fatherhood. Further, the straddling of these fatherhoods appeared to shape their conception of fatherhood and masculinity and this underscores the idea that one can have simultaneously competing roles and conceptions of masculinity and fatherhood. The birth of their children was another salient experience related to masculinity in the fathers' transitions.

Involved from birth

In Bartlett's (2004) comprehensive review of literature on first time father's experiences of childbirth and labour, he summarized the literature as indicating fathers felt coerced to participate, fathers were uncomfortable in their role as coach or support, fathers felt excluded, and fathers felt unprepared for the reality of childbirth. Interestingly, the narratives generated for the current study do not support the first three of Bartlett's conclusions. Fathers' narratives

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included reports of feeling involved and valued in their involvement. Further, men wanted to participate and be present for the birth process. However, congruent with Bartlett's summary, all fathers' narratives, with the exception of Jimi, included reports of feeling unprepared for the reality of child birth.

Jimi described birth as "cool" and "empowering" and noted that he was happy to be "in the bed and gripping my partner's hand" throughout (Jimi, Chapter 3: 3). Similarly, Johnny actively tried to be as involved as possible and stated:

A big part of fatherhood felt like geez I'm really just bystander for a big part of it but I didn't want to feel like a bystander. I just wanted to be as supportive and involved as humanly possible. Just knowing what childbirth- how intense it is on a woman's body and I figured the least I could do is be there as much as humanly possible. (Johnny, Chapter 3: 5)

Johnny was worried about not being included and actively inserted himself in the birth of his child. He did his best to be helpful and felt useful in the process.

...I think men when they are involved then instinctively there is something that triggers- like a switch flipped and I knew instinctively what my partner needed. I felt involved in the process. I felt lucky that I had a lot of the training and support to be a part of it. It was exhausting but there is a lot of adrenaline... You knew she needed me and she's been carrying this baby around for nine months and I thought it was the very least I could do. (Johnny, Chapter 3: 4)

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Kurt had a similar experience to Johnny where he felt he understood what to do to support his partner. He said, "I felt that I liked being in the room and just kinda went into the zone trying to take care of her and massage her throughout the process" (Kurt, Chapter 4: 2).

Freddy described his role in the delivery of his child as similar to a corner man in a boxing match. He said:

Like it felt like I was in a boxing match and that's how I'd explain it. You are like okay you get your first set of contractions and then it eases off and then you get the next- round two and round three and you are just over there... She's like Rocky and you're that little guy like "you got this Rock!" and patting her head with ice water so she can do her thing ... (Freddy, Chapter 3: 6)

Through being present in the process Freddy also described feeling admiration for his partner and it being a positive in their relationship watching her do the work of childbirth. Neil described a similar admiration for his partner.

Thus, Bartlett's conclusion that men felt coerced and uncomfortable in their support of their partners was not congruent with any of the narratives generated in the current report.

The fathers I spoke to believed it was their place to be in the birth of their child and to be an active support. Bob spoke to this as a shift in masculinity when he stated:

I hear like "oh back in my day we wouldn't even be in the hospital when we had a kid- we would be on the golf course and someone would call us and tell us the news on the sixteenth hole." It is just such a big disconnect between those generations. (Bob, Chapter 6: 12)

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However, despite men feeling as though being present and involved in the birth was part of their role as father and was rewarding, most described the experience as overwhelming and not something for which they were prepared. The reality of childbirth was a surprise to almost all of the fathers I interviewed. Bob said:

[The birth was something] I was not expecting. You have people telling you that you are going to see some stuff that you cannot un-see and it was eye opening to go through that. I was surprised by how long it took and at how physically demanding it really was. She was in a lot of pain and hurting. (Bob, Chapter 4: 1)

Bob's partner was a nurse, so he was familiar with the setting and, yet, the reality of childbirth was a surprise for him. Similarly, Leonard, whose partner was a doctor, said:

Because [my partner] is a doctor she knew everyone in the room... [but] it was a very foreign environment for me. I wasn't adequately briefed and I didn't fully understand the setting... like walking into that room and like Jesus there is a like a dozen people in here and there is all these lights and aprons and she is on her back with a cloth up to [her shoulders] and you can't see her body and there is another dude sitting right there with a giant machine... (Leonard, Chapter 4: 2)

For these fathers, the experience was very clinical and medical. However, there was also heavy emotion and risk, as Kurt recalled being scared by one such moment in the birth of his child:

There was one moment at the end when [my child's] head was sticking out and it was just her head and it was very blue looking and that was the one moment of panic... I had to kind of step away from the bed at that point... Yeah again it was really that fear. I

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thought I was losing them before I even met [them]. No one had prepared me for that...

