

Like Son, Like Father

By Roy M. Payne, PhD – Adapted from the original at: <http://circumstitions.com/Father.html>

Recently, a young man contemplating fatherhood asked me the following questions. What is it like to be the cut father of an intact son? Do I waffle between jealousy and pride concerning his status? Do I ever have difficulty answering his questions, since I did not experience a foreskin as I was growing up? Did I ever regret the decision to leave him intact?

As I see it, the "circumcision to look like Dad" argument is more for the father's psychological comfort than the son's benefit. And if the father honestly knew what he was having done to his son, I doubt he would or could go through with it. Here's my story...

My son is grown now. He was born in Tokyo while I was posted to the U.S. Embassy in '70-'72. Hoping for a son and being even then not in favor of circumcision, before he was born I had looked for religious (Christian) reasons for it and found none. When he was born, the attending doctor, one of Japan's leading ob-gyns at that time, asked me if I wanted him circumcised. I asked if there were any medical reasons for it and got a very firm "No!" - the Japanese equivalent of "Hell no!" I was greatly relieved and we left him as nature meant him to be.

Now, I didn't know beans from buckshot about the care of an intact penis and neither did my wife. This was when Dr. Spock still advocated for circumcision and there was no one else around to turn to. So, we just left it alone, cleaned only the outside, and otherwise never really touched it. Something intuitively told us that was best.

I was transferred to Surabaya, Indonesia, when he was about 10 months old. Little boys there on Java aren't cut at birth but later, following the Islamic tradition. So, the people he was around were familiar with little boys and their intact penises. His playmates were mostly Indonesian, Australian, and British, and intact. My best buddies there were Australian but cut. So he saw his peers intact and their daddies cut but never mentioned the subject. My friends and I discussed circumcision a time or two... thought it was not good, but we were done, and that was that. (This was in the early '70s and we didn't know then just how destructive a mutilation it is, or that restoration was possible...)

Only one time did a doctor ever say to me that my son should have been circumcised. When he was about three or three-and-a-half, his glans and foreskin were separating normally (I realize in retrospect) and he was tugging at himself a lot. Again because I didn't have a clue about what to do with or for an intact penis, I couldn't really help, so

we asked an American (missionary) doctor. He retracted the skin to clean under it and muttered that this boy should have been circumcised. I let the comment drop like a rock. Today I would not allow that (retraction) to happen, but then I didn't know any better. Fortunately, there were no ill effects.

When he was almost six, we moved back to the States to stay. He must have been a minority of one then among his friends. When he was about ten, he and I went to Six Flags Over Texas for a father-son weekend. On that trip he asked me why our penises were different. I still didn't know just how destructive cutting was, so I simply told him that neither his doctor when he was born nor I thought it was a good idea. I told him that it was *his* penis, and if he wanted to have it cut on and hurt he could have it done when he grew up, but that I didn't want to hurt him. He seemed to accept that as good enough, and that was pretty much the end of the discussion.

A couple of years later, my marriage broke up and I was effectively removed from my son's life except for two weekends a month. So, I wasn't there much for him during adolescence... It never really bothered me all that much when anyone mentioned his being intact. It happened infrequently enough anyway. I just said about the same as I wrote above.

When I would bathe him and later take him in the shower or bath with me, or we would skinny dip together (we had a pool at our house in Indonesia), I would see his little penis and wonder what mine would have been like. Would it have looked like his? What would it have felt like? etc. I was sort of jealous of him then, but at a much less profound level than now, since I have learned exactly what was stolen from me. Nevertheless, the jealousy was also mixed with pride and a sense of satisfaction for having kept him safe and unharmed. Today, I count that as one of my better accomplishments in life. And that pride and satisfaction at having given him a whole, natural body increases almost daily as I have learned what circumcision really does to men, and as I restore my own foreskin. Saving my own son from the butchers, all those years ago, has helped me recently to deal with the psychological wounds I sustained at their hands - and which I only now am beginning to understand and deal with.

That is the message of hope and healing that I would give to any young father-to-be who was considering circumcision to make his son "look like" himself. Why not restore, and make yourself look like him instead? It's so much better for both of you!

Today, with all the resources available on the Internet, young cut fathers-to-be don't even have the "but I don't know how to take care of an intact penis" rationale... unless of course they happen to be illiterate. If they are, let me know, I'd be happy to read the books to them.