

The Fatherly Heart: Involved Fatherhood as Spiritual Practice ¹

by Dr. Michael Obsatz – June 2021

Dr. Michael Obsatz’s “**The Fatherly Heart: Involved Fatherhood as Spiritual Practice**” (June 2021) presents an inclusive, spiritually grounded vision of fatherhood that goes far beyond biology. Drawing on Matthew Fox’s *The Hidden Spirituality of Men* and Barbara Coloroso’s *Kids Are Worth It*, he describes the **fatherly heart** as a way of being that any man (or fathering figure) can embody—biological fathers, adoptive fathers, mentors, elders, teachers, community uncles, and men who care for others in everyday life.

At its core, a **fatherly heart** is a commitment to wholeness—emotional, spiritual, physical, cognitive—and to nurturing that wholeness in others. Obsatz highlights key qualities:

- **Caring & Generous:** Shows love through presence, affection, provision, protection, and countless everyday acts—not just material giving but deep compassion, patience, and support.
- **Receptive Listener:** Pays close attention, honors differences, and remains present without rushing to control or judge, helping children and others feel truly seen and safe.
- **Encouraging & Courage-Building:** Instills courage to be oneself in a challenging world; offers vision, hope, and blessing, acting as a spiritual warrior who holds both joy and grief.
- **Big-Picture, Nonjudgmental:** Sees beyond tribalism, labels, and domination; teaches that all people are worthy and interconnected, moving toward compassion for everyone.

¹ Summary created by using YouTube transcript and ChatGPT to Summarize.

YouTube link: [The Fatherly Heart: Involved Fatherhood as Spiritual Practice by Dr. Michael Obsatz](#)

- **Playful & Affectionate:** Brings humor, imagination, and shared delight into relationships, helping children love life and problem-solve creatively.
- **Protective & Boundaries-With-Love:** Guides safety and responsibility; helps children develop **inner discipline**—choosing wisely from the inside out, being accountable, and understanding consequences. This echoes Coloroso’s “backbone family” model.
- **Empowering:** Teaches children how to think, not what to think; encourages intuition, critical thinking, creativity, and moral responsibility, including care for the earth and concern for injustice.

Obsatz lifts up Coloroso’s six daily messages as central to the fatherly heart:

“I believe in you. I trust you. I know you can handle life’s situations. You are listened to. You are cared for. You are very important to me.” These messages communicate enduring love, confidence, and importance, while still expecting responsibility and growth.

Obsatz concludes that **involved fatherhood is a spiritual practice**: a holistic, loving, accountable way of being male that transcends stereotypes and embraces all forms of fathering as sacred work—forming people who know they are lovable, capable, responsible, and connected to others and the wider world.