(Kurt, Chapter 4: 3)

Similarly, Johnny said:

...There's that question where I didn't know how I was going to respond to it. It was a really visceral experience seeing a human being come out of your partner and into the world. There is no prepping that is done- there is no prepping that I had ever done to kinda really prepare myself for what it looks like to see a human being birthed into this world and know how I was going to respond. It was a big unknown to me. I think maybe if you live on a farm and you see animals give birth then you maybe have an idea of what it's going to look like but I certainly didn't and I had heard of stories of men not being able to handle the visual experience or the blood or all the experiences that come through it. (Johnny, Chapter 3: 2)

Johnny questioned if there was room in our society for someone to be prepared for that experience without first-hand experience previously. Even the fathers who had prepared for the birth or were familiar with medical settings felt surprised by the reality of childbirth. Freddy stated:

For us beforehand we talked to some people and they recommended prenatal classes and I'm so happy I talked to them. If I was going in there totally unrehearsed I'd have been freaking out more. I'd have been like what is this? Is this bad? Is this good? So many questions. Because we did the prenatal classes they kind of give you- like no one is ever prepared for that experience because it is so visceral and so in-your-face and so

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raw and one of the craziest experiences of all time. So you can't be totally prepared for it but it felt good going in knowing a few things. (Freddy Chapter 3: 1)

Freddy felt as prepared as he could be and, still, he was surprised by what he experienced as the gruesome realities and medical context of childbirth.

The fathers all described wanting to be involved and feeling, as though it was part of their role as father to be supportive and present. Also, most of the fathers I interviewed felt unprepared and shocked by the experience of birth. They described the medical setting as anxiety provoking and at times they felt powerless, which may relate to conceptions in masculinity where they are used to protecting and feeling in control and not being able to do so in the hospital setting. Thus, while modern conceptions of nurturant fatherhood may point to increased involvement in all aspects of the transition to fatherhood including birth, the experience was not easy for fathers. Fathers found the experience to be emotionally overwhelming perhaps foreshadowing the shift in emotion awaiting them as they continued to transition into fatherhood.

These findings support previous theory and research on masculinity in the transition to fatherhood. As noted, no previous research specifically asked fathers to describe masculinity in the transition to fatherhood however the topic has been discussed. Fathers in the current research discussed a new more involved fatherhood, on more involved than that of their fathers, and described wanting to be more involved in caregiving than previous generations. However, echoing what Doucet (2004) and Miller (2011) interpreted, these fathers also maintained a "foot in the door" of more traditionally masculine fatherhood roles like breadwinning and gender role model. Further, fathers felt it was part of their role to be present

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in the birth of their children, something fathers in the past were less likely to endorse, but found the experience overwhelming. In addition to these findings that support what has already been discussed, the current research adds to what was known with some important new contributions to the area.

Unique Contributions

This research adds important and unique contributions to our understanding of masculinity in men's transition to fatherhood. Most notable are the descriptions of emotional changes in men's transition to fatherhood and fathers' descriptions of fatherhood as rewarding. All of the fathers I interviewed described experiencing emotional changes in fatherhood with some noticing an increase in the expression of anger, increases in anxiety, and new experience of love and these contributions further support the complex interplay between hegemonic masculinities and fatherhood. Previous literature regularly discusses fatherhood in relation to the stresses of challenges experienced. Rarely is fatherhood described as rewarding or "awesome", making the discussion of men finding the transition to fatherhood rewarding in this study another unique contribution.

New emotional experiences in fatherhood

One unique finding in the current research was the emotional experiences of men in the transition to fatherhood. Narrative research is well-situated to explore the experiences and stories of people in rich detail and the fathers' expressions of emotion and their relation to conceptions of fatherhood and masculinity is one area where this approach to research allowed participants to articulate something not previously explored in fatherhood research. Expressing vulnerable emotion historically has not been part of Western hegemonic masculinities and

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fathers openly spoke about the struggle they experienced in expressing or experiencing new emotions in fatherhood. The expression of emotion felt like new ground for these fathers that they were learning to navigate in their transitions. For example, Neil saw his role as a father as needing to publicly suppress his emotions to prioritize the needs of those around him. However, in contrast to this, he also saw the suppression of emotion as unhealthy. Thus, Neil expressed trying to balance wanting to appear strong, while also finding healthy ways, such as talking with a therapist, to express his emotions. He stated:

That's kinda mixing how I see men should be and how kinda men are viewed or whatever... like we talked about that emotional balance and I'm sure that's going to come into play as I go down the road as a father. There is going to be times where I need to keep it in and there are going to be times where I need to show it and being able to be an example of that balance of masculinity and being tough and of being sensitive. (Neil, Chapter 7: 4)

For Neil and some of the other fathers, being strong and emotionally controlled was part of their conception of being a good man but they also believed that to be a good father they would need to be more sensitive and emotionally reflective, clearly demonstrating the interplay between 'manhood' and 'fatherhood'. Johnny also saw this dialectic and noted that there was no "roadmap" for how to do this for fathers. For Johnny it felt like it was a difficult balance that men learned to do through being a father and one he didn't feel he handled well. He noted:

... I'm expected to have that sensitivity, that masculine and feminine where I'm asked to be more in touch and in tune and then at the same time that strong closed off... I don't think I was able to balance that properly... (Johnny Chapter 5: 4).

