

Jordan's Promise

We celebrated Father's Day this past Sunday, and the important role of this parent cannot be overstated. In his book, "Lessons from a Father to His Sons," Attorney General John Ashcroft writes:

Until 1997 Michael Jordan, indisputably the leading player in the National Basketball Association for over a decade, was never the highest paid player. When asked why he did not do what so many other players do -- hold out on their contracts until they get more money -- Michael replied, "I have always honored my word. I went for security. I had six-year contracts, and I always honored them. People said I was underpaid, but when I signed on the dotted line, I gave my word."

Three years later, after several highly visible players reneged on their contracts, a reporter asked Michael once again about being underpaid, and he explained that if his kids saw their dad breaking a promise, how could he continue training them to keep their word? By not asking for contract renegotiation, Michael Jordan spoke volumes to his children. He told them, "You stand by your word, even when that might go against you." His silence became a roar.

Honesty, sadly, is a vanishing virtue in our society today. But probably more than any other quality, it defines character. And character not only becomes a goal for children searching for an example, but it draws the admiration of the public at large.

--Beecher Hunter