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Similarly, Freddy commented that showing emotions as a man felt like a challenge. He stated:

I think emotions are always looked at as a negative when it comes to being a quote-unquote man, but if you are emotionally conscious and you understand what is going on to where you can read a situation much better than you can if you are looking at it from this one aspect of like emotion is weakness... [and in fatherhood] I think it was just amplified. (Freddy, Chapter 7: 6)

For Freddy, similar to Neil and Johnny, being a good man meant suppressing emotion and being a good father meant being more expressive with his emotions. There was an incongruence between being a good man and being a good father when it related to the expression of emotion. However, this suppression of emotion in hegemonic masculinities does not typically include all emotions. Anger is often seen as an acceptable emotion within historical hegemonic masculinities and one over which the fathers in this study wanted more control. Jimi described his grandfather as angry and his father as less angry but angrier than he wanted to be as a father and he remembered these as places where their fathering was not congruent with the father role he wanted to enact. Leonard, by contrast, didn't comment on anger as a problem generationally, but noticed that his own experience of anger changed in fatherhood. He noted that:

...The other emotional change I've seen would be the anger. I guess when the anger spikes that is the time where I am feeling like I'm not doing this well. Like I shouldn't be doing this... It only happens when I'm alone so I think the societal pressure that it's not okay makes it happen maybe. (Leonard, Chapter 9: 2)

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For Leonard there was a felt societal pressure to not feel angry in the role of father. When overwhelmed, Leonard found he went to a place of anger quickly, yet in fatherhood this anger felt less acceptable and incongruent with the role he wanted to enact. Kurt similarly noted that he went quickly to a place of “discipline” and this was something he was trying to manage better. These fathers attempted to dampen the expression of anger, a traditionally masculine emotion, and found increases in the expression of anxiety and compassion, emotions that are traditionally more feminine, once again demonstrating the clear link between masculinity and fatherhood.

The most prominent emotional change in the fathers’ narratives was the change in anxiety. Previous research has found that anxiety and anxiety disorders are common for new fathers in both the perinatal and postnatal period (Leach et al.,2016). The fathers in current research add depth to our understanding of this phenomena. All of the men interviewed described feeling as though they were no longer individuals but rather part of a family once they became fathers and it was no longer just themselves that they were looking out for. Jimi directly addressed this shift in identity when he stated:

...I feel like a Dad and I’m just trying to think of how that changed in my view. I used to feel a lot like an individual and I didn’t necessarily see myself as part of a two-person partnership. I would think of myself and my partner was someone who lived at home with me and we were in love and now I really feel like a Dad- like that role supersedes some of my own. (Jimi, Chapter 9: 2)

Based on hegemonic conceptualizations of masculinity (Connell, 1995), to be a man is to be an individual. However, to be a father is to enact a social role grounded in a relationship or

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relationships: to be a father requires more than just focusing oneself and these fathers felt that shift. Worrying more for the wellbeing of others and experiencing more anxiety than they had prior to becoming fathers appeared to be a key experience for all of the fathers: being a father meant protecting your family and thinking of the world with their safety in mind. On this change Kurt said:

...I think I was quite carefree before [children] and very much like if I die tomorrow I would be fine kind of thing, but there is definitely a lot more to live for and I don't mean that in a negative way but there is definitely more fear now... (Kurt, Chapter 7: 1)

Before fatherhood, Kurt was less worried about his own experience in the world including placing himself at risk, but in transitioning to fatherhood, Kurt began to consider the safety of his family and specifically his child. Similarly, Freddy noticed that he looked at the world differently when he considered how fragile his newborn child felt. Freddy said:

And I remember yeah there is that protector but there is also you realize how fragile everything is... but your world doesn't become a scarier place but you are definitely more aware of it and the things that could go wrong... (Freddy, Chapter 6: 2)

Whereas traditional hegemonic masculinities often include taking risks and decreased concern for individual health and wellness (Olliffe et al., 2019), the fathers now found themselves more aware of risk and more averse to taking risks. For example, Jimi wasn't sure if he was protective or just more broadly concerned about the riskiness of the world. He said:

...I'm not sure I would describe any of that as protective as that isn't quite right but when things are out of my hands with someone I love I just get a lot of worry about worst case scenarios. (Jimi Chapter 6: 3)

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Johnny felt so different he wondered if there was not a biological change in him. He said:

...Definitely when I became a Dad I was more averse to risk... Looking back at it I think there's something that happens and I noticed like a physical change in myself. I think my testosterone level dropped at one point where I was more cautious..." (Johnny, Chapter 5: 1-2)

As fathers, the men I interviewed approached the world and viewed the world differently than they did before they made the transition to being fathers. They now saw the world as a place filled with potential risk and felt a responsibility to protect their children; where hegemonic masculinity promoted bravery and a lack of consideration for your own potential risk, fatherhood appeared to increase their anxieties and muted their tolerance for risk-taking in their children and themselves.

Another aspect of this shift in identity as a father was feeling a responsibility to their families and not wanting to jeopardize their ability to be a good father. Regardless of whether they emphasised a breadwinner or caregiver role prominently in their fathering, for the fathers I spoke with, their children needed them and if they were, as the father, to be hurt or killed it would negatively impact their family. Leonard said:

...I guess I have thought about it a little bit. I guess just recently I thought what would it look like if I broke my leg. So now I'm beyond useless. I'm more of a burden than they are if that happened (Leonard, Chapter 8: 2)

Leonard was a primary caregiver of twins and knew that being injured would make this more difficult and impact his ability to be a father and this shift in his thinking decreased his risk-taking behaviours. Similarly, Bob noted, "things changed so much from being carefree and no

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responsibilities to actually thinking that you know if I get hurt I have a baby I have to take care of..." (Bob, Chapter 7: 2). To be a good father, the men I spoke with believed they would need to decrease their risk taking behaviours in order to preserve themselves and decrease traditionally masculine risk-taking.

The dialectic between more tolerance for risk in masculinity and less tolerance for risk in fatherhood was complex and handled uniquely by each father. For example, the narratives of Johnny and Neil capture two divergent approaches to managing changes in risk perception in fatherhood. In preparing to be a father, Johnny sold his motorbike as he believed being a father meant taking less risk and he was preparing for that role and, yet, he described regret when reflecting on his decision to sell his motorbike. Johnny believed that giving up his bike had changed him too much and he saw this as contributing to the failure of his romantic relationship with his partner, as he changed from the person to whom she initially was attracted. On this, he said:

... I think part of the reason that my partner fell in love with me and wanted to have a child and raise this family was because I was a certain way. Because I was this strong masculine figure and then when my child came along that kinda shifted for me. Where it was kinda more cautious and... I don't know, there is a part of me that wonders if that would have played out differently... (Johnny, Chapter 5: 3)

In contrast, Neil's narrative expressed that he had decided to keep his motorcycle to maintain some of who he felt he was prior to having children. He said:

...I have my motorcycle right and everyone knows it's dangerous to ride a motorcycle but I don't want to change who I am completely because I don't want to rob my kids of

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the person I am... I want to be myself and continue to be who I am so that they can get that experience and know me for who I am so they can feel okay being who they are.

(Neil, Chapter 6: 2)

While Johnny wondered if selling his motorbike made him someone different and someone that his partner was less attracted to, Neil chose to keep his motorbike so he did not rob his child and family of the person he was. These two narratives compellingly and succinctly illustrate the dialectic that these men who became fathers navigated between hegemonic masculinities and hegemonic fatherhoods. In wanting to be the best father he could, Johnny wondered if he gave up some of his desirability as a man, which points to the idea that, based on hegemonic ideals, being a good father is not always commensurate with being a good man.

Being a father is awesome!

One of the most unique and interesting findings of the current study is the rich emotional experience of fatherhood, which was a surprise for all of the fathers with whom I spoke. This has not been discussed in any previous literatures I encountered in preparing for this study. The expression of emotion, and especially fear, is a divergence from traditional hegemonic masculinities but something the fathers I spoke to saw as part of being a good father. Further, the fathers I spoke with did not see this as an entirely negative change and many embraced the new emotional experience. For example, Freddy emphatically described the experience of being a father as “fucking awesome.”

The fathers I interviewed were surprised by how rewarding and “normal” fathering felt to them, which is another aspect of the transition to fatherhood that was not discussed in previous literatures I encountered while conducting this research. Freddy described hearing

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very little positive about being a father from others prior to having children and, based on these reports, he imagined a negative fatherhood experience without sleep, recreation, and friends. Though all the fathers noted changes in these areas, many also noted how natural and normal being a father felt. Freddy was surprised that no one had told him how rewarding being a father was. He noted:

...so many people that you run into made a point of telling you how shitty it is going to be. I talked to like ten people on the strip and eight of them told me it was going to be shitty... I had this conversation with a friend and... I was like dude it is the best and he was like man you are one of the few people to say that. I was like dude it is fucking awesome. It is so sweet. Life doesn't change as much as you think it's going to change.

(Freddy, Chapter 8:1-3)

Freddy felt it was common practice for fathers to describe the father role as negative to those expecting or transitioning to fatherhood. He said he was inundated with negative information about how his experience as a father was going to be but, in contrast, he found that this was not true and that he very much enjoyed being a father. Becoming a father or being a father was not described as easy by any of the men I spoke to but all of them described it as rewarding and positive. For example, Kurt remarked that being a father significantly improved his outlook on the world and himself, as prior to having a child he had struggled with Depression and self-doubt. Actively parenting and feeling efficacy around his ability to father was a very positive experience for him. Kurt said:

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[When I first took on the primary caregiving role] I just remember it being a really happy time. Actually, that was probably a better moment for feeling confident and like I got this. (Kurt, Chapter 6: 5)

Being a father was a good experience for Kurt and a source of pride and esteem, which contributed to his happiness. Similarly, Bob stated:

...It has been awesome connecting. So much fun. Just the look he gives you and he is a happy baby. He is always smiling and can always get a laugh out of him and just enjoyable to be around now and to interact with. (Bob, Chapter 8: 2)

The relationship with his child was meaningful to Bob and something through which he experienced joy and reward.

Related to both the deepening of emotion in fatherhood described above and the reward men felt in involved fatherhood, one of the most positive aspects of fatherhood described by the men I interviewed was the love they felt for their child. They described this love as being novel to them and transformative. Of this love, Johnny said:

It's a certain kind of love that you don't get to experience without having your own child... [It's] a tall order to describe that kind of love because again even having siblings describe it to me it's like a secret. It's like a secret club. (Johnny, Chapter 7: 3)

Similarly, Leonard was surprised by how early he felt attached to his children and how deeply he cared for them (Chapter, 9: 1). Johnny and Jimi described the love they felt for their child as different than any love they had felt previous. Jimi said:

...The love I feel for my child is like no other I've felt before. What I mean by that is that it doesn't feel like a "stronger version" of the way I love my partner or my parents. It

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feels like a completely new form of love. If you told me I could only pick one kind of love for the rest of my life, it would be this new one. (Jimi, Chapter 8: 1)

For the fathers, this new type of connection was not something they were seeking or were even aware existed. It was something that once they experienced it, it changed them and made their lives more meaningful.

The fathers I spoke to co-generated rich, descriptive and personally meaningful narratives that highlight the literature on a new dominant fathering role. Similar to that described by Lamb (2000), the narratives support the idea of a more physically and emotionally involved father in the care of his children than that of previous fatherhoods. The narratives generated also describe numerous example of the incongruence between these new, more involved, hegemonic fatherhoods and hegemonic masculinities, expressed in in dialectics between breadwinning and caregiving, between emotional expression and strength and between being involved in all aspects of caregiving or only those deemed historically manly. There is evidence in all the narratives generated in this project of stress related to discordance between hegemonic masculine and hegemonic fatherhood roles. However, and despite all of the incongruences and possible conflicts, being a father, regardless of its position or stress in relation to masculinities, was experienced as rewarding and meaningful to those I interviewed.

Limitations and Future Research Recommendations

All research has limitations, and one major limitation in the current project was its timing. The recruitment and data generation for the current project occurred during the initial wave of the COVID 19 global pandemic. Individuals do not exist free of time or place and, as such, individual narratives can present versions of that time and a place. For the fathers who

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participated in the current research, that time and place became significant in their narratives. Interviews took place between March and July of 2020, when all of the fathers interviewed were directly impacted by strict lockdown measures with Canada's initial response to the pandemic.

The fathers interviewed all experienced significant shifts in their lives due to COVID 19. For example, Jimi's place of employment, a community youth center, was fully shut down for a period and then reopened with limited hours. This meant Jimi was home more than he might have been without the pandemic and his ability to provide for his family during that period destabilised. Across all families, both parents spent more time in the home during the pandemic and, for many, outside work and routines slowed down. Though the goal of qualitative research is never to generalize, it must be noted that the narratives were generated in an unprecedented global moment with universal impacts on personal and professional lives. That said, as the pandemic response was in its early stages at the time of the interviews, most of the narratives collected referred to pre-pandemic experiences, viewed retroactively through a present-day lens of a global health crisis.

The occurrence of the pandemic also changed the nature of data generation. Face-to-face contact with people outside of immediate family groups was discouraged and doctors' offices and community agencies were closed to the public. Recruiting during the pandemic was a challenge as people were warier of connecting with people outside of close social groups and the proposed strategy of advertising in public spaces was no longer feasible. Further, the change from face-to-face interviews to phone interviews made it harder to create a safe setting and connection with the fathers. Though I was grateful for the contributions of all the fathers

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who participated and believe they shared meaningful narratives, I cannot help but question if the narratives might have been different with in-person interviews.

Other key limitations were budget and time. This project was completed as part of a PhD program and was self-funded by the primary researcher who completed all aspects of the research while also working full-time and parenting two small children. I have been grateful for the support of my family, my PhD committee and the opportunity I have had to complete this research. However, though I have worked hard to conduct research that is meaningful and thorough, I also appreciate that I have done so with finite monetary resources and time.

Potentially related to the limitations of both the study occurring during a global pandemic and the limited budget and time, the participants represent a relatively homogeneous group of fathers. First, all fathers in the current research self-selected to participate, and lived in the Kootenay region of southern British Columbia, Canada. All fathers were engaged in caregiving, were heterosexual/straight, co-habiting with a romantic partner, and all were white and middle to upper-class socio-economic status. Though the goal of qualitative research is not to generalize across broad or diverse groups, clearly this sample was relatively homogenous and not broadly representative of fatherhood across all of Canada or Globally, representing a well-understood and generally accepted limitation of qualitative research.

The fathers included in the current research represented a group of fathers in a uniquely privileged social location. Being white, straight, and financially stable these fathers experienced certain privilege in their transitions to fatherhood. These fathers described active recreation lives with some having the flexibility to invest significant time and resources into recreation

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such as skiing or sport. Research looking at masculinity in groups without the same degree of privilege such as gay or trans fathers, indigenous fathers, young fathers, or impoverished fathers may generate unique interpretations to those generated in the current research and expand our knowledge in how men experience masculinity in their transition to fatherhood. Men in the current study were likely provided unique space and choice in their transition to fatherhood and their adoption of father roles that may not be available to other fathers.

Narrative research is used to generate stories that can comprehensively explore meaning and movement, leading to increased understanding of a research question. This study includes the narratives of seven fathers, which are co-creations reflecting the interpretations of the fathers I spoke to, combined and intermixed with my own interpretations as the primary researcher. While interesting and meaningful in their own right, they cannot be reliably or reasonably superimposed onto the experiences of others and the focus is not on generalizability and predictability, but rather on deeper understanding and learning.

The narratives generated illuminate and expand our knowledge of men's experiences as they navigate hegemonic masculine and father roles. Continued research on masculinities, fatherhood, and the potential overlaps and discord between these constructs is needed as very little is still known about these. Broad theoretical concepts like those organized and explored by Connell and colleagues (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2016) are helpful but say little regarding how individual men may experience them. The current research supported and expanded what we know about the hegemonic fatherhoods described by Lamb (2000) and Pleck (1987) and the research on the possible interactions between these and hegemonic masculinities (Connell,

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1995). The current research also added the rich descriptions of emotional change in hegemonic fatherhood discordant with hegemonic masculinity.

One unique and unexpected finding that warrants further investigation was the emotional experience of men in their transition to fatherhood. Future research further exploring the emotional experience of men in their transition to fatherhood could help expand on these findings and identify if they are unique to the fathers I interviewed or a more common experience amongst fathers in Canada and beyond. A better understanding of these emotional experiences could help support father involvement through addressing some of the challenging emotions men may experience in fatherhood that were described in this research such as increased anxiety and anger. Future research in this area could also lead to better understanding of the aspects of fatherhood that men find rewarding including the “different love” the men I interviewed described and help fathers find greater reward in their fathering roles.

Through the narratives of seven Canadian fathers I contrasted conceptual models of hegemonic masculinities and hegemonic fatherhoods. This was the first work I have seen that attempted to explore the relationships between these two models. Future research looking at the similarities and differences between dominant social masculine roles and dominant social fatherhood roles could further the work I have begun in this area.

Counselling Practice Implications

The men I spoke to wanted to be involved and found their involvement meaningful. They also found that they gained capacity as they were included and involved in caregiving. As such, practical strategies to support men to be involved including socially and professionally

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supported paternal leaves, pre and post-natal education and support mindful of the discord men experience between hegemonic masculinities and fatherhoods could be helpful for men transitioning to fatherhood, based on these narratives.

Further, fathers described the transition to fatherhood as complex and as though there were few models to help shape their transition aside from how they were fathered.

Professional support in helping men to explore their own masculinity and shape the masculine and father roles they enact are needed. The development of clinical tools to help men explore masculinities and fatherhoods would help with this meaningful endeavour for fathers.

In the current research, fathers described their emotional experience and co-generated narratives. Though the research process was not therapy and was not approached as therapy, it appears to have been therapeutic for fathers. Anecdotally, at the conclusion of most initial interviews fathers commented that they found the experience of discussing their experiences of masculinity in transitioning to fatherhood meaningful. Then, when asked to review their narratives, fathers again commented on how valuable it was to review them. In response to reading his narrative, one father wrote, "Sean, it was a very honest reflection and I intend to look closer into my feelings with the help of a counselor to do any 'unpacking'. I feel there is always room to improve as a father. The changes I make now will have a lasting effect on all my relationships" (Johnny, Email Correspondence Dec. 3, 2020). The process of exploring their experience was meaningful for fathers and believed to be helpful. This is further evidence for the value of counselling to help fathers explore, assess and potentially change their father roles.

Based on the narratives generated in the current research, clinical frameworks to help men safely explore their own masculinity including areas where the roles they enact benefit

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them and where they are harmful would be helpful. The one father in the current research that did seek counselling support described it as helpful but challenging to engage in based on his own conceptions of masculinity. Creating opportunities for men to engage in therapeutic work that are more comfortable for men could help with this and encourage more fathers to participate in counselling. This could include male specific clinics or counselling approaches that account for masculine discomfort in expressing fear or sadness.

Sadly, fathers, and men in general, do not appear to engage in counselling as frequently as other groups (Vogel & Heath, 2016). Isacco and colleagues (2017) analysed data collected for the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study. From their sample of 1989 fathers, only 64 (3.2%) accessed counselling services despite the predicted need being much higher. Though work to address the barriers to these low rates of engagement have not been fully explored for fathers, there is some work looking at how to overcome these barriers for men. In a comprehensive review of qualitative literature looking at “male-friendly individual counselling practices” between the years 1995 and 2016, Beel and colleagues (2018), conclude:

Male-sensitive counseling has clear similarities with multicultural counseling and feminist counseling. All three paradigms focus on understanding the socialization experiences of the client, and all three seek to liberate clients from the constraints and oppressions associated with these constraints. (p. 7)

The interpretations from the current research could help counsellors to socialize to the potential experiences of fathers and these goals appear in line with the narratives generated. Beel and colleagues went on to note that unlike feminist and multicultural approaches to

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counselling, that masculinity has historically been identified in therapy and linked to the pathology of the client. They cite this as one potential barrier to men feeling safe exploring their masculinity and one potential point for future change. Counselling practices that do not link masculinity to pathology and, rather, provide father's an opportunity for safe exploration of the impact of masculinity are likely to be of more benefit.

Conclusions

I interviewed seven first time fathers and co-created narratives to answer the primary research question: "What are men's narratives of masculinity in their transition to fatherhood?" I answered this by generating seven unique narratives of masculinity in men's transitions to fatherhood. Each narrative added to our understating of how masculinity influenced the men I interviewed in their transition to fatherhood. I interpreted that these men did identify with a new hegemonic fatherhood role that was more involved in caregiving and domestic work than previous hegemonic fatherhoods and incongruent with hegemonic masculinities. The men I spoke to wanted to be involved in caregiving for their children and wanted to have meaningful relationships with them. However, they also felt some pressure to fulfil previous hegemonic fatherhoods such as breadwinner or gender role model that are more congruent with hegemonic masculinities.

I began this research with a narrative from my transition to fatherhood. In it, I described realizing that I was no longer living just for myself anymore. Rather, I recognized that my behaviour would now impact the experience of my daughter. This realization shifted my perception from myself to my family. The fathers I interviewed described as similar shift- a decentralization of focus from the self-outward.

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In addition, this research has added to what was previously known through narratives that described men's rich emotional experiences in their transitions in fatherhood. The men I interviewed described experiencing more intense emotions in fatherhood including increased anger and anxiety. Fathers noticed their perceptions of risk changed in fatherhood as they considered a world through the eyes of a family and not just themselves. Finally, and perhaps most important to any current or future fathers reading this report, men described fatherhood as awesome. Men found being involved in caregiving and having engaged relationships with their children deeply rewarding. Men's emotional experiences in their transition to fatherhood are far more rich than have been described previously in research or endorsed in hegemonic masculinities and need to be explored. Qualitative research that allows men to describe their experiences in rich detail, like the current research, are well situated to continue this valuable work.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Notice

Research Participation Opportunity for Fathers

I am looking for first time fathers to participate in a research project looking at men's transition to fatherhood. The study will be completed by Sean Larsen MA, PhD Candidate as part of the requirements for his PhD studies through the University of Victoria.

Who is eligible?

- Fathers

What will you be asked to do?

- You will be asked to participate in an interview with the researcher that will take between 60 and 120 minutes to complete
- You will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire

What do you get?

- You will get the opportunity to contribute to research that may be used to help men transition to fatherhood
- The opportunity to explore the story of your own transition to fatherhood with a trained interviewer and psychotherapist

If you have any questions or are interested in participating, please contact:

The investigator at 250 xxx-xxxx or xxxxxx@gmail.com

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

**University
of Victoria**

Participant Consent Form**Being a man and becoming a father: A narrative exploration of 10 men's transition to fatherhood**

You are invited to participate in a study entitled "Being a man and becoming a father: A narrative exploration of 10 men's transitions to fatherhood" that is being conducted by Sean Larsen.

Sean Larsen is a PhD student in Educational Psychology at the University of Victoria and you may contact him if you have further questions by email at xxxxxxxx@gmail.com

As a PhD student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Education and Leadership Studies. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Tim Black. You may contact my supervisor at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is explore the narratives of men's transitions to fatherhood.

Importance of this Research

Fatherhood is important and impacts all Canadians yet little is known about men's subjective experience of the transition to fatherhood. In learning more about how men experience the transition to fatherhood, I hope to both contribute to the body of information on this topic as well as inform potential intervention to support men transitioning to fatherhood.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a father willing to discuss your experience of transitioning to fatherhood.

What is involved

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include an initial screening phone call with the researcher that will last up twenty minutes. You will be asked to participate in an interview to describe your transition to fatherhood that will last between 60 and 120 minutes. This interview may occur face-to-face or over the phone. You will also be contacted a few months after this to read the generated narrative and verify for completeness.

Interviews will be recorded digitally and stored as an MP3 file. These files will be saved on a secured flash drive and only the researcher will have access to the flash drive and know the password to access the drive. Interviews will be transcribed and transcriptions will also be stored on a secured flash drive.

Inconvenience

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Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including the loss of time (approximately 120 minutes) and some emotional distress.

Risks

As a participant in this research, you will be asked to take part in an interview with the researcher. During the course of this interview there are risks of emotional or psychological discomfort, such as feeling demeaned or embarrassed due to the research. However, these risks are no more than might be encountered in typical daily interaction.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include contributing to the state of knowledge on men's transition to fatherhood and having the opportunity to explore your own transition to fatherhood with a trained interviewer.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will only be used with your permission. Should you request, all written and taped contributions will be destroyed following your withdrawal from the study.

Anonymity

In terms of protecting your anonymity only the researcher will be aware of which participant provided which data. All written output will have identifying details omitted from the transcription or writing and a pseudonym will be assigned.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by all research data and writings being digitally secured on the researcher's primary laptop and secured flash drives. Only the primary researcher has the password for both the laptop and any drives data is stored on. Limits to confidentiality refer to cases in which the researcher is ethically required to share information without the participant's express permission. These limits confidentiality include information shared from which the researcher believes there is a significant risk of significant harm to the participant or other or if it is disclosed that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm. Should it be determined information needs to be disclosed, participants will be informed and they will be invited to participate in determining how that information should be shared. Should they decline participation in the disclosure, information will need to be disclosed to appropriate services to manage safety for the participant and others.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways. A dissertation report will be written detailing the research process, findings and a discussion of them. The researcher will also seek to publish either an academic paper or a book based on the findings of the research. As noted, no participants will be identified in any writings related to the project. This PhD project will also be accessible online via UVicSpace following its completion.

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be disposed of by erasing all electronic data following the completion of my PhD studies and completion of my dissertation report. A digital copy of this scanned form will be saved

BECOMING A FATHER AND BEING A MAN

on an encrypted hard drive and deleted at the completion of this study. This paper copy will be shredded once scanned and stored in a locked drawer prior to scanning.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include the primary researcher, Sean Larsen, or his supervisor, Tim Black. Please refer to their contact information at the beginning of this consent form.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

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Appendix C: Interview Guide**Interview Guide**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this project exploring men's stories of becoming a father.

Tell me the story of masculinity in your transition to fatherhood?

Where do you believe the story of your transition to fatherhood started?

- Then what happened?...

- When did you learn you were going to become a father?
 - How did you feel?
 - What happened next?

If you were present for the birth of your child, tell me story of that experience?

Tell me the story of transitioning to the requirements of fatherhood?

- What did that look like for you?

Tell me about how you experienced your role as a man in your transition to fatherhood?

- Tell me about any struggles you experienced in maintaining your role as a man in transitioning to fatherhood?
 - What did you